

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sanjiv K. Kapur, president, City Club of Cleveland; Mayor Frank G. Jackson of Cleveland, OH; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert “Jaap” de

Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Message on the Observance of Nowruz *March 20, 2006*

I send greetings to those celebrating Nowruz.

Nowruz is an ancient celebration marking the arrival of the New Year. For millions of people around the world who trace their heritage to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and Central Asia, Nowruz is a celebration of life and an opportunity to express joy and happiness through visiting family and friends, exchanging gifts, and enjoying the beauty of nature.

Our Nation is blessed by the traditions and contributions of Americans of many different backgrounds. Our diversity has made us stronger and better, and Laura and I send warm regards to all Americans celebrating Nowruz.

Best wishes for peace and prosperity in the New Year.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## The President’s News Conference *March 21, 2006*

*The President.* Good morning. Yesterday I delivered a—the second in a series of speeches on the situation in Iraq. I spoke about the violence that the Iraqi people had faced since last month’s bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. I also said that for every act of violence there is encouraging progress in Iraq that’s hard to capture on the evening news.

Yesterday I spoke about an important example of the gains we and the Iraqis have made, and that is in the northern city of Tall ‘Afar. The city was once under Al Qaida control, and thanks to coalition and Iraqi forces, the terrorists have now been driven out of that city. Iraqi security forces

are maintaining law and order. We see the outlines of a free and secure Iraq that we and the Iraqi people have been fighting for. As we mark the third anniversary of the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the success we’re seeing in Tall ‘Afar gives me confidence in the future of Iraq.

Terrorists haven’t given up; they’re tough-minded; they like to kill. There’s going to be more tough fighting ahead. No question that sectarian violence must be confronted by the Iraqi Government and a better trained police force. Yet we’re making progress, and that’s important for the American people to understand.