

of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Excellency Ayad Allawi, the Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentleman from California (Mr. COX);

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON);

The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER);

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON);

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS); and

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as a committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Excellency Ayad Allawi, the Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM);

The Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL);

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN);

The Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR);

The Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE);

The Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX);

The Senator from Michigan (Mrs. STABENOW);

The Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON); and

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Jesse Bibiano Marehalau, Ambassador of Micronesia.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered

the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 10 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m., the Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced His Excellency Ayad Allawi, Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq.

The Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, it is my great privilege and I deem it a high honor and a personal pleasure to present to you His Excellency Ayad Allawi, Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY AYAD ALLAWI, INTERIM PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Prime Minister ALLAWI. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, it is my distinct honor and great privilege to speak to you today on behalf of Iraq's interim government and its people. It is my honor, too, to come to Congress and to thank this Nation and this people for making our cause your cause, our struggle your struggle. Before I turn to my government's plan for Iraq, I have three important messages for you today.

First, we are succeeding in Iraq. It is a tough struggle, with setbacks, but we are succeeding. I have seen some of the images that are being shown here on television. They are disturbing. They focus on the tragedies, such as the brutal and barbaric murder of two American hostages this week. My thoughts and prayers go out to their families and to all those who lost loved ones.

Yet, as we mourn these losses, we must not forget either the progress we are making or what is at stake in Iraq. We are fighting for freedom and democracy, ours and yours. Every day we strengthen the institutions that will protect our new democracy, and every day we grow in strength and determination to defeat the terrorists and their barbarism.

The second message is quite simple, and one that I would like to deliver directly from my people to yours. Thank you, America. We Iraqis know that Americans have made and continue to make enormous sacrifices to liberate Iraq, to ensure Iraq's freedom. I have come here to thank you and to promise you that your sacrifices are not in vain. The overwhelming majority of Iraqis are grateful. They are grateful to be rid of Saddam Hussein and the torture and brutality he forced upon us, grateful for the chance to build a better future for our families, our country, and our region. We Iraqis are grateful to you Americans for your

leadership and your sacrifice for our liberation and our opportunity to start anew.

Third, I stand here today as the Prime Minister of a country emerging finally from the dark ages of violence, aggression, corruption, and greed. Like almost every Iraqi, I have many friends who were murdered, tortured, or raped by the regime of Saddam Hussein. Well over 1 million Iraqis were murdered or are missing. We estimate at least 300,000 are in mass graves which stand as monuments to the inhumanity of Saddam's regime. Thousands of my Kurdish brothers and sisters were gassed to death by Saddam's chemical weapons. Millions more like me were driven into exile. Even in exile, as I myself can vouch, we were not safe from Saddam; and as we lived under tyranny at home, so our neighbors lived in fear of Iraq's aggression and brutality.

Reckless wars, uses of weapons of mass destruction, needless slaughter of hundreds of thousands of lives and the financing and exporting of terrorism, these were Saddam's legacy to the world. My friends, today, we are better off, you are better off, and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein.

Your decision to go to war in Iraq was not an easy one, but it was the right one. There are no words that can express the debt of gratitude that future generations of Iraqis will owe to Americans. It would have been easy to have turned your back on our plight, but this is not the tradition of this great country. Not for the first time in history you stood up with your allies for freedom and democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, I particularly want to thank you and the United States Congress for your brave work in 2002 to authorize American men and women to go to war to liberate my country because you realized what was at stake, and I want to thank you for your continued commitment last year when you voted to grant Iraq a generous reconstruction and security funding package. I met many of you last year, and I have in Iraq accepted your commitment to our country that you have come to see firsthand the challenges, and the progress we have and we are making.

Ladies and gentlemen, the costs we know have been high. As we have lost our loved ones in this struggle, so have you. As we have mourned, so have you. This is a bitter price of combating tyranny and terror, our hardworking families, every American who has given his or her life in the cause and every American who has been wounded to help us in our struggle. Now we are determined to honor your confidence and sacrifice by putting into practice in Iraq the values of liberty and democracy which are so dear to you and which have triumphed over tyranny across our world.

