

for elections, and paves the way for a permanent constitution. At this moment, United Nations Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi is conducting intensive consultations with a wide range of Iraqis on the structure of the interim government that will assume control on July the first. We welcome this U.N. engagement.

The transition to sovereignty will mark the beginning of a new Government and the end of the coalition's administrative duties, but the coalition's commitment to Iraq will continue. We will establish a new American Embassy to protect our Nation's interests. We will continue helping the Iraqi people reconstruct their economy, undermined by decades of dictatorship and corruption. And our coalition forces will remain committed to the security of Iraq.

Iraq's elections for a permanent Government are scheduled to be held near the end of 2005, and the elected Government can count on coalition assistance. We will stand with the Iraqi people as long as necessary to ensure that their young democracy is stable and secure and successful.

As we have done before, America is fighting on the side of liberty, liberty in Iraq and liberty in the Middle East. This objective serves the interests of that region, of the United States, and of all freedom-loving countries. As the greater Middle East increasingly becomes a place where freedom flourishes, the lives of millions in

that region will be bettered, and the American people and the entire world will be more secure.

From the first days of the war on terror, I said our Nation would face periods of struggle and testing. As the June 30th transition approaches, we will continue to see a test of wills between the enemies of freedom and its defenders. We will win this test of wills and overcome every challenge, because the cause of freedom and security is worth our struggle.

This weekend, many of the men and women who serve that cause in uniform will celebrate Easter and Passover far from home. In this season that celebrates hope and freedom, our Nation remembers in prayer the good and the brave people of our military. They are the best of America, and America is firmly behind them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:50 a.m. on April 9 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas *April 11, 2004*

Easter

The President. Happy Easter to everybody. It's our honor to have celebrated this holy day with family members whose loved one is in Iraq. Fort Hood has made a mighty contribution to freedom in Iraq and to security for the country. I value my time

with the family members and those who sacrifice on behalf of the country.

Today I ask for God's blessings for our troops overseas. May He protect them, and may He continue to bless our country.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Situation in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. We're coming off a week in which dozens of American soldiers have died. We've seen images of incredible violence and chaos. Should Americans brace for weeks or months of this? Do you expect it to abate soon? And also, what's General Abizaid telling you about how many more troops he'll need, if any?

The President. Yes, I've spoken to General Abizaid twice in the last 4 or 5 days. He knows full well that when he speaks to me that if he needs additional manpower, he can ask for it. He believes, like I believe, that this violence we've seen is part of a few people trying to stop progress toward democracy. Fallujah, south of Baghdad—these incidents were basically thrust upon the innocent Iraqi people by gangs, violent gangs.

And our troops are taking care of business. Their job is to make Iraq more secure so that a peaceful Iraq can emerge, and they're doing a great job. And it was a tough week last week, and my prayers and thoughts are with those who paid the ultimate price for our security. A free Iraq will make the world more peaceful. A free Iraq is going to change the world. And it's been tough, and our troops are performing brilliantly and bravely.

Q. Do you think it's right to add—[*inaudible*].

The President. It's hard to tell. I just know this, that we're plenty tough, and we'll remain tough. Now, listen, obviously, we're openminded to suggestions—members of the Governing Council wanted a chance to move into Fallujah and see if they could bring some order to the gangs and violence. And as you can tell, our military is giving them a chance to do so. Obviously, I pray every day there's less casualty.

But I know what we're doing in Iraq is right. It's right for long-term peace. It's right for the security of our country, and it's hard work. And today, on bended knee,

I thank the good Lord for protecting those of our troops overseas and our coalition troops and innocent Iraqis who suffer at the hands of some of these senseless killings by people who are trying to shake our will.

Yes, sir.

President's Daily Briefing

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us, did you see the Presidential—the President's Daily Brief from August of '01 as a warning—

The President. Did I see it? Of course I saw it. I asked for it.

Q. No, no, I'm sorry. Did you see it as a warning of hijackers? And how did you respond to that?

The President. My response was exactly like then as it is today, that I asked for the Central Intelligence Agency to give me an update on any terrorist threats. And the PDB was no indication of a terrorist threat. There was not a time and place of an attack. It said Usama bin Laden had designs on America. Well, I knew that. What I wanted to know was, is there anything specifically going to take place in America that we needed to react to?

As you might recall, there was some specific threats for overseas that we reacted to. And as the President, I wanted to know whether there was anything, any actionable intelligence. And I looked at the August 6th briefing. I was satisfied that some of the matters were being looked into. But that PDB said nothing about an attack on America. It talked about intentions, about somebody who hated America—well, we knew that.

Yes, Dave [David Gregory, NBC News].

Q. Just to follow up on that, Mr. President. There was, in that PDB, specific information about activity that may speak to a larger battle plan, even if it wasn't specific. So I wonder if you could say what specifically was done, and do you think your administration should have done anything more?

The President. David, look, let me just say it again. Had I known there was going to be an attack on America, I would have moved mountains to stop the attack. I would have done everything I can. My job is to protect the American people. And I asked the intelligence agency to analyze the data to tell me whether or not we faced a threat internally, like they thought we had faced a threat in other parts of the world. That's what the PDB request was. And had there been actionable intelligence, we would have moved on it.

I'm not exactly sure what you're referring to in the PDB, but if you're referring to the fact that the FBI was investigating things, that's great. That's what we expect the FBI to do.

Q. Wasn't that current threat information? That wasn't historical; that was ongoing.

The President. Right, and had they found something, they would have reported it to me. That's—we were doing precisely what the American people expects us to do, run down every lead, look at every scintilla of intelligence, and follow up on it. But there was—again, I can't say it as plainly as this: Had I known, we would have acted. Of course we would have acted. Any administration would have acted. The previous administration would have acted. That's our job.

Q. Are you satisfied, though, that each agency was doing everything it should have been doing?

The President. Well, that's what the 9/11 Commission should look into, and I hope it does. It's an important part of the assignment of the 9/11 Commission. And I look forward to their recommendations, a full analysis of what took place. I am satisfied that I never saw any intelligence that indicated there was going to be an attack on America—at a time and a place, an attack. Of course we knew that America was hated by Usama bin Laden. That was obvious. The question was, who was going to attack us, when and where and with what. And you might recall the hijacking that was referred to in the PDB. It was not a hijacking of an airplane to fly into a building; it was hijacking of airplanes in order to free somebody that was being held as a prisoner in the United States.

Okay, thank you all. Happy Easter to everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Crawford, Texas

April 12, 2004

President Bush. Thank you all for coming. I'm pleased to welcome my friend Hosni Mubarak to my home. Welcome. I always look forward to visiting with him, and I look forward to hearing his wise counsel. I appreciate his frank views on many challenges that face our two nations and that face the greater Middle East.

Our nations have a relationship that is strong and warm. Our people share the bonds of friendship, a commitment to prosperity and peace and regional stability. Egypt is a strategic partner of the United States, and we value President Mubarak's years of effort on behalf of the peace and stability of the Middle East.