

given the choice between freedom and tyranny will choose freedom. And history shows that freedom will yield the peace we all want.

There will be difficult moments in the work ahead, and yet we can be confident in the outcome. With faith in the power of freedom, we will transform nations that once harbored our enemies into strong and capable allies in the war on terror. With faith in the power of freedom, we will prove that the future of the Middle East belongs not to terror, but to liberty. And with faith in the power of freedom, we will leave behind a safer and more peaceful world for our children and our grandchildren.

I thank you for all you do to keep America safe. I thank you for your service in freedom's cause. May God bless you, your families, and our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in Eisenhower Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Frances C. Wilson, USMC, president, National Defense University, who introduced the president; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks During a Visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center September 9, 2008

The President. General, thank you for your hospitality, and thank you for your leadership.

I come to Walter Reed to do a couple of things; First, I pay my respects to those who have been wounded; I've come to pay my respects to the healers and doctors and nurses and thank them for their service. I can truthfully say that the health care our troops receive here is first class.

I've also come to pay my respects to family members that are praying that their loved one can get back on their feet and serve again, or get back on their feet and live a normal life.

It's—this is a interesting experience because, on the one hand, you see the horrors of war; on the other hand, you see the courage of the people that have volunteered to serve. I marvel when I come to Walter Reed, I marvel at the fact that people say to me, "Mr. President, I'd do it again." And you see somebody in bed who's been severely wounded, and they look and

they say, "I'm honored and proud to have served." They had one kid in there who got hurt pretty bad, and he says, "I'm looking forward to getting back in uniform, getting back on the frontlines."

America is lucky to have men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform and to serve to protect us. And, General, we're lucky—and they're lucky—to have health care that can provide for the wounded and provide comfort to those who need the care. So I'm honored to be with you.

Maj. Gen. Carla G. Hawley-Bowland. Well, thank you. You energize our staff, as well as the patients and their families, to get even better. So thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. Participating in the visit was Maj. Gen. Carla G. Hawley-Bowland, USA, commanding general, North Atlantic Regional Medical Command and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq September 10, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome. First of all, I am so pleased to see that you're looking good. The President's health is strong, and that's going to be very important for the people of Iraq. After all, there's been no stronger defender of a free Iraq than President Talabani. I've known him for a long time. He cares deeply about the Iraqi people, and he has been a strong defender of human liberty.

Mr. President, thanks for the good conversation we had about the election laws, about the need to get a strategic framework agreement signed. And thank you very much for bringing me up to date on your perspective about life inside of Iraq. It's—things have changed a lot since we've known each other.

President Talabani. Of course.

President Bush. And attitudes are completely different now that people realize the security situation has changed and mothers can raise their children in a more normal life. It's still difficult, but there's no doubt that the surge has been effective, which has enabled us to take out troops. Iraqis want there to be fewer U.S. troops, the United States wants there to be fewer U.S. troops, but both of us want to realize that vision based upon success.

And so, Mr. President, welcome back. I'm glad you're feeling good. And thank you for the visit.

President Talabani. Well, Mr. President, thank you very much for giving me the honor of meeting you again. I think it's clear that we are in Iraq looking to you as a hero of liberation of Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship. And now we are working with your—with you, Mr. President, for finalizing the strategic framework of—agreement between United States and Iraq.

And also, we are always getting benefit from your views about how to secure Iraq. I think you know very well that we—you

and we in Iraq achieved very good successes on terrorism. Now I can say all parts of Iraq liberated from terrorist control and activities. It's true that some groups remain, hiding themselves from here or there, but there's no place, no inch of Iraqi land under the control of terrorist activities. There are some terrorist—still groups working, hiding themselves. And thanks to you and sacrifice of your brave Army and to Iraqi people, now we can live in peace and security.

And Iraq Government started to spend the money which we have for serving the Iraqi people and rebuilding the country, reconstructing the country. Not only we liberated our country from terrorist activities, but also from militias, outlawed militias who are also making troubles and danger for Iraqi people.

And as you have heard, the Basra city, Sadr City, Shulla, Ninawa, Baqubah, all these cities are now liberated. So we are thankful to you and to your people, your Army. We hope that the agreement about this strategy situation will be signed soon.

And as usual, we are working in—our Parliament is working now for finalizing the draft of a new law for election of Provinces. And I hope that—as I heard the news yesterday—I hope that today it will be finalized, because the groups—head of groups of Parliament are now gathering in Parliament to reach—to finalize it.

In our country, we are now busy to reconstruct our country and to rebuild our country. And I am glad to tell you, Mr. President, that our relation with our neighbors is improved very well—with Turkey, with Syria, with Iran, with the Arab countries. The relation is normal now, and we have no problem with any of these countries. In contrary, many, many new ambassadors are coming—

President Bush. That's right.