Creating a democratic, prosperous, and stable nation where differences are respected, human rights protected, and

which lives in peace with itself and its neighbors is our highest priority, our sternest challenge and our greatest goal. It is a vision, I assure you, shared by the vast majority of the Iraqi people, but there is the tiny minority who despise the very ideas of liberty, of peace, of tolerance and who will kill anyone, destroy anything to prevent Iraq and its people from achieving this goal.

Among them are those who nurse fantasies of the former regime returning to power. There are fanatics who seek to impose a perverse vision of Islam in which the face of Allah cannot be seen; and there are terrorists, including many from outside Iraq, who seek to make our country the main battleground against freedom, democracy, and civilization.

For the struggle in Iraq today is not about the future of Iraq only. It is about the worldwide war between those who want to live in peace and freedom and terrorists. Terrorists strike indiscriminately, at soldiers, at civilians, as they did so tragically on 9/11 in America and as they did in Spain and Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, and my country and many others.

So in Iraq, we confront both, insurgency and the global war on terror, with their destructive forces sometimes overlapping. These killers may be just a tiny fraction of our 27 million population, but with their guns and their suicide bombs to intimidate and to frighten all the people of Iraq, I can tell you today they will not succeed. For these murderers have no political program or cause other than to push our country back into tyranny. Their agenda is no different than terrorist forces that have struck all over the world, including in your own country on September 11.

There lies the fatal weakness. The insurgency in Iraq is destructive but small, and it has not and will never resonate with the Iraqi people. The Iraqi citizens know better than anyone the horrors of dictatorship. This has passed. We will never revisit.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me turn now to our plan which we have developed to meet the real challenges which Iraq faces today, a plan that we are successfully implementing with your help. The plan has three basic parts: building democracy, defeating the insurgency, and improving the quality of life of ordinary Iraqis.

The political strategy in our plan is to isolate the terrorists from the communities in which they operate. We are working hard to involve as many people as we can in the political process to cut the ground from under the terrorists' feet. In troubled areas across the country, government representatives are meeting with local leaders. They are offering amnesty to those who realize there are other ways. They are making clear that there can be no compromise with terror; that all Iraqis have the opportunity to join the side of order and democracy and that they

should use the political process to address their legitimate concerns and hopes.

I am a realist. I know that terrorism cannot be defeated with political tools only, but we can weaken it and with local support help us to tackle the enemy head on to identify, isolate, and eradicate this cancer. Let me provide you with a couple of examples of where this political plan is already working.

In Samarra, the Iraqi government has tackled the insurgents who once controlled the city. Following weeks of discussions between government officials and representatives, Coalition forces and local community leaders, regular access to the city has been restored. A new provisional council and governor have been selected and a new chief of police has been appointed. Hundreds of insurgents have been pushed out of the city by local citizens eager to get on with their lives. Today, in Samarra, the Iraqi forces are patrolling the city in close coordination with the Coalition counterparts.

In Tall Afar, a city northwest of Baghdad, the Iraqi government has reversed an effort by insurgents to wrest control away from the proper authority. Iraqi forces put down the challenge and allowed local citizens to choose a new mayor and police chief. Thousands of civilians have returned to the city; and since their return, we have launched a large program of reconstruction and humanitarian assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me turn now to our military strategy. We plan to build and maintain security forces across Iraq. Ordinary Iraqis are anxious to take over entirely this role and to shoulder all the security weapons of our country as quickly as possible. For now, of course, we need the help of our American and Coalition partners, but the training of Iraqi security forces is moving forward briskly and effectively.

The Iraqi government now commands almost 50,000 armed and combat-ready Iraqis. By January, it will be some 145,000. And by the end of next year, some 250,000 Iraqis. The government has accelerated the development of Iraqi special forces and the establishment of a counterterrorist strike force to tackle specific problems caused by insurgencies. Our intelligence is getting better every day.

