



Remarks With Iraqi President Jalal Talabani

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Baghdad, Iraq
April 20, 2008

PRESIDENT TALABANI: (Via interpreter.) First of all, I want to start by thanking our guest and friend, Secretary Rice, for her visit. We started our meeting by thanking her for convincing our brothers from the Arabic Gulf Council to include (inaudible) in their conference tomorrow in Bahrain. And we gave her an update about Iraq and also, before me, Prime Minister Maliki gave her an update about what's happening in Iraq. And we told her that we are living the Iraqi political spring.

And then later on, if you have any questions, then later on, you can ask me.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you for welcoming me again here to Iraq. And I want to thank also Prime Minister Maliki for welcoming me earlier. It is indeed a moment of opportunity in Iraq thanks to the courageous decisions taken by the Prime Minister and a unified Iraqi leadership and, of course, the Iraqi security forces, which have fought very bravely in this recent operation. Much work remains to be done, Mr. President, as we have discussed, on the reconciliation -- the national reconciliation, on reconstruction and development for the Iraqi people so that they can feel the full benefit of a united Iraqi Government that is working together for their best intentions.

I look forward to going to Bahrain, where I will meet with the Gulf Cooperation Council: Egypt, Jordan and Iraq. Iraq is, of course, a very important Arab country, a founding member of the Arab League, and I look forward to engaging with Iraq and its Arab neighbors and then going on to the expanded neighbors meeting in Kuwait, where we will talk about regional issues.

So, thank you, again, Mr. President. I'm now going to go over to our Embassy and have a chance to thank some of the American civilian and military personnel. I hope you know that you have a good friend in America and thank you again for a great meal.

2008/T13-3

Released on April 20, 2008

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