

whether North Korea is a threat. North Korea clearly wants to be a threat. And I think—I just want to repeat what the President has said. Given that that's a society of the kind of nature it is, I think this should concern us immensely, and the fact that it is prepared to arm itself and prepared to threaten to use such armaments—I think it is something that we should be gravely concerned about, as was said earlier.

Missiles that are fired in the direction of the United States constitute a threat to Canada. That's one of the reasons why our Government renewed, on a permanent basis, the NORAD treaty. Through NORAD we have a special relationship on air defense and we share information on these kind of matters. I think as you know, to answer your specific question, the Government of Canada is not prepared to open a missile defense issue at this time, but I will say that I think it should be obvious, when we look at this kind of threat, why the United States and others would want to have a modern and flexible defense system against this kind of threat. So I think that's something, at least, our Government fully understands.

[Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

President Bush. Welcome. Thank you for your birthday greetings.

President's Birthday

Q. Mr. President, happy birthday.

President Bush. Thank you very much. Yes.

Q. It's also my birthday.

President Bush. Today's your birthday, too?

Q. Yes, sir.

President Bush. It is? Come on up. Let's have a birthday picture. Come up, come up, come up. *[Laughter]* Come on. Get up here. Anybody else have their birthday today? *[Laughter]* It's your birthday? Yes, sure. It is your birthday? Come on. *[Laughter]* It's amazing how everybody's birthday is today.

[All present sang Happy Birthday to the President and others celebrating birthdays.]

President Bush. Dear Richard—he just told me he's 30 years old. *[Laughter]* Happy birthday. Happy birthday.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; President Hu Jintao of China; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad

July 6, 2006

The President. It's been my pleasure to sit here and talk to our Ambassador from Iraq. I want—first, Zal, I thank you for your service. I really appreciate your family supporting you on this very important mission. I know the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser join me in

saying it gives us great comfort to know that we've got a man of your caliber there. It's a hard job. And Zal has earned the confidence of the new Iraqi Government, and I was able to see that firsthand in how the Prime Minister and other members of his administration related to him.

He brought back a report that is realistic. On the one hand, he said they've got a good Government—goal-oriented people who are working to achieve certain objectives. And I know that you've been impressed by Prime Minister Maliki's determination to succeed and his willingness to lay out a commonsense agenda and then hold people to account.

Zal also said it's still a dangerous place because there are people there that will do anything to stop the progress of this new Government. And you have to ask yourself, who's afraid of democracy? I mean, why would people be afraid of a peaceful civil society? And the answer is, people who want to not only harm Iraqis but want to harm us.

And I've assured Zal that—to assure the Iraqi people that when we give our word, we'll keep our word. And we intend to work closely with the Government and to help defend the people until this Government is more capable of defending itself.

And he talked about police training. There's more work to be done in training the police. And we talked about the training of the army, and it's gone quite well. Zal is concerned about foreign influences in the country, as am I.

I do appreciate your briefing on the Prime Minister's recent trip in the neigh-

borhood, which looked like a very successful trip. We, of course, are concerned that some in the neighborhood may want to derail the progress of a free Iraq. And that is troubling and something that we'll work on.

But, Mr. Ambassador, you represent our country with a lot of class and dignity. And so, thank you. You may want to say a few comments.

Ambassador Khalilzad. Thank you, Mr. President. I came today to also wish the President a happy birthday. Happy birthday, Mr. President. And it's an honor to serve the United States in Iraq. Under your leadership, we're working very hard to make sure Iraq succeeds because Iraq is the defining challenge of our time. And what happens in Iraq will shape the future of the Middle East, and the future of the Middle East will shape the future of the world.

So it's an honor to see you again. And happy birthday, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and Business Leaders in Chicago, Illinois July 6, 2006

Laura said, "What do you want for your birthday?" I said, "I want to have dinner in Chicago with the mayor." [Laughter] Thank you all for joining us. We've had a wonderful discussion. Chicago is a fabulous town, Mayor. And you're awfully kind to host us here.

Somebody said, "Well, what's your birthday wish?" I've got a lot of birthday wishes.

I hope our troops are safe. I hope Roger Ebert does well. That's a birthday wish. I know a lot of people here in Chicago are praying for him. It's been a heck of a birthday party tonight, and I appreciate you all joining me, and looking forward to having my cake.

Thanks for coming.