

## **Joint Press Availability With European Union Presidency Foreign Minister and President of the Council Jean Asselborn, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, European Union External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and European Union High Representative Javier Solana After the International Conference on Iraq**

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Brussels, Belgium

June 22, 2005

(11:15 a.m. EDT)

**MODERATOR:** Welcome to the press conference on the Iraq International Conference today. The floor today is composed of the EU Council President Jean Asselborn, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari. Also on the panel are the Secretary General and the High Representative Javier Solana as well as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner.



The floor is to the Presidency.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Okay. So the International Conference that took place today here in Brussels co-hosted, as you know, by the EU and the U.S. and organized at the request of the Iraqi authorities, provided a forum for the Iraqi Transitional Government to present its vision and priorities in the three areas of Resolution 1546, political/economic and rule of law/public order for the transition period leading up to elections toward the end of this year. With the participation of the Foreign Ministers and representatives of over 80 countries and international organizations, this conference is another strong expression of the support that the international community is lending to Iraq.

I am particularly delighted that as a further proof of our commitment in assisting Iraq, we were able to conclude our conference proceeding today's -- today with the adoption of a statement by all -- and I emphasize, by all -- the participants. We are determined to fully support Iraqi efforts to achieve a democratic, a federal, a pluralized and a unified Iraq. We also reaffirmed our commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. All participants emphasized the central role of the UN and

reiterated their support to the efforts that the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative for Iraq. Through its expertise and universal nature, the United Nations contribution will be crucial to this process. In our first working session this morning on the political process, co-chaired by Egypt and the UN, the constitutional process featured very prominently and here was -- here we recognized together with our Iraqi interlocutors the importance of an inclusive constitutional process based on national dialogue and nationwide consensus.

All Iraqis need to have a voice in determining the future of their country. The next few weeks will be particularly important in this respect in ensuring the timely drafting of a new constitution based on nationwide consensus. We welcome the fact that various political groupings are represented in the newly formed government. It is crucial that this process of inclusiveness and national dialogue is further continued and also strengthened. Efforts should be continued to reach out to all segments of Iraqi society and, namely, to all Iraqis willing to renounce violence in order to promote an inclusive political process as well as national reconciliation.

Our second working session, co-chaired by Japan and the European Commission, was devoted to economic reconstruction and the integration of Iraq in the world economy. We are also looking forward to the meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund for Iraq in Amman, in Jordan on the 17th and 18th of July, where concrete commitments can be confirmed officially.

Concerning our third working session on the rule of law and public order, co-chaired by the U.S. and the EU High Representative, I would like, first of all, to reiterate our strongest condemnation of all violence directed against innocent civilians and aimed at disrupting the democratic political process.

As you are aware, apart from continued new financial and humanitarian assistance to Iraq, further support will be given to the political and constitutional process as well as to the training of judges, of police, of prison officers under the auspices of an Integrated EU Rule of Law Mission. You know it. It's EUJUST LEX. Other regional and multilateral partners, including NATO in the framework of its training mission, will also endeavor to assist the building up of Iraqi security capabilities. We welcome all these efforts. The international community is committed to build a new Iraq with stability, with democracy, with human rights and constructive relations with its neighbors. The EU stands ready to take up these challenges shoulder to shoulder with Iraq in a spirit of partnership. Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** The floor is to Secretary General Kofi Annan.

**SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN:** Thank you very much. Today I believe that Iraq and the international community have turned a page together. A sovereign elected Iraqi Government has presented the international community with a comprehensive view of Iraqi's future, its vision. In response, I believe we have all jointly declared that we will

work with Iraq to help meet the priorities and the expectations of the Iraqi people.

In short, we have promised to each other to be full partners in the emergence of a new Iraq. In that partnership, the United Nations is acutely conscious of its responsibilities. We are determined to help the Iraqis fashion a truly inclusive process, one which makes a real difference on the ground and convinces all Iraqis that they have a stake in the new Iraq.

