



# The White House

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
June 9, 2004

## President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Discuss Iraq at G8 Summit

Remarks by the President and Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom in a Photo Opportunity  
Dunbar House  
Sea Island, Georgia

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President's Remarks

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8:50 A.M. EDT

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much for your steadfast leadership, your clear vision and your friendship.

Yesterday was an important day for the Iraqi people. The United Nations Security Council unanimously expressed the desire for Iraq to be free and peaceful, and I want to thank you for your leadership on that issue. It's really important for leaders to have allies that they can count on and rely on, and who's got good judgment -- and you do. Welcome to America.

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** Thanks. Well, thanks very much, Mr. President, and thank you for your help and support in getting the resolution through. It's been a really important time.

The crucial thing now is the people of Iraq know they've got the whole of the international community on side, for Iraq is a stable and democratic country. And the terrorists and the fanatics and the extremists who are trying to stop this democracy happening know they've got the whole of the world against them, and that's the key thing.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** A couple of questions. Tom.

Q Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, do you think you can translate this momentum from yesterday's vote into getting more debt relief for Iraq? And, also, what are you looking for now as a next step, in terms of NATO involvement in the process?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** We discussed NATO -- the NATO involvement over breakfast, and we believe NATO ought to be involved. We will work with our NATO friends to at least continue the role that now exists, and hopefully expand it somewhat. There is going to be some constraints, obviously. A lot of NATO countries are not in a position to commit any more troops -- we fully understand that. But I do think NATO ought to stay involved, and I think we have a good chance of getting that done.

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PRIME MINISTER BLAIR: I think that's right. And I think, also, the key next step in this is going to be for the new Iraqi government to sit down with a multi-national force and work out how, over time, the Iraqi capability for security can be established and built up. I mean, there is a capability that it is there at the moment, but we know that there are gaps in that capability. And we're there to help them and make sure that the Iraqis ultimately can take care of their own security, because that's, as the Iraqi prime minister has been saying, that's the key issue and that's the one they want to deal with.

Q I mean, given what's wrong in Iraq, as well as what's gone right -- do you see what I mean -- is there any way you think that what's happening in Iraq can be a model for the rest of the Middle East, particularly given the fact that countries like Saudi Arabia have declined to come here?

PRIME MINISTER BLAIR: Well, I think that -- the one thing that's interesting when you talk to the Iraqi prime minister and the new Iraqi government is that they do see the possibility of a democratic Iraq being a force for good in their region, as well as obviously being good for the people of Iraq.

I mean, I think this is a process of change, and we've got to help people manage it. And really what we're doing today is to say, look, sensible people sitting down and looking at the situation in the Middle East know that there needs to be a process of reform and change. Now, that's not for us to dictate to people, but it is for us to help them get there. And that's what this is about. And I think it's all part of the same picture, which is to say to people, the security challenge we face obviously has to be dealt with by security measures, but it's not just about security measures, it's not just about force -- it's also about political and democratic reform and it's about helping people to get to where they know, I think, really, that they need to be, that they need some help to get there.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Steve.

Q Mr. President, you're seeing the new President of Iraq today. What are you going to tell him? What do you want to hear from him? And how can he and the other leaders function properly in the atmosphere of violence there?

PRESIDENT BUSH: I'm going to tell him we're pulling for him and pulling for the people of Iraq, particularly those who have a deep desire to live in a free society. I'm going to thank him for having the courage to stand up and lead, and tell him that America will help him. I'm also going to tell him that when we say transfer full sovereignty, we mean transfer full sovereignty. He is the President of a sovereign nation and, therefore, he and the prime minister and the rest of the ministers must make decisions on -- wise decisions on behalf of the Iraqi people.

I'm looking forward to the meeting with the man. And in one of my conversations with him he thanked me for the sacrifices of coalition troops, for which I was most grateful. The American people need to know that there are people in Iraq who are deeply grateful for the fact that our sons and daughters have died for their freedom. And I'm sure the people of Great Britain want to hear that same message. I look forward to reminding him of what he told me in that phone call.

Final question -- we've got to get ready, I've got to go over -- I'm the host, so I've got to greet people. (Laughter.)

Q What do you both say to the men of violence in Iraq, who will probably want to take no notice of this resolution?

PRESIDENT BUSH: I will tell them that freedom will eventually prevail and that they are not going to drive us out of Iraq because of their random killing; that we will not be intimidated by their murderous ways.

END 8:56 A.M. EDT

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