

for the Iranians to understand that the discussion is limited to Iraq. We feel like they need to know our position.

Ultimately, Iraq-Iranian relations will be negotiated between the Iraqi Government and the Iranian Government. Ours is just—we're using this as an opportunity to make it clear about our concerns of interference within a process that is—a democratic process that is evolving. Our position is still very clearly that the Iraqis—Iranians should not have a program to build a nuclear weapon, and/or the capacity, the knowledge necessary to build something which could lead to a nuclear weapon. And we're working closely with or allies and friends to continue to make that clear to them.

So the issues are different. The issues are different stages of diplomacy.

Listen, I've enjoyed this. I hope you have as well. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sanjiv K. Kapur, president, City Club of Cleveland; Mayor Frank G. Jackson of Cleveland, OH; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of Nowruz

March 20, 2006

I send greetings to those celebrating Nowruz.

Nowruz is an ancient celebration marking the arrival of the New Year. For millions of people around the world who trace their heritage to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and Central Asia, Nowruz is a celebration of life and an opportunity to express joy and happiness through visiting family and friends, exchanging gifts, and enjoying the beauty of nature.

Our Nation is blessed by the traditions and contributions of Americans of many different backgrounds. Our diversity has made us stronger and better, and Laura and I send warm regards to all Americans celebrating Nowruz.

Best wishes for peace and prosperity in the New Year.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's News Conference

March 21, 2006

The President. Good morning. Yesterday I delivered a—the second in a series of speeches on the situation in Iraq. I spoke about the violence that the Iraqi people had faced since last month's bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. I also said that for every act of violence there is encouraging progress in Iraq that's hard to capture on the evening news.

Yesterday I spoke about an important example of the gains we and the Iraqis have made, and that is in the northern city of Tall 'Afar. The city was once under Al Qaida control, and thanks to coalition and Iraqi forces, the terrorists have now been driven out of that city. Iraqi security forces are maintaining law and order. We see the outlines of a free and secure Iraq that we and the Iraqi people have been fighting for. As we mark the third anniversary of the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the success we're seeing in Tall 'Afar gives me confidence in the future of Iraq.

Terrorists haven't given up; they're tough-minded; they like to kill. There's going to be more tough fighting ahead. No question that sectarian violence must be confronted by the Iraqi Government and a better-trained police force. Yet we're making progress, and that's important for the American people to understand.

We're making progress because of—we've got a strategy for victory, and we're making progress because the men and women of the United States military are showing magnificent courage, and they're making important