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to me personally but a promise he made to the Israeli officials. And the promise was, is that he will work as hard as he can to fight off those elements within the territories that want to use violence to destroy any hope for peace and, therefore, use violence to destroy the hopes of the Palestinian people.

Patsy.

Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction

Q. Sir, is U.S. credibility on the line over weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

The President. I'm not exactly sure what that means. I mean, Iraq had a weapons program. Intelligence throughout the decade showed they had a weapons program. I am absolutely convinced with time we'll find out that they did have a weapons program. The credibility of this country is based upon our strong desire to make the world more peaceful—and the world is now more peaceful after our decision; the strong desire to make sure free nations are more secure—our free nations are now more secure; and the strong desire to spread freedom. And the Iraqi people are now free and are learning the habits of freedom and the responsibilities that come with freedom.

I read a report that somehow, you know, that there is no Al Qaida presence in Baghdad. I guess the people who wrote that article forgot about Al Zarqawi's network inside of Baghdad that ordered the killing of a U.S. citizen named Foley. And history will show, history—time will prove that the United States made the absolute right decision in freeing the people of Iraq from the clutches of Saddam Hussein.

Keil [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News], last question.

U.S. Policy on the Dollar

Q. Sir, do you have anything for us on the dollar? It continues to slide.

The President. Yes.

Q. The rhetoric continues to be that we favor a strong dollar policy, but there doesn't seem to be much of anything helping to prop it up.

The President. The policy of this Government is a strong dollar policy. I spent time talking about the—our dollar policy at the G–8. And I reminded our G–8 partners that there is a difference in interest rates, particularly between Europe and the United States, and that interest rate differential has caused people to sell dollars to buy euros to get a higher return on investment. And that's why you're seeing pressure on the dollar.

And of course, the European Union is—like the United States, has got an independent organization that sets monetary policy. But you'll see a—you'll see different behavior as interest rate spreads begin to narrow between Europe and the United States.

But I'll repeat as clearly as I can, the policy of the United States Government is a strong dollar policy.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq: Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation John S. Wolf; Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, senior Al Qaida associate; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of U.S. Military Forces in Response to Security Concerns for U.S. Embassy Personnel in Liberia and Mauritania

June 9, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Clashes between Liberian government and rebel forces in the vicinity of the United States Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia and the potential for further deterioration of the security environment in Liberia render the safety of the United States Embassy and its occupants uncertain.

On June 7, 2003, an assessment team and standby response and evacuation force of approximately 35 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. European Command were pre-positioned in Freetown, Sierra Leone. On June 8, 2003, these forces moved into Monrovia, Liberia to augment the Embassy security forces and to aid in the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Liberia if required.

Additionally, on June 8, 2003, a coup attempt occurred in Mauritania. Fighting has been reported in the vicinity of the United States Embassy. This fighting continued during the morning of June 9 in the center of Nouakchott, about three kilometers from the Embassy. At the request of the United States Embassy, an assessment team and standby response and evacuation force of an estimated 34 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. European Command are being sent to Nouakchott, Mauritania and are expected to arrive on June 10, 2003. Their mission is to augment the Embassy security forces and to aid in the evacuation of American citizens from Mauritania if required.

In addition to the forces noted above, several fixed wing aircraft and their aircrew have been pre-positioned in Dakar, Senegal in order to shorten the response time should an evacuation of American citizens from either Liberia or Mauritania be required.

Although in both cases the U.S. forces are equipped for combat, these movements were undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. United States forces will redeploy as soon as it is determined that the threats to the Embassy compounds have ended or an evacuation, if necessary, is completed.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act

June 10, 2003

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks a lot. Welcome to the White House and the beautiful Rose Garden. I want to thank you for coming today to help us mark progress, significant progress, toward making sure our public schools meet our objective, which is every single child in America gets a high-quality education.

Last year, I had the honor of signing into law some historic reforms. The No Child Left Behind Act sets a clear objective for American education. Every child in every school must be performing at grade level in the basic subjects that are key to all learning, reading and math. The ambitious goal is the most fundamental duty of every single school, and it must and it will be fulfilled.

In order to ensure this goal is met, the No Child Left Behind Act requires every State in our country to submit an accountability plan that leads to measurable gains in student performance. As of today, all of the States, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, have now submitted those plans. And that's why we're meeting.

The era of low expectations and low standards is ending; a time of great hopes and proven results is arriving. And together, we are keeping a pledge: Every child in America will learn, and no child will be left behind.

I want to thank our Secretary of Education for his service to our country. I first got to know him as a superintendent in Texas. He was the superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, and I figured if he could handle that—[*laughter*]—he could handle whatever Washington threw his way. But he's doing a great job, and so is his staff. I want to thank the chief State school officers who are with us today. Thank you for your setting high standards. Thank you for your care and concern for our Nation's children.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here today. I see quite a few Senators and House Members. I particularly want to pay my respects to the two chairmen that made the bill happen, Chairman Judd Gregg, Chairman John Boehner—Judd of the Senate, John of the House. I want to thank you for your leadership. When we had our negotiations on the bill and discussions on the bill, I can't remember which one of the two said, "Are you going to follow through?" I said, "Yes, we'll follow through."