

FACT SHEET: THE TRANSITION TO IRAQI SELF-GOVERNMENT

"The rise of a free and self-governing Iraq would deny terrorists a base of operation, discredit their narrow ideology, and give momentum to reformers across the region. This would be a decisive blow to terrorism at the heart of its power, and a victory for the security of America and the civilized world."

George W. Bush
May 24, 2004

Today's Presidential Action

- In a speech at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, President Bush reported to the Nation on our strategy in Iraq and the specific steps we are taking to achieve our goal. Our coalition has a clear goal, understood by all: To see the Iraqi people in charge of Iraq for the first time in generations. America's task in Iraq is not only to defeat an enemy, it is to give strength to a friend – a free, representative government that serves its people and fights on their behalf. And the sooner this goal is achieved, the sooner our job will be done.
- The President announced five steps in his plan to achieve freedom and democracy in Iraq. We will:
 1. hand over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government;
 2. help establish the stability and security in Iraq that democracy requires;
 3. continue rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure;
 4. encourage more international support; and
 5. move toward free, national elections that will bring forward new leaders empowered by the Iraqi people.

1. Handing Over Authority to a Sovereign Iraqi Government

- **On June 30, full sovereignty will be transferred to a government of Iraqi citizens.**
 - At that time, the Coalition Provisional Authority, led by Ambassador Paul Bremer, will cease to exist and will not be replaced.
 - Iraqis will govern their own affairs. The Iraqi Interim Government's primary responsibilities will be to run the day-to-day operations of Iraq's government and ministries, increase security, and prepare the country for national elections.
- **The New United States Embassy.** Ambassador John Negroponte will oversee the new embassy and ensure that all resources and efforts of the United States are mobilized to help Iraqis build security and democracy in their country.
 - Our embassy in Baghdad will have the same purpose as any other American embassy – to assure good relations with a sovereign nation.
 - The United States and other countries will continue to provide technical experts to help Iraq's ministries, but these ministries will report to Iraq's new Prime Minister.

- **The Iraqi Interim Government.** United Nations Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi has outlined a framework for an interim government.
 - The Brahimi framework calls for a President, two Vice Presidents, and a Prime Minister leading a Cabinet with 26 ministers who will oversee government departments, from health to justice to defense.
 - The President will serve as head of state and the Prime Minister will serve as chief executive.
 - This new government will be advised by a national council, which will be chosen by Iraqis representing their country's diversity.
 - The Iraqi Interim Government will operate under rules defined in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). The TAL provides a historic bill of rights for the Iraqi people and a roadmap to a permanent and elected government in 2005.

- **Many Functions of Government Have Already Been Transferred to Iraqis.** In preparation for sovereignty, many functions of government have already been transferred. Twelve government ministries are now under the control of Iraqis. In addition, many of Iraq's cities and towns now have elected town councils or city governments.

2. Establishing the Stability and Security in Iraq that Democracy Requires

- **Working with the Iraqis to Defeat Common Enemies.** Coalition forces and the Iraqi people have the same enemies – terrorists, illegal militia, and Saddam loyalists who stand between the Iraqi people and their future as a free nation. Working as allies, we will defend Iraq and defeat these enemies.

- After the transfer of sovereignty, United States and Coalition forces **will remain in Iraq** and will operate under American command as part of a multinational force authorized by the United Nations.
 - Our forces will remain under U.S. command and will have clear rules of engagement.
 - We will maintain our troop level at the current 138,000 as long as necessary. General Abizaid and other commanders in Iraq are constantly assessing the level of troops they need to fulfill their mission. If they need more troops, they will get more troops.
 - The tactics of our military will be flexible. Commanders on the ground will pay close attention to local conditions.

- **Iraqi Security Forces.** Iraq's military, police, and border forces have begun to take on broader responsibilities. Eventually, they must be the primary defenders of Iraqi security.
 - In Fallujah, we are making security a shared responsibility. Coalition commanders have worked with local leaders to create an all-Iraqi security force, which is now patrolling the city. We want Iraqi forces to gain experience and confidence in dealing with their country's enemies. We want the Iraqi people to know that we trust their growing capabilities – even as we help build them. At the same time, Fallujah must cease to be a sanctuary for the enemy, and those responsible for terrorism will be held to account.

- In the cities of Najaf, and Karbala, and Kufa, most of the violence has been incited by a young, radical cleric who commands an illegal militia. These enemies have been hiding behind an innocent civilian population, storing arms and ammunition in mosques, and launching attacks from holy shrines. Our soldiers have treated religious sites with respect, while systematically dismantling the illegal militia. We are also seeing Iraqis themselves take more responsibility for restoring order. In recent weeks, Iraqi forces have ejected elements of this militia from the governor's office in Najaf and cleared out a weapons cache from a large mosque in Kufa. Respected Shia leaders have called on the militia to withdraw from these towns, and ordinary Iraqis have marched in protest against the militants.
 - Iraq and its armed forces will be a principal partner in the Coalition. Iraqi forces will be under Iraqi civilian control and there will be an Iraqi national chain of command for their forces. We will build a strong partnership – mechanisms for coordination and consultation – with Iraqi institutions in order to support the Iraqi Interim Government's efforts to lead Iraq to elections early next year.
- In some cases, the early performance of Iraqi forces fell short. We have learned from these failures and have taken steps to correct them.
- Successful fighting units need a sense of cohesion – so we have lengthened and intensified training.
 - Successful units need to know they are fighting for the future of their own country, not an occupying power – so we are ensuring that Iraqi forces serve under an Iraqi chain of command.
 - Successful units need the best possible leadership – so we improved the vetting and training of Iraqi officers and senior enlisted soldiers.
- At the direction of President Bush, and with the support of Iraqi authorities, the United States is accelerating our program to help train Iraqis in the defense of their country.
- A new team of senior military officers is now assessing every unit in Iraq's security forces.
 - The President has directed this team to help oversee the training of a force of 260,000 Iraqi soldiers, police, and other security personnel.
 - Five Iraqi army battalions are now in the field, with another eight battalions to join them by July 1. The eventual goal is an Iraqi army with 27 battalions in the field, fully prepared to defend their country.

