

Remarks on the Vote Approving the Iraqi Constitution October 16, 2005

On behalf of the American people, I'd like to congratulate the people of Iraq for the successful completion of a vote on their draft constitution. By all indications, the turnout was greater than the turnout from the last January election, which is good news. By all indications, the Sunnis participated in greater numbers in this election than last time. And that's good news. After all, the purpose of a democracy is to make sure everybody is—participates in the process.

I'm also pleased, from the initial indications, that the level of violence was considerably less than the last election. That's a tribute to the Iraqis—forces who we've trained as well as coalition forces that worked hard to make sure that democracy could move forward in Iraq.

This is a very positive day for the Iraqis and as well for world peace. Democracies are peaceful countries. The vote today in Iraq stands in stark contrast to the attitudes and philosophy and strategy of Al Qaida

and its terrorist friends and killers. We believe and the Iraqis believe the best way forward is through the democratic process. Al Qaida wants to use their violent ways to stop the march of democracy because democracy is the exact opposite of what they believe is right.

We're making progress toward peace. We're making progress toward an ally that will join us in the war on terror, that will prevent Al Qaida from establishing safe haven in Iraq, and a country that will serve as an example for others who aspire to live in freedom.

So, again, I congratulate the Iraqi people. I thank you for meeting this milestone. Thank you for doing what is right, to set the foundation for peace for future generations to come.

Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Georgi Purvanov of Bulgaria and an Exchange With Reporters October 17, 2005

President Bush. We'll have opening statements, two questions a side. Welcome, Mr. President.

Mr. President, your country is a strategic ally. It's been my honor to welcome you to the Oval Office, and thank you for a wide-ranging discussion on a lot of important topics.

Bulgaria has been a valued partner in NATO. Your country has been a strong example for democracy. You understand, like I understand, that the march of democracy

will lead to world peace. I want to thank you for being a part of a vast coalition that helped liberate 50 million people. We discussed important bilateral issues.

And I want to thank you again for coming. Thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your friendship.

President Purvanov. Thank you, Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say how pleased I am with the discussions we just had with Mr. President. I am delighted that we had a chance to