

Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relationship With Tribal Governments

September 23, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments

The United States has a unique legal and political relationship with Indian tribes and a special relationship with Alaska Native entities as provided in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, and Federal statutes. Presidents for decades have recognized this relationship. President Nixon announced a national policy of self-determination for Indian tribes in 1970. More recently, Executive Order 13175, entitled Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, was issued in 2000. I reiterated my Administration's adherence to a government-to-government relationship and support for tribal sovereignty and self-determination earlier this year in Executive Order 13336, entitled American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

My Administration is committed to continuing to work with federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis and strongly supports and respects tribal sovereignty and self-determination for tribal governments in the United States. I take pride in acknowledging and reaffirming the existence and durability of our unique government-to-government relationship and these abiding principles.

This commitment begins at the White House, where my Director of Intergovern-

mental Affairs serves as my White House liaison with all Indian nations and works with federally recognized tribal governments on an intergovernmental basis. Moreover, it is critical that all departments and agencies adhere to these principles and work with tribal governments in a manner that cultivates mutual respect and fosters greater understanding to reinforce these principles.

Accordingly, the head of each executive department and agency (agency) shall continue to ensure to the greatest extent practicable and as permitted by United States law that the agency's working relationship with federally recognized tribal governments fully respects the rights of self-government and self-determination due tribal governments. Department or agency inquiries regarding this memorandum, specifically those related to regulatory, legislative, or budgetary issues, should be directed to the Office of Management and Budget.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, entities, or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of Iraq September 23, 2004

President Bush. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to stand with the Prime Minister of a free and sovereign Iraq. Welcome, Mr. Prime Minister. I applaud your leadership and your courage. It's my honor to welcome a friend to the White House.

Prime Minister Allawi. Thank you.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, you've accomplished a great deal in less—in the 3 months since the transition to a free Iraq that is governed by Iraqis. These have been months of steady progress, despite persistent violence in some parts of your country. Iraqis and their leaders are engaged in a great and historic enterprise to establish a new democracy at the heart of a vital region.

As friends of liberty, the new leaders of Iraq are friends of America and all civilized nations. As enemies of tyranny and terror, the people of Iraq and the American troops and civilians supporting their dreams of freedom have been the target of acts of violence. The enemies of freedom are using suicide bombing, beheadings, and other horrific acts to try to block progress. We're sickened by the atrocities, but we'll never be intimidated. And freedom is winning.

Mr. Prime Minister, America will stand with you until freedom and justice have prevailed. America's security and Iraq's future depend on it.

The Iraqi people are showing great courage and great determination. As terrorists have attacked Iraqi security forces, still more brave Iraqis have come forward to volunteer to serve their country. As killers have attempted to assassinate Government officials, Iraq's leaders have refused to be intimidated, and the vast majority of Iraqis remain committed to democracy.

The path to our safety and to Iraq's future as a democratic nation lies in the resolute defense of freedom. If we stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq, they would be free

to plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free nations. To retreat now would betray our mission, our word, and our friends. Mr. Prime Minister, America will keep its commitments.

The path ahead is difficult because a free Iraq has deadly enemies. Remnants of the old regime and terrorist groups want to prevent Iraq's elections and demoralize Iraq's allies. Because of that, Prime Minister Allawi and I believe terrorist violence may well escalate as the January elections draw near. The terrorists know that events in Iraq are reaching a decisive moment. If elections go forward, democracy in Iraq will put down permanent roots, and terrorists will suffer a dramatic defeat. And because Iraq and America and our coalition are standing firm, the Iraqi people and not the terrorists will determine Iraq's future.

There's much at stake. Mr. Prime Minister, you recently said, "The war in Iraq now is not only an Iraqi war. It is a war for the civilized world to fight terrorists and terrorism, and there is no route but the route of winning." Prime Minister Tony Blair recently called the struggle in Iraq the crucible in which the future of global terrorism will be determined. I share the view of these strong leaders that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror, and our only option is victory.

We're making steady progress in implementing our five-step plan toward the goal we all want, completing the mission so that Iraq is stable and self-governing and American troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The first step was achieved on June 28th, not only on time but ahead of schedule, when the coalition transferred full sovereignty to a Government of Iraqi citizens.

The second step is to help Iraq's new Government establish stability and security. Iraq must be able to defend itself, and