3. Continuing to Rebuild Iraq's Infrastructure

- **Significant Progress to Date.** The United States and its Coalition partners are committed to improving the quality of life for the Iraqi people and continuing to make investments in Iraq's key infrastructure and economy. The United States is dedicating more than \$20 billion to reconstruction and development projects in Iraq.
- The Coalition has helped refurbish more than 2,200 schools, 240 hospitals and 1,200 health clinics, repair bridges, upgrade the electrical grid, and modernize the communications system.
 - Oil production is now more than 2 million barrels a day, bringing revenues of nearly \$6 billion so far this year – which is being used to help the people of Iraq.
 - A new currency has been introduced, and Iraq's Governing Council approved a new law that opens the country to foreign investment for the first time.
 - A private economy is taking shape in Iraq. Stores have opened, satellite dishes and other quality-of-life goods are now available to the Iraqi people, and private businesses and services like Internet cafes that were once banned are now opening.

- **International Support.** Thanks in part to the efforts of former Secretary of State James Baker, many of Iraq's largest creditors have pledged to substantially reduce Iraqi debt incurred by the former regime. And at the urging of the Coalition, 37 countries, and the IMF and World Bank, have so far pledged \$13.5 billion in aid for Iraqi reconstruction.
- **A Modern Prison System.** A new Iraq will also need a humane, well supervised prison system. Under Saddam Hussein, prisons like Abu Ghraib were symbols of death and torture. That same prison became a symbol of disgraceful conduct by a few American troops who dishonored our country and disregarded our values. America will fund the construction of a modern, maximum security prison. When that prison is completed, detainees at Abu Ghraib will be relocated. Then, with the approval of the Iraqi government, we will demolish the Abu Ghraib prison, as a fitting symbol of Iraq's new beginning.
- **The Challenge of Rebuilding.** Over the decades of Saddam's rule, Iraq's infrastructure was allowed to crumble while money was diverted to palaces, wars, and weapons programs. We have made great strides, but there is still much work to do. Even after June 30, we will continue to work with Iraqi leaders to address problems related to Iraq's insufficient infrastructure.

4. International Support for a Free Iraq

- **Building Strong International Support.** Today, the United States and Great Britain presented a new resolution in the U.N. Security Council to help move Iraq toward self-government. The President has directed Secretary Powell to work with fellow members of the Council to:
 - endorse the timetable the Iraqis have adopted;
 - express international support for Iraq's interim government;
 - reaffirm the world's security commitment to the Iraqi people; and
 - encourage other U.N. members to join in the effort.
- The President will travel to the NATO Summit in Istanbul next month where he will thank our 15 NATO allies who together have more than 17,000 troops on the ground in Iraq.
 - Great Britain and Poland are each leading a multinational division that is securing important parts of the country. NATO is giving helpful intelligence, communications, and logistical support to the Polish-led division.
 - At the NATO Summit, the leaders will discuss NATO's role in helping Iraq build and secure its democracy.

5. Working for Free, National Elections by January 2005

- **U.N. Election Team.** A U.N. team is now in Iraq helping to form an Independent Election Commission that will oversee an orderly and accurate national election.
 - In that election, the Iraqi people will choose a Transitional National Assembly, the first freely elected, truly representative national governing body in Iraq's history.
 - This Assembly will serve as Iraq's legislature, and it will choose a Transitional Government with executive powers.
 - The Assembly will draft a new constitution, which will be presented to the Iraqi people in a national referendum scheduled for the fall of 2005.
 - Under this new constitution, Iraq will elect a permanent government by the end of 2005.

Completing the Transition

- **We Will Succeed.** Completing the five steps to Iraqi elected self-government will not be easy. There is likely to be violence before the transfer of sovereignty, and afterward.
 - The terrorists and Saddam loyalists would rather see many Iraqis die than have any live in freedom.
 - President Bush, our Coalition partners, and the Iraqi people will not allow terrorists to determine the future of Iraq. American troops are in Iraq to defend our security and make the Iraqi people free.
 - Our terrorist enemies seek to impose Taliban-like rule on all of the Middle East, training more killers and exporting more violence. They seek to shock, frighten, and demoralize the civilized world into failure and retreat. They will not succeed.

- **Securing America and the World.** We believe that freedom can advance and change lives in the Greater Middle East, as it advanced and changed lives in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. We believe that when all Middle Eastern peoples are finally allowed to live and think and work and worship as free men and women, they will reclaim the greatness of their own heritage. And when that day comes, the bitterness and burning hatreds that feed terrorism will fade and die away. America and the world will be safer when hope has returned to the Middle East.