That is why United Nations personnel today are working hard in Iraq, both inside and outside Iraq, carrying out the mandate given to us by the Security Council. We are assisting in constitution making, coordinating humanitarian and development aid and supporting institution building. We will continue that work and we will continue to expand it as much as we can. So I hope that all Iraqis take heart from today's conference. The people of Iraq have plenty of friends and we are determined not to let them down. Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Secretary of State Rice.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. I would like to thank the European Union for its co-sponsorship of this conference and, of course, Secretary General Annan for his work here and especially to the Iraqi delegation. We heard a vision for the future from the Iraqi Government, the elected Iraqi Government, from its ministers, from members of its opposition, which demonstrates that this is an Iraq that is, indeed, well on its way to democracy. We heard of a vision of an Iraq based on the rule of law where human rights and individual rights are secured, an inclusive Iraq in which all Iraqis, whatever their ethnic or religious backgrounds, can be represented and can feel a part.

And we heard a devotion to a process that began with the return of sovereignty to the Iraqi people less than a year ago. And it's important to emphasize that return of sovereignty was less than a year ago. And Iraq has since then, I think, exceeded expectations as it has gone from the formation of an interim government to the elections that were held in January, elections that inspired everyone as the Iraqi people faced down terrorism to exercise their right to vote. That election then gave way to the formation of an inclusive government, which is now in the process of overseeing the writing of a constitution, which will lead then to elections in December.

We heard a very positive vision for Iraq's future. We heard from the Iraqi Government what the international community needs to do in support of that vision. I want to underscore what Secretary General Annan has said. This is a new chapter for the international community and for Iraq as we lay the foundation today for a new international partnership for the people of Iraq on their journey toward democracy.

We heard about the importance of training and equipping of security forces, about the need for technical assistance in rule of law, the building of a judiciary, the building of

public order. We heard about the needs of economic reconstruction and about the special responsibilities of Iraq's neighbors to make certain that those who would try and destroy the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people cannot operate on the territory of neighbors, but rather that those neighbors will accept and welcome the new Iraq into the region.

This is certain to be an Iraq that, unlike the Iraq of Saddam Hussein, is a stabilizing force for the region. And we look forward to that future.

The United States, the European Union, the Iraqis and others have taken this opportunity to present this case because with the daily pictures from Iraq of the headline-grabbing activities of evil people who with a suicide bomb or a car bomb or some way of killing innocents, can always demonstrate that they are determined.

We heard, today, that there are some who are even more determined and that is the Iraqi people and their freely elected government. They are determined to face down those who would destroy their hopes. They are determined to carry out a political process that will lead to a free and democratic Iraq. And we believe that the region, and indeed the world, will be more secure when that day is realized. It is that reason that the international community today strongly demonstrated its support and friendship and solidarity with the Iraqi people. Thank you very much.

**MODERATOR:** Foreign Minister Zebari.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** Thank you. Today was a good day for Iraq. It was a successful day for Iraq and good news for the people of Iraq to see that the international community is coming together to stand by the process they are trying to initiate to build freedom and democracy through democratic processes. And myself and member of the Iraqi delegations are very pleased.

We want to extend our thanks to the EU for helping to organize this, to the United States Government for assisting in providing this platform for my government, in fact, to come and speak to you, to lay out our vision, our views about the future, to underline the priorities that is most needed in the three areas that the conference covered: political, economic, and security. We think this was a successful day for Iraq. In fact, we have many challenges, but when we see this international solidarity, even we get more encouraged, in fact, to move with more determination to achieve our goals.

The differences over the war, I think, are behind now. We are all looking forward to the future. Now, we have 80 countries attended this conference, agreed on a final communiqué that expressed the free will of all these countries. Also, we have the United Nations Secretary General, who has been very supportive and his team should now be on the ground. We are all in a partnership in trying to move forward together.

We are very confident that the Iraqi people will make it proudly. We have, here in our

delegation, not only the government side; in fact, we have the three branches. We have the judicial, we have the executive and we have also the legislature. We have the heads of all the national assembly committees who are addressing some of the key issues of legislation for the future.

