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Baghdad, Iraq

April 24, 2006

*U.S. Ambassador to Iraq addresses a news conference after the Iraqi parliament session in Baghdad*

Today, I congratulate the Iraqi Assembly for electing their top leaders for a national unity government. Of course, I congratulate President Talabani and the other elected leaders and wish Mr. Maliki success in his effort to put an effective government together. These democratically elected leaders have come

together to chart a common path forward. I congratulate the Iraqi leaders for working through their differences and forging important compromises. This process has been without precedent in Iraq's long history.

What happened today was a very important accomplishment. However, important challenges still lay ahead: building bridges of trust across ethnic and sectarian lines, defeating terrorists who promote sectarian conflict, establishing security and rule of law for all Iraqis, increasing prosperity and services, and fighting corruption. The diverse leadership elected today will give the government a strong foundation for progress. We urge the formation as quickly as possible of a cabinet comprised of competent ministers committed to building a better future for all Iraqis. The United States promises to work together with the new government to bring security and prosperity to Iraq. We call on all others in the international community to join us in this effort, for what happens in Iraq will shape the future of the world.

Thank you very much.

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