

Week Ending Friday, January 19, 2007

The President's Radio Address

January 13, 2007

Good morning. On Wednesday night, I addressed the Nation from the White House to lay out a new strategy that will help Iraq's democratic Government succeed.

America's new strategy comes after a difficult year in Iraq. In 2006, the terrorists and insurgents fought to reverse the extraordinary democratic gains the Iraqis have made. In February, the extremists bombed a holy Shi'a mosque in a deliberate effort to provoke reprisals that would set off a sectarian conflict. They succeeded, and the ongoing sectarian violence, especially in Baghdad, is making all other progress difficult.

Only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people. Their leaders understand this, and they are stepping forward to do it. But they need our help, and it is in our interests to provide that help. The changes in our strategy will help the Iraqis in four main areas.

First, we will help the Iraqis execute their aggressive plan to secure their capital. Eighty percent of Iraq's sectarian violence occurs within 30 miles of Baghdad. The new plan to secure Baghdad fixes the problems that prevented previous operations from succeeding. This time, there will be adequate Iraqi and U.S. forces to hold the areas that have been cleared, including more Iraqi forces and five additional brigades of American troops committed to Baghdad. This time, Iraqi and American forces will have a green light to enter neighborhoods that are home to those fueling sectarian violence. Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference with security operations will not be tolerated.

Second, America will step up the fight against Al Qaida in its home base in Iraq—Anbar Province. Our military forces in Anbar are killing and capturing Al Qaida leaders and protecting the local population. Re-

cently, local tribal leaders have begun to show their willingness to take on Al Qaida, and as a result, our commanders believe we have an opportunity to deal a serious blow to the terrorists. So I've given orders to increase American forces in Anbar Province by 4,000 troops. These troops will work with Iraqi and tribal forces to increase the pressure on the terrorists. America's men and women in uniform took away Al Qaida's safe haven in Afghanistan, and we will not allow them to reestablish it in Iraq.

Third, America will hold the Iraqi Government to benchmarks it has announced. These include taking responsibility for security in all of Iraq Provinces by November, passing legislation to share oil revenues among all Iraqis, and spending \$10 billion of its own money on reconstruction projects that will create new jobs. These are strong commitments, and the Iraqi Government knows that it must meet them or lose the support of the Iraqi and the American people.

Fourth, America will expand our military and diplomatic efforts to bolster the security of Iraq and protect American interests in the Middle East. We will address the problem of Iran and Syria allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq. We will encourage countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf States to increase their economic assistance to Iraq. Secretary Rice has gone to the region to continue the urgent diplomacy required to help bring peace to the Middle East.

My national security team is now making our case on Capitol Hill. We recognize that many Members of Congress are skeptical. Some say our approach is really just more troops for the same strategy. In fact, we have a new strategy with a new mission: helping secure the population, especially in Baghdad. Our plan puts Iraqis in the lead.

Others worry that we are pursuing a purely military solution that makes a political solution less likely. In fact, the sectarian violence

is the main obstacle to a political solution, and the best way to help the Iraqis reach this solution is to help them put down this violence.

Members of Congress have a right to express their views and express them forcefully. But those who refuse to give this plan a chance to work have an obligation to offer an alternative that has a better chance for success. To oppose everything while proposing nothing is irresponsible.

Whatever our differences on strategy and tactics, we all have a duty to ensure that our troops have what they need to succeed. Thousands of young men and women are preparing to join an important mission that will in large part determine the outcome in Iraq. Our brave troops should not have to wonder if their leaders in Washington will give them what they need. I urge Members of Congress to fulfill their responsibilities, make their views known, and to always support our men and women in harm's way.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:40 a.m. on January 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Volunteer Event

January 15, 2007

This has been my honor to be here. One of the things that Mrs. King wanted was for MLK Day to be a day of service. It is not a day off, but it's a day on. And so I'm here at Cardozo High School to thank the hundreds of people who have showed up to serve the country by volunteering.

And right here in the library, we're with a group of folks who are sending postcards to folks who have been affected by Katrina, cards of hope, an opportunity for a citizen here to say to somebody in the New Orleans area, "We care about you; people are think-

ing about you"—and all in the hopes of lifting somebody's spirit.

And so I not only want to thank the folks involved in this project, and thank the Attorney General for volunteering, but I encourage people all around the country to seize any opportunity they can to help somebody in need. And by helping somebody in need, you're honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King. And by helping somebody in need, you're really helping yourself because you're lifting your soul.

And so I want to thank the principal of this fine high school; I want to thank the organizers of the event; and I want to thank the volunteers, young and old, for setting aside time to make somebody else's life better.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. at Cardozo High School. In his remarks, he referred to Reginald Ballard, principal, Cardozo High School.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

January 16, 2007

President Bush. Mr. Secretary-General, welcome. The last time I visited with you in this Oval Office, you were the Foreign Minister of an important country. Now you come representing the United Nations, and I welcome you. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you for this very important discussion we just had. I appreciated so very much how you opened up the discussion with a strong commitment to democracy and freedom. And the United States is willing—wants to work with the United Nations to achieve a peace through the spread of freedom.

And I want to thank you very much for the wise advice that you have given on a variety of issues. We talked about the Middle East, of course, and the importance of the Quartet. We talked about Darfur. Mr. Secretary-General, I want to thank you for your commitment to help the suffering people in Darfur, and I wish you all the best as you work hard to convince the President of the