We are making progress, in fact, in our constitutional commission and its representation. We have proven -- not only to you, but to our people -- that we are for inclusiveness. This country belongs to all. Nobody wants to marginalize any group or any sections of Iraq. And we are making progress. This is maybe not noticed by the media, but we feel it. We have a real democratic process ongoing.

And so far, we have made each and every commitment we have made to the international community and we will make. Also, the writing of the constitution. We will hold the next elections for the people to elect their own government. And again, I'd like to express our thanks again.

And also we mentioned, in fact, during the conference, our concerns about the attitudes about the actions of our neighbors. We are extremely uncomfortable by some of the intervention, by some of the facilitations is giving to these extremist groups or terrorist groups, not -- I mean, not as a state policy but we feel really some of our neighbors have not been helpful enough to help us in the security field. And they were all here today in the conference and they heard our message loud and clear.

And we hope that there will be, after today's conference, a new page and these countries will really will provide more assistance, they will be more constructive, they will provide more assistance in the security and other areas that we need.

Thank you again. Thank you very much.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Just one sentence from my side. You said today is a good day for Iraq and I believe you. But I want to thank in my personal name, because it's the last time that I will be as representative of the Presidency before the international press, but here you can see also that politics is sometimes a very, very tough and cold job. I want to warmly -- really warmly -- thank Condoleezza Rice, on one side for the organization of this conference; and also, on my left side, Hoshyar Zebari, who is now a friend; and also Mr. Kofi Annan, for all his help. And I want -- I don't forget Javier Solana and Benita Ferrero-Waldner. We have done a very big job and this is -- I think we have done a very big job on this point because the 22nd of February we had been in this same room and we say we will make this conference, Iraq conference. It was not so evident. A lot of work had to be done and our diplomats from all the sides in the world worked very, very hard to prepare this draft that we could accept with unanimity. And so I am very proud. I think I can say it, I'm really very proud that this point was a very, very important point to renounce (sic) transatlantic relationship, the international role of Europe and even at this time where not everything is very good in Europe, but to have been able to have this result today that's another result as the result of last Friday, but I think we

today we proved that Europe is there and that Europe can function.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you very much. We'll take a couple of questions. As usual, please indicate your name and your media outlet before asking a question. I'll start here on the left, then I'll do the round of the room. AFP, I think.

**QUESTION:** Peter Mackler, Agence-France Presse.

Gentlemen and ladies, obviously, there's been a lot of words of support for Iraq, but one of the most concrete areas we're looking for support, or they are, is in the area of debt relief. Since the Paris Club meeting about seven months ago, we have not seen any progress on that front, particularly from countries like Saudi Arabia or Kuwait.

Can you please tell us, have you made any progress on that issue? And what do you think about the attitude of countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, who have yet to be forthcoming on this?

**FOREIGN MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Do you want to answer or --

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** Well, both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were present at the conference and they supported and endorsed the statement, the final statement. And also, our relations with both governments are good and very positive. We have a continuous dialogue with them. And soon we are planning to reestablish our full diplomatic relationship between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait that has been cut off since the invasion of Kuwait.

On the debt relief, in fact, we have raised those issues with them directly that we need, at least to consider some arrangements comparable to the Paris debt relief arrangement, Paris Club debt relief arrangements. We are getting some positive responses from them but maybe we need to further discuss these issues of reparations. And we recently, at the UN compensations meeting, really, they have agreed to drop this reparations for environmental reparations as a result of the Gulf War of nearly \$49 billion, for instance it's coming from all neighbors, but primarily from Saudi Arabia, from Kuwait.

So these are very good signs. I think they will be supportive.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Just one sentence from the European side. Like in the Middle East peace process in Palestine, we encourage -- really, that's diplomatic language but it is very clear -- we encourage all the countries of the neighborhood to be a little bit more, let's say, generous. And on the same line, we see Iraq, I think, that the neighbors countries have to play a very important role in this matter. I know that the Luxembourg's Presidency has nothing more to do with budget, with financial perspectives, but where we -- I think that we have to give a little push to the neighbor countries of Iraq to make an effort in that sense.