You have seen the successful resolution of the Najaf crisis and then the targeted attacks against insurgents in Fallujah. These new Iraqi forces are rising to the challenge. They are fighting on behalf of a sovereign Iraqi government and their performance is improving every day. Working closely with the Coalition allies, they are striking their enemies wherever they hide, disrupting operations, destroying safe houses, and removing terrorist leaders.

But in improving the everyday lives of Iraqis, tackling our economic problems is also essential to our plan. Across the country, there is a daily progress too. Oil pipelines are being re-

paired, basic services are being improved, homes are being rebuilt, schools and hospitals are being rebuilt, and clinics are open and reopened. There are now over 6 million children at school, many of them attending one of the 2,500 schools that have been renovated since liberation.

Last week, we completed a national polio vaccination campaign, reaching over 90 percent of all Iraqi children. We are starting work on 150 new health centers across the country. Millions of dollars in economic aid and humanitarian assistance from this country and others around the world are flowing into Iraq. For this, again, I want to thank you.

And so today, despite the setbacks and daily outrages, we can and should be hopeful for the future. In Najaf and Kufa, this plan has already brought success. In those cities, a firebrand cleric had taken over Shi'a Islam's holiest sites, in defiance of the government and the local population. Immediately, the Iraqi government ordered the Iraqi armed forces into action to use military force to create conditions for political success.

Together with the Coalition partners, Iraqi forces cleaned out insurgents from everywhere in the city, capturing hundreds and killing many more. At the same time, the government worked with political leaders and with Ayatollah Sistani to find a peaceful solution to the occupation of the shrine. We were successful. The shrine was preserved, order was restored, and Najaf and Kufa were returned to their citizens.

Today, the foreign media have lost interest and left, but millions of dollars in economic aid and humanitarian assistance are now flowing into the cities. Ordinary citizens are once again free to live and worship at these places. As we move forward, the next major milestone will be holding of the free and fair national and local elections in January next.

I know that some have speculated, even doubted, whether these stakes can be met. So let me be absolutely clear. Elections will occur in Iraq, on time in January, because Iraqis want elections on time. For the skeptics who do not understand the Iraqi people, they do not realize how decades of torture and repression fueled our desire for freedom. At every step of the political process today, the courage and resilience of the Iraqi people has proved the doubters wrong.

They said we would miss the January deadline to pass the interim constitution. We proved them wrong. They warned that there could be no successful handover of sovereignty by the end of June. We proved them wrong. A sovereign Iraqi government took over control 2 days early. They doubted whether a national conference could be staged this August. We proved them wrong. Despite humiliation and violence, over 1,400 citizens, a quarter of them women, from all regions and from

every ethnic religious and political grouping in Iraq, elected a national council. And I pledge to you today, we will prove them wrong again over the elections.

Our Independent Electoral Commission is working with the United Nations and our security forces to make these elections a reality. In 15 out of our 18 Iraqi provinces, we could hold elections tomorrow. Although this is not what we see in your media, it is a fact.

Your government, our government, and the United Nations are all helping us mobilize the necessary resources to fund voter registration and information programs. We will establish up to 30,000 polling sites, 130,000 election workers, and all other complex aspects of mounting a general election in a nation of 27 million before the end of January next.

We already know that terrorist and former regime elements will do all they can to disrupt these elections. There would be no greater success for the terrorists if we delay, and no greater blow when the elections take place, as they will, on schedule.

The Iraqi elections may not be perfect. They may not be the best elections that Iraq will ever hold. They will, no doubt, be an excuse for violence from those that despise liberty, as were the first elections in Sierra Leone, South Africa, or Indonesia. But they will take place, and they will be free and fair. And though they won't be the end of the journey towards democracy, they will be a giant step forward in Iraq's political evolution. They will pave the way for a government that reflects the world and has the confidence of the Iraqi people.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is our strategy for moving Iraq steadily towards security and democracy and the prosperity our people crave. But Iraq cannot accomplish this alone. The resolve and will of the Coalition in supporting a free Iraq is vital to our success.

