

Energy/Foreign Sources of Oil

Q. Mr. President, did you talk about oil production and maybe getting it back to pre-war levels, or anything?

The President. We did. We spent a lot of time in talking about energy and oil. The oil belongs to the Iraqi people. It's their asset. It is one of the—the capacity to generate wealth from the ground distinguishes Iraq from Afghanistan, for example. It's something that I view as a very positive part of Iraqi future. And we talked about how to advise the Government to best use that money for the benefit of the people.

Secondly, obviously, we spent time figuring out how to help strategize with the new ministries as to how to get oil production up. And recently, they've had oil production as high as a little over 2 million barrels a day, which is extremely positive. The oil sector is very much like the rest of the infrastructure of Iraq: Saddam Hussein let it deteriorate. There wasn't much reinvestment or not much modernization. After all, he was using the money for his own personal gain, and he wasn't spending the people's money on enhancing the infrastructure. And the oil infrastructure collapsed and deteriorated. And as a result, there's a lot of work that needs to be done on, for example, work-overs—that is, to help oil wells become revitalized, just a standard maintenance procedure. So there's a maintenance program on to help the Iraqi people get their production up.

There's some unbelievably interesting exploration opportunities. And the new Government is going to have to figure out how best to lease the people's lands in a fair way. My own view is, is that the Government ought to use the oil as a way to unite the country and ought to think about having a tangible fund for the people, so the people have faith in central government.

Listen, thank you all for coming today. And tomorrow is going to be a fascinating day, and I'm looking forward to having discussions with our counterparts via SVTS. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Minister

of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufriji, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who was killed in Baquba, Iraq, on June 7. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq in Baghdad, Iraq

June 13, 2006

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for this opportunity to visit with your Cabinet. I have expressed our country's desire to work with you, but I appreciate you recognizing the fact that the future of this country is in your hands. The decisions you and your Cabinet make will be determinate as to whether or not a country succeeds that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. I'm impressed by the Cabinet that you've assembled. You've assembled people from all parts of your country, representing the different religions and the different histories and traditions.

And yet the Cabinet here represents the entire Iraqi people, and I appreciate your commitment to representing the people of Iraq. I'm impressed by the strength of your character and your desire to succeed. And I'm impressed by your strategy. We've discussed—I discussed earlier with the Prime Minister and here with his Cabinet and with members of my Cabinet the strategy necessary to have a country that is capable of answering to the needs of the people.

We discussed the security strategy. We discussed an economic strategy, a reconstruction strategy. And all of it makes sense to me. And so I've come to not only look you in the eye, I've also come to tell you that when America gives its word, it will keep its word; that it's in our interests that Iraq succeed. It's not only in the interests of the Iraqi people; it's in the interests of the American people and for people who love freedom.

Iraq is a part of the war on terror. Iraq is a central front on that war, and when Iraq succeeds in having a government of and by and for the people of Iraq, you will have dealt a serious blow to those who have a vision of darkness, who don't believe in liberty, who

are willing to kill the innocent in order to achieve a political objective.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, I want to thank you for giving me and my Cabinet a chance to hear from you personally and a chance to meet the members of this team you've assembled. It's an impressive group of men and women, and if given the right help, I'm convinced you will succeed, and so will the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 6:36 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to United States Military Personnel in Baghdad

June 13, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Thought I'd stop in to say hello. [Laughter] I bring greetings from a grateful nation. I thank you for your sacrifice; I thank you for your service; I thank you for making history.

You know, one of the things I try to do is put good people in place who accomplish hard jobs. And I can't think of two better leaders than Zal Khalilzad and General Casey to lead this important effort. I thank you all very much for your service to our country. Your sacrifice is noble, and your sacrifice is important.

I understand long deployments are tough—they're tough on you, and they're tough on your families. And so the first thing I want to tell you is, the American people are incredibly grateful for what you do, and I bring their greetings and their thanks for the sacrifices you and your family make.

These are historic times. The mission that you're accomplishing here in Iraq will go down in the history books as an incredibly important moment in the history of freedom and peace, an incredibly important moment of doing our duty to secure our homeland.

You know, right after September the 11th, I knew that some would forget the dangers we face. Some would hope that the world would be what it's not—a peaceful place in which people wouldn't want to do harm to those of us who love freedom. I vowed that day, after September the 11th, to do every-

thing I could to protect the American people. And I was able to make that claim because I knew there were people such as yourself who were willing to be on the frontline in the war on terror.

Baghdad and Iraq is a front in the war on terror. It is a part of our mission to help make sure that the world is a better place. I truly believe the work that you're doing here is laying the foundation of peace for generations to come, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The progress here in Iraq has been remarkable when you really think about it. The people of this country suffered under the hands of a brutal tyrant. And thanks to the United States forces and coalition forces, the people are liberated from the clutches of Saddam Hussein. America is safer; the world is better off; and the Iraqi people have a chance to realize the great blessings of liberty because Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

Thanks to your hard work, the Iraqi people have been given a chance to go to the polls—not once but three different times—to elect a government that is dedicated to the will of the people. Today I have come to not only thank you but to look Prime Minister Maliki in the eyes, to determine whether or not he is as dedicated to a free Iraq as you are, and I believe he is.

I met with the Cabinet officials from all walks of life here in Iraq and came away with the distinct impression that they are unified in serving the people of Iraq. They want to succeed. The faith and future of Iraq is in their hands, and our job is to help them succeed—and we will.

I have come today to personally show our Nation's commitment to a free Iraq. My message to the Iraqi people is this: Seize the moment; seize this opportunity to develop a government of and by and for the people. And I also have a message to the Iraqi people, that when America gives a commitment, America will keep its commitment.

Our work is not done with the formation of a unity government. This Government is just getting started. And the enemies of a free Iraq will do everything they can to stop the progress. That should tell us something