**SECRETARY RICE:** And we will also encourage states to be generous, as the Paris Club agreement was. And after all, there is a debt sustainability study that I think more than justifies a substantial and generous downgrading of -- or restructuring our forgiveness of the Iraqi debt.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you. The gentleman here in the third row.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) LBC.

Secretary of State, you have mentioned today Syria is one of the neighboring countries you are sending a message to cooperate on the issue of terrorism. Did you have any evidence that Syria is supporting terrorism? And what about the dialogue the United States have established at some stage with Damascus to get somewhere?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, on the first issue, we have forces that are near that border. We know what's coming across that border and that border is a real problem for the Iraqi people. And I think you've heard that also from the Iraqi Government and from the Iraqi Defense Minister. And so something needs to be done about that.

Now, we have had numerous interactions with the Syrian Government about a number of concerns, going all the way back to Secretary Powell's visit to Damascus a couple of years ago. Rich Armitage was there. The Syrian Government knows what it needs to do and I would just make a broader point, which is that I would hope that the Syrian Government would decide to associate itself with the progress that is being made in the Middle East, rather than being a place that appears to be resistant to that progress.

Whether you are talking about the situation in Lebanon, where, while transparent Syrian forces have been withdrawn, there continues to be instability in Lebanon that has led to the assassination of now, at least three figures of the opposition. And we are concerned that there could be others and we call upon the Syrian Government to do everything that it can to deal with the instability that it is helping to create there.

Secondly, that out of Damascus there operate a number of Palestinian rejectionist groups, Palestinian Islamic Jihad for instance, which has decided to be outside of the consensus that Mahmoud Abbas is trying to arrange so that there can be calm in the Palestinian territories, so that they can make progress with Israel.

But most importantly, in the context of today's conference, it is really the responsibility of all of Iraq's neighbors to do everything they can, actively, to resist and to frustrate the efforts of those who are trying to destroy the progress that is being made in Iraq. And I mean, not just what is happening to coalition forces, but of course that is -- people are undertaking violent acts against coalition forces. But when you have violent acts also against Iraqi children who are standing at school or Iraqi patriots who are joining the police forces or the army and they're standing in line, Iraqi intellectuals, ordinary Iraqis along the street -- it's time for Iraq's neighbors and especially Syria to live up to its

responsibilities.

**QUESTION:** Marie-Louise Moller from Reuters. Madame Secretary, you say that your forces is very well aware of what's coming across that border. How confident are you that the Syrians will take steps to seal off the border? And what steps will Washington take if no action is taken by Syria on this point?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we have, as I said, communicated before to the Syrian Government directly and I think a number of other states have communicated to the Syrians that we would expect a better response to the situation on that border.

I never speculate about what steps might be taken. I think that's the preserve of the President to decide what it is that he will do. But I just want, again, to emphasize that Syria has a responsibility; it has a responsibility to the international community, it has responsibility to its neighbors not to allow its territory to be used for the gathering of people who are wreaking havoc and causing harm against innocent Iraqis.

Of course, we have already taken some actions under the Syrian Accountability Act, which is a tool given to us by the Congress. And there remain activities that we are -- there remain actions that we could take under that act. But of course, I'm not going to speculate on when or why we might do that.

**QUESTION:** Barbara Slavin of *USA Today*.

Madame Secretary, while we sit here in air-conditioned comfort, the committee that is supposed to be writing the constitution for Iraq apparently has postponed its meetings because of a shortage of water and electricity. I ask you, and also Minister Zebari, wouldn't the money spent on this conference have been better used helping the Iraqis on reconstruction?

And Madame Secretary, Iran sent its Foreign Minister. I understand you did not meet with him. Given Iran's importance in Iraq, why did you not meet with him?

Thank you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** It is true I did not meet with him. As you probably know, we don't have relations with Iran, but the Iraqis do. The Iraqis have relations with their Iranian neighbor and we think that that is a good thing. We have every desire for there to be good relations between Iraq and all of its neighbors, including with Iran.

