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Bremer Congratulates Iraq's Newest Police Academy Graduates

Calls police force "the line between civilization and barbarism"



New members of Iraq's Police Service attend a graduation ceremony, April 1, 2004, in Baghdad. (©AP/WWP)

The first graduates of Iraq's police academy received praise and appreciation from Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator Paul Bremer at April 1 commencement ceremonies in Baghdad.

"While lesser men kill the innocent, you, the men and women of the Iraqi police, have chosen to protect the innocent. While lesser men complain of violence, you have chosen to confront it. While lesser men ask for a better future, you have chosen to help create one," Bremer told the newest members of Iraq's police force.

Bremer contrasted the police officers with those responsible for recent acts of violence, saying, "You and your colleagues are the visible answer to the shameful barbarians of Fallujah and Karbala and Najaf and

Baghdad. You follow the finest traditions of all humanity as you take up the task of protecting the innocent."

The police academy provides an eight-week training course followed by a 24-week period of field training for new recruits. Bremer noted that more than 1,000 men and women are currently in training and that the police force will grow to 25,000 by next year.

He said that the United States has budgeted nearly \$1 billion to train and equip the Iraqi police force.

Bremer highlighted the respect and confidence that Iraqi citizens place in the police force and said, "In years to come, when Iraq's future of hope has been achieved, when old men speak of the days following liberation from Saddam's tyranny, they will speak of your bravery, your sacrifice and your accomplishments."

Following is the text of Ambassador Bremer's remarks:

L. Paul Bremer
Administrator
Coalition Provisional Authority
Police Academy Commencement
Baghdad
April 1, 2004

The men and women before me are the line between civilization and barbarism.

Civilization started here, in what is now Iraq. It was here that humans first stopped wandering from place to place in search of food, began to cultivate crops and formulated the rules necessary to dignify life.

Eventually the rules devised for bringing decency to human existence had to be codified. And that too first happened here, the place where Hammurabi created the world's first known legal code.

Legal codes have changed over the centuries. But some things have not changed since the time of Hammurabi. There have always been and always will be criminals. And there have always been those who stand on the side of justice and human dignity.

Yesterday's events in Fallujah are a dramatic example of the ongoing struggle between human dignity and barbarism. Five brave soldiers were killed by an attack in their area. Then, two vehicles containing four Americans were attacked and their bodies subjected to barbarous maltreatment.

The acts we have seen were despicable and inexcusable. They violate the tenets of all religions, including Islam, as well as the foundations of civilized society. Their deaths will not go unpunished.

Our sympathy goes out to the families of all, civilian and military, Iraqi and Coalition, who have given their lives in the war to liberate Iraq and free it from terrorism. They have not died in vain.

These acts are also a crime under law and a crime against the future of Iraq. The Coalition, Americans and others, came here to help the people of Iraq. They came to help Iraq recover from decades of dictatorship, to help the people of Iraq gain the elections, democracy and freedom desired by the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people.

These murders are a painful outrage for us in the Coalition. But they will not derail the march to stability and democracy in Iraq. The cowards and ghouls who acted yesterday represent the worst of society. You before us represent the other, larger, better Iraq.

You, the finest of the honorable majority of Iraq's men and women, have chosen to confront the evil-doers, to carry the banner of civilization. You have put to shame the human jackals who defiled the streets of Fallujah, and the Ashoura murderers who besmirched the streets of Karbala and Baghdad with the blood of innocents.

Your efforts, and the efforts of the millions upon millions of decent Iraqis who support you, will make a difference.

* * *

You are the first graduates of this eight-week police training course in Iraq. You now begin a 24-week program of field training. And more of the finest men and women in Iraq will follow you. Over a thousand are in training right now.

By this time next year, the Coalition, using American funds, will have trained over 25,000 police, the largest police training program in history.

The taxpayers of the United States are providing almost \$19 billion dollars for the reconstruction of Iraq. Our top priority is improving Iraq's security forces. We are spending billions of dollars to create a new Iraqi army, to raise an effective Civil Defense Corps and to form a professional police service.

The United States will provide Iraq with almost \$1 billion for training and technical assistance to you, the Iraqi police. We will also spend over \$1.3 billion on courts, prisons, judicial protection and training and other activities related to the administration of justice and the rule of law.

You are the guardians of Iraq's future. We will stand with you after June 30 when an Iraqi government will become sovereign. Like you, we have shed our blood to construct a better, more just Iraq, an Iraq where all live in dignity. We will not walk away from our shared commitment to you and to justice.

The Coalition is here and will remain here to support you, to cooperate with you and ease your burden. After June 30, and for as long as necessary, the Coalition will continue to do what is necessary for Iraq to defend itself against murderers and terrorists.

Once again, the Land between the Two Rivers is the focal point of the clash between the forces of darkness and the light of civilization. You, the men and women of the Iraqi Police, have chosen the side of civilization.

You and your colleagues are the visible answer to the shameful barbarians of Fallujah and Karbala and

Najaf and Baghdad. You follow the finest traditions of all humanity as you take up the task of protecting the innocent.

While lesser men kill the innocent, you, the men and women of the Iraqi police, have chosen to protect the innocent.

While lesser men complain of violence, you have chosen to confront it.

While lesser men ask for a better future, you have chosen to help create one.

You already enjoy the respect and admiration of your fellow Iraqis. The polls make it clear that your fellow citizens place more confidence you, their police, than any other part of the government.

Ladies and gentlemen, in years to come, when Iraq's future of hope has been achieved, when old men speak of the days following liberation from Saddam's tyranny, they will speak of your bravery, your sacrifice and your accomplishments.

They will remember the times when the decent people of Iraq stood against the forces of evil.

They will be grateful to you for your service to your country.

I congratulate you and I am honored to stand here before you.

Mabruk al Iraq al Jadeed.
Aash al-Iraq!

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