

Remarks Following a Meeting With Governors Who Traveled to Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan

April 19, 2006

The President. I just had breakfast with four Governors who have returned from Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. I invited Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld, as well as Steve Hadley and Josh Bolten, to breakfast so that we could hear from these Governors.

First of all, I want to thank the four of them for traveling overseas. I particularly want to thank them for going to see our men and women who are helping secure freedom and peace. I thank them for sending a message from home that we care about them—that we care about our troops; that we'll support our troops; that we appreciate the fact that people are willing to make sacrifices.

I assured them that our goal in Afghanistan and Iraq is victory. And victory will be achieved when there is a democracy in both countries that are able to sustain itself and defend itself.

Secretary Rice brought the Governors up to date about a conversation she had with Ambassador Khalilzad. We fully recognize that the Iraqis must step up and form a unity government so that those who went to the polls to vote recognize that a Government will be in place to respond to their needs. In other words, we also recognize that vacuums in the political process create opportunity for malfeasance and harm. And so we assured these Governors that we understand full well that the political process in Iraq must occur soon, and we're working toward that end.

I again want to thank the Governors for coming. I thought—I asked them if they wouldn't mind saying a few words. We—I don't expect everybody to agree with my decision to go into Iraq, but I do want the people to understand—the American people to understand that failure in Iraq is not an option, that failure in Iraq would make the security situation for our country worse, and that success in Iraq will begin to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

Governor Daniels.

[At this point, Gov. Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., of Indiana, Gov. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa, and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida made brief remarks.]

The President. Yes. Again, I want to thank the four Governors for coming. Thank you for your eloquent statements. I appreciate your service to our Nation. I assured the Governors that the United States will complete the mission; that we will honor those who've paid the ultimate price, by completing the mission; that we will help those who desire to live in freedom, and in so doing, we will lay the foundations of peace for a generation to come.

I appreciate you all coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Governors Daniels, Manchin, Vilsack, and Bush.

Remarks Announcing the Resignation of Press Secretary Scott McClellan

April 19, 2006

Press Secretary McClellan. Good morning, everybody. I am here to announce that I will be resigning as White House Press Secretary.

Mr. President, it has been an extraordinary honor and privilege to have served you for more than 7 years now, the last 2 years and 9 months as your Press Secretary.

The White House is going through a period of transition. Change can be helpful, and this is a good time and good position to help bring about change. I am ready to move on. I've been in this position a long time, and my wife and I are excited about beginning the next chapter in our life together.

You have accomplished a lot over the last several years with this team, and I have been honored and grateful to be a small part of a terrific and talented team of really good people.

Our relationship began back in Texas, and I look forward to continuing it, particularly when we are both back in Texas.

The President. That's right. [Laughter]