As to the situation with infrastructure and services for Iraq, the United States, of course, has devoted \$18.6 billion to reconstruction in Iraq, a good bit of that to water projects, to electricity. I think it's awfully important to step back and recognize that under Saddam Hussein this Iraqi infrastructure was seriously deteriorated. I don't think anybody really

knew the extent to which the infrastructure had deteriorated under the regime of Saddam Hussein. I have read estimates that, for instance, the country had only about 50 percent of the generating power that it actually needed for electricity for the whole country.

So these things are not going to be accomplished in a day. It takes time. Part of what we are trying to do here is to establish with the Iraqi Government further priorities. There is already a lot of work that has gone on on electricity, a lot of work that has gone on on water, from us, from the European Union, from other states. And I would hope that this conference would spur even further development in that way when we meet in Amman for the reconstruction conference.

So let us not be misled that this is the first time that Iraq infrastructure has been an issue. I repeat, the American people -- in grant aid, not in loans, in grant aid -- has devoted over \$18 billion to Iraq's reconstruction and security.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** I just would like to say that the head of the Constitutional Commission is here with us. Maybe that's why he was unable to take part in a meeting in Baghdad. (Laughter.) But honestly, I haven't -- I'm not aware -- you say that -- The meetings are continuous; I mean, they have not stopped. And whatever you heard, that report you better double-check. You see these meetings are ongoing. There are a number of sub-, you know, committees that deals with different aspects of the constitution writing. So he's here. He's a living proof. You see that. (Laughter.)

**MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Just to say, Madame, even in Europe the constitution -- (laughter) -- is going on. And I told my friend Hoshiyar if you have problems the 15th of October with your constitution, you can come to Luxembourg and we will show you -- or another country in Europe -- how to do it. (Laughter.)

**MODERATOR:** So we have one question --

**SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN:** I was going to say something. No, no, no, I wasn't -- I was really going to tease you to say that since we came here, I have noticed that you've all been absorbed by recent events in Europe. If it is any reassurance, let me assure our EU friends that there are many regions that would love to have your problems. (Laughter.)

**MINISTER ASSELBORN:** So I take the floor now. Two more questions. One from Iraq and one from the right side. Okay, Iraq. Iraq. A journalist from Iraq.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) journalist from Iraq. I would like to raise a question for ladies and gentlemen. You said that there is a good news for Iraqi people that's about the, what is happening now in the conference in Brussels. I would like to say that our concern as Iraqis about the writing the constitution, that the constitution should be inclusive for all -- include for all Iraqi people. And this is the process, which should be, you know, to include not only the official or the political parties but also the civil societies. And the time is for --

it is too shortage. For two months we are going to write a constitution. What do you think? Are you sure that the writing of the constitution in two months will be, you know, really cover the aspiration of our Iraqi people? I doubt about this, and I would like to raise this issue for you as United Nations and the U.S. and all European parliament about this issue, to take it into consideration for the benefit of all Iraqis. Thank you.

**MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Thank you. Just one sentence and then I will give the floor to Hoshiyar and also to Kofi Annan, if he wants.

We have a constitution in Europe that took not only two months to build but two years in a convent, and then we even had problems. So it's not the length of time you need to have good work, but it is the substance. So, and it is also how you are able to transmit it to the public opinion.

Now, it's up to you to answer, a new constitution.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** I agree that the process really needs to be inclusive, and this is what the Constitutional Commission is doing right now. You see reaching out to all communities. The UN also; they have established an office to support the constitutional process; and we are getting many offers, in fact, to help us in this. So I agree. I mean, I don't disagree with you.

But as for the timetable, it's very important for us, for our credibility, for the credibility of the Iraqi Government really to meet this deadline, this timetable. It's very important.