The Iraqi government needs the help of the international community, the help of countries that not only believe in the Iraqi people, but also believe in the fight for freedom against tyranny and terrorism everywhere.

Already, Iraq has many partners. The transition in Iraq from brutal dictatorship to freedom and democracy is not only an Iraqi endeavor, it is an international one. More than 30 countries are represented in Iraq with troops on the ground in harm's way. We Iraqis are grateful for each and every one of these courageous men and women.

United Nations Resolution 1546, passed in June 2004, endorsed the Iraqi interim government and pledged international support for Iraq's upcoming elections.

The G8, the European Union, and NATO have also issued formal statements of support. NATO is now helping with one of Iraq's most urgent needs, the training of Iraqi security forces. I

am delighted by the new agreement to step up the pace and scope of this training.

The United Nations has reestablished its mission in Iraq. A new United Nations special representative has been appointed and a team of United Nations personnel is now operating in Baghdad. Many more nations have committed to Iraq's future in the form of economic aid.

We Iraqis are aware how international this effort truly is. But our opponents, the terrorists, also understand all too well that this is an international effort. And that is why they have targeted members of the Coalition.

I know the pain this causes. I know it is difficult, but the Coalition must stand firm. When governments negotiate with terrorists, everyone in the free world suffers. When political leaders sound the sirens of defeatism in the face of terrorism, it only encourages more violence. Working together, we will defeat the killers and will do this by refusing to bargain about our most fundamental principles.

Ladies and gentlemen, goodwill aside, I know that many observers around the world honestly wonder if we in Iraq really can restore our economy, be good neighbors, guarantee the democratic rule of law, and overcome the enemies who seek to tear us down.

I understand why, faced with the daily headlines, there are these doubts. I know, too, that there will be many more setbacks and obstacles to overcome. But these doubters underestimate our country, and they risk fueling the hopes of the terrorists.

Despite our problems, despite our recent history, no one should doubt that Iraq is a country of tremendous human resources and natural resources. Iraq is still a nation with an inspiring cultural tradition and an educated and civilized people. And Iraq is still a land made strong by its Islamic faith which teaches us tolerance, love, respect, and duty.

Above all, they risk underestimating the courage and determination of the Iraqi people to embrace democracy, peace and freedom, for the dreams of our families are the same as the dreams of families here in America and around the world.

There are those who want to divide our world. I appeal to you, who have done so much already to help us, to ensure they do not succeed. Do not allow them to say to Iraqis, to Arabs, to Muslims that we have only two models of government, brutal dictatorship or religious extremism. This is wrong.

Like Americans, we Iraqis want to enjoy the fruits of liberty. Half of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims already enjoy democratically elected governments. As Prime Minister Blair said to you last year when he stood here, "Any where, any time ordinary people are given the chance to choose, the choice is the same: freedom, not tyranny; democracy, not dictatorship; and the rule of law, not the rule of the secret police."

Do not let them convince others that the values of freedom, of tolerance and democracy are for you in the West but not for us. For the first time in our history, the Iraqi people can look forward to controlling our own destiny. This would not have been possible without the help and sacrifice of this country and its Coalition partners.

I thank you again from the bottom of my heart. And let me tell you as we meet our greatest challenge by building a democratic future, we the people of new Iraq will remember those who have stood by us.

As generous as you have been, we will stand with you, too. As stalwart as you have been, we will stand with you too. Neither tyranny nor terrorism has a place in our region or our world. And that is why we Iraqis will stand by you, America, in a war larger than either of our two nations: the global battle to live in freedom.

God bless you and thank you.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 10 o'clock and 39 minutes a.m., His Excellency Ayad Allawi, Interim Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The members of the President's Cabinet;

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess until approximately 11:15 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHAW) at 11 o'clock and 15 minutes a.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.