

and the resources they need so they can defeat Al Qaida in Iraq.

Thanks for letting me come by today. I've explained the connection between Al Qaida and its Iraqi affiliate. I presented intelligence that clearly establishes this connection. The facts are that Al Qaida terrorists killed Americans on 9/11, they're fighting us in Iraq and across the world, and they are plotting to kill Americans here at home again. Those who justify withdrawing our troops from Iraq by denying the threat of Al Qaida in Iraq and its ties to Usama bin Laden ignore the clear consequences of such a retreat. If we were to follow their advice, it would be dangerous for the world and disastrous for America. We will defeat Al Qaida in Iraq.

In this effort, we're counting on the brave men and women represented in this room. Every man and woman who serves at this base and around the world is playing

a vital role in this war on terror. With your selfless spirit and devotion to duty, we will confront this mortal threat to our country, and we're going to prevail.

I have confidence in our country, and I have faith in our cause because I know the character of the men and women gathered before me. I thank you for your patriotism. I thank you for your courage. You're living up to the motto, "One Family, One Mission, One Fight!" Thank you for all you do. God bless your families. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., of Charleston, SC; Mayor Harry M. Hallman, Jr., of Mount Pleasant, SC; Mayor R. Keith Summey of North Charleston, SC; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks Following a Briefing by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors

July 25, 2007

I want to thank Secretary Shalala and Senator Dole for briefing myself and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Defense on the general recommendations they'll be making to the country about how to make sure that our wounded heroes get the best possible care from the Defense Department and the Veterans Affairs Department.

I asked these two distinguished citizens to lead an extensive search about how best for this Government to respond. We owe a wounded soldier the very best care and the very best benefits and the very easiest-to-understand system. And so they took a very interesting approach, and that they took the perspective from the patient, as the patient had to work his way through the hospitals and bureaucracies. And

they've come up with some very interesting and important suggestions that they'll be voting on later and then will be holding a press conference about afterwards.

The reason I've asked you to come in is, I do want to thank you on behalf of the Nation for doing what's right.

I also want to recognize Bob Woodruff here. He is a—he himself was wounded, severely wounded and went through the system, to a certain extent. And we welcome you back, and we're glad you're with us. And we would hope that any wounded soldier, any person in uniform would receive the kind of care and the ability to return to work, just like you have done. And so we're glad you're with us, Bob. Congratulations on the will to recover.

That will exist with our troops as well. It's amazing how courageous our men and women in uniform are, and they deserve the best. And that's the spirit in which you analyzed the system. And we welcome your recommendations, and we thank you for your service.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala and former Sen. Robert J. Dole, Co-chairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff, who was injured in Iraq on January 29, 2006. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on a Report by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors and an Exchange With Reporters July 25, 2007

The President. I've been running with Max and Allen—I mean, Neil. I met these guys at Walter Reed. Neil lost both legs, and he told me he's going to run with me on the South Lawn of the White House. Max lost his leg, and he told me he was going to be jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne. Sure enough, he's jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne, and along with Neil, he's running on the South Lawn.

This is a—running with these two men is incredibly inspirational to me. And it should be inspirational to anybody who has been dealt a tough hand. Sometimes in life you get dealt a hand that you didn't expect to play. And they got dealt a tough hand, and they're playing it with all their soul. And I appreciate you guys being here. It means a lot to me.

Today Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala delivered a report to the White House. I told the press corps that they were going to go out and hold a press conference. They've held their press conference. I'd like to make some comments on that report.

First of all, the spirit of that report is, any time we have somebody hurt, they deserve the best possible care, and their fam-

ily needs strong support. We've provided that in many cases, but to the extent we haven't, we're going to adjust. In that recommendation, there are things the United States Congress should do, and I call upon them to do it.

In that report, there are a lot of things that the executive branch of Government can do, the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense. And I've instructed Secretary Gates and Secretary Nicholson to look at every one of these recommendations and to take them seriously and to implement them, so that we can say with certainty that any soldier who has been hurt will get the best possible care and treatment that this Government can offer.

I'm working with two men who have been hurt, two men who refuse to allow their current circumstances to get them down or to keep them down. I am proud to be with you guys. Neil, thank you.

Sergeant Neil Duncan. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. God bless you, Max.

Specialist Max Ramsey. Thank you, Mr. President.