We are making really some miracles. We, the Iraqis. Just imagine, in one year you will be having free elections. You know, we had one in January. We'll have another referendum, another one in December. So with the international help and support, we think we can meet it. It's not easy. It's a challenge. But I think the Constitutional Commission that now is working and functioning is confident that it is doable.

Thank you.

**SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN:** Thank you very much. I think the lady is quite right, that in writing the constitution one should try and have as wide a consultation as possible and it should be as inclusive as possible; and that has been our approach since we undertook to assist the government in the constitution writing.

My own Special Representative has been very active trying to facilitate and work with the government. Obviously, there has to be a major effort in public education and reaching out, public outreach, to make sure that the population and the people understand what is going on and what the key issues are.

There will be a referendum, but that is not -- that should not be the only point of

consultation with the people because you're going to have a rather thick document which the people may not understand. And so in our efforts with the government we do have a program of public outreach engagement. I'm sure the government is going to do the same.

We are not only assisting the government, but we are also coordinating the international support to the process and we have quite a bit of -- quite a few offers from other governments and regions to assist. The process obviously is an Iraqi process, it's Iraqi-owned, and we will offer advice and facilitate. But I take the point and I'm sure the Iraqi Ministers who are here have also heard you that the outreach to the civil society and the population is equally important, and we will work with them in public outreach.

Thank you.

**MINISTER ASSELBORN:** Thank you. So you will have the last word, on the right side.

**QUESTION:** Thank you very much. A question. My name is Françoise (inaudible) from *The Forum*. A question to Mr. Kofi Annan, and also to Mr. Zebari.

Mr. Secretary General, in March 2003 a French cameraman called Frédéric Nérac disappeared in Iraq. He was not taken hostage. It would seem that he was taken under heavy shootings by Coalition forces. Today, two and a half years later, his wife and his two children still don't know whether their father and their husband is dead or alive. It seems that the affair has remained very discreet.

Mr. Secretary General and Mr. Zebari, do you think that this affair is normal, and could you not please open the way for a formal and proper inquiry so that the truth comes out and that the family knows what has happened?

Thank you very much.

**SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN:** Let me say that, I as Secretary General of my organization, we have never condoned any kidnapping or any attempt to harm innocent civilians. We have condemned terrorism and attacks on non-combatants and civilians. And we do condemn all kidnappings, whether it's for ransom or political pressure. And I don't have the details of the case you have raised, but I would not say that it is normal. And obviously, whatever can be done to either assure his release or get to the facts should be done. But none of us on this table, I think, will consider the situation you've described as normal. Recently, there have been other hostages and other kidnappings --

**QUESTION:** (Off-mike).

**SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN:** Some -- he wasn't kidnapped?

**QUESTION:** He vanished. Vanished.

**SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN:** He was not a hostage, he was not kidnapped, he just vanished. I'm sorry I don't know enough about the details to answer your question. We're also talking about, more or less, a war zone, and I think what we need to do is try and find out as much about the case as we can. I don't have the details and I cannot say much more than I've said.

Thank you.

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** Yes. We're aware of the case of the French journalist Frédéric Nérac, and I have been approached by the French Government try to find out as much information as possible. This happened during the military operations, in 2003 in the south, as far as I could remember, during the advance of the coalition forces. And during those days, really, we as the Iraqi Government, had no influence over, not even in existence. We have pursued this case and we, even with the Coalition forces, to find out, at least, as much information as possible. But so far, really, I have no information on this case.

But it is true, we have been approached, we tried to pursue it, but I have no firsthand information to report back to you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** I would just -- of course, we have tried to find out whatever information there is. It was a war zone and we'll continue to try and pursue the case and to see what we can learn.

**MODERATOR:** And here so, the last question for the journalist from Iraq.

**QUESTION:** I'm sorry for my voice, and my question for the (inaudible) woman, the Secretary of United States.

Yes, everyone here, I think, know that this conference happened because of you, as I think. So the question is, this interaction between United States and European Union, how much does it cost Iraq? You are -- you became close from each other at this conference, you know? So what is there reserved for the Iraqi people? How they can touch it? How they can feel it? How can they feel that to you are really work