

Having said all that, if in fact the Iraqi Government behaved the way it did over the last 5, 6 years, where it failed to pass legislation that would reincorporate Sunnis and give them a sense of ownership; if it had targeted certain Sunni leaders and jailed them; if it had alienated some of the Sunni tribes that we had brought back in during the so-called Awakening that helped us turn the tide in 2006—if they had done all those things and we had had troops there, the country wouldn't be holding together either. The only difference would be we'd have a bunch of troops on the ground that would be vulnerable. And however many troops we had, we would have to now be reinforcing, I'd have to be protecting them, and we'd have a much bigger job. And probably, we would end up having to go up again in terms of the number of ground troops to make sure that those forces were not vulnerable.

So that entire analysis is bogus and is wrong, but gets frequently peddled around here by folks who oftentimes are trying to defend previous policies that they themselves made.

Going forward with respect to Afghanistan, we are leaving the follow-on force there. I think the lesson for Afghanistan is not the fact that we've got a follow-on force that will be capable of training and supporting Afghan security efforts. I think the real lesson in Afghanistan is that if factions in a country after a long period of civil war do not find a way to come up with a political accommodation; if they take

maximalist positions and their attitude is, I want a hundred percent of what I want and the other side gets nothing, then the center doesn't hold.

And the good news is, is that in part thanks to the excellent work of John Kerry and others, we now are seeing the two candidates in the recent Presidential election start coming together and agreeing not only to move forward on the audit to be able to finally certify a winner in the election, but also the kinds of political accommodations that are going to be required to keep democracy moving.

So that's a real lesson I think for Afghanistan—for Afghanistan coming out of Iraq is, if you want this thing to work, then whether it's different ethnicities, different religions, different regions, they've got to accommodate each other; otherwise, you start tipping back into old patterns of violence. And it doesn't matter how many U.S. troops are there. If that happens, you end up having a mess. All right?

Thanks a lot, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Fuad Masum and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Salim al-Jabouri of Iraq; and Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an alternative designation for the ISIL terrorist organization.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq From Chilmark, Massachusetts *August 11, 2014*

Good afternoon, everybody. I wanted to provide an update on recent developments in Iraq, including some important steps forward as Iraqis form a new Government.

Over the past few days, American forces have successfully conducted targeted airstrikes to prevent terrorist forces from advancing on the city of Erbil and to protect American civilians there. Kurdish forces on the ground continue to defend their city, and we've stepped up military advice and assis-

tance to Iraqi and Kurdish forces as they wage the fight against ISIL.

At the same time, we've continued our daily humanitarian efforts to provide lifesaving assistance to the men, women, and children stranded on Mount Sinjar and deployed a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team to help. Some have begun to escape their perch on that mountain, and we're working with international partners to develop options to bring them to safety. I want to thank in particular the United

Kingdom, France, and other countries working with us to provide much needed assistance to the Iraqi people. And meanwhile, our aircraft remain positioned to strike any terrorist forces around the mountain who threaten the safety of these families.

This advances the limited military objectives we've outlined in Iraq: protecting American citizens, providing advice and assistance to Iraqi forces as they battle these terrorists, and joining with international partners to provide humanitarian aid. But as I said when I authorized these operations, there is no American military solution to the larger crisis in Iraq. The only lasting solution is for Iraqis to come together and form an inclusive Government, one that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqis and one that can unify the country's fight against ISIL.

Today Iraq took a promising step forward in this critical effort. Last month, the Iraqi people named a new President. Today President Masum named a new Prime Minister-designate, Dr. Haider al-Abadi. Under the Iraqi Constitution, this is an important step towards forming a new Government that can unite Iraq's different communities.

Earlier today Vice President Biden and I called Dr. Abadi to congratulate him and to urge him to form a new Cabinet as quickly as possible, one that's inclusive of all Iraqis and one that represents all Iraqis. I pledged our support to him, as well as to President Masum

and Speaker Jabouri, as they work together to form this Government. Meanwhile, I urge all Iraqi political leaders to work peacefully through the political process in the days ahead.

Now, this new Iraqi leadership has a difficult task. It has to regain the confidence of its citizens by governing inclusively and by taking steps to demonstrate its resolve. The United States stands ready to support a Government that addresses the needs and grievances of all Iraqi people. We are also ready to work with other countries in the region to deal with the humanitarian crises and counterterrorism challenge in Iraq. Mobilizing that support will be easier once this new Government is in place.

Now, these have been difficult days in Iraq, a country that's faced so many challenges in its recent history. And I'm sure that will—there will be difficult days ahead. But just as the United States will remain vigilant against the threat posed to our people by ISIL, we stand ready to partner with Iraq in its fight against these terrorist forces. Without question, that effort will be advanced if Iraqis continue to build on today's progress and come together to support a new and inclusive Government.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Tisbury, Massachusetts

August 11, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, first of all, can we all thank Roger and Linda for this unbelievable setting? This is absolutely gorgeous. And I understand that we also have some outstanding young musicians from the Berklee School. So let's give them a big round of applause. Thank you very much.

Two other hotshots we've got here. First of all, those of you from Massachusetts, your own Ed Markey. Thank you for the outstanding

work that you do every single day. And Michael Bennet, one of the finest public servants we have out of Colorado, also has the challenging, but fulfilling tasking of heading up—[laughter]—or enormously gratifying task up heading up the DSCC. Please give Michael a big round of applause.

So I've got a lot of old friends here, in addition to Linda and Roger, so I'm not going to give a long speech at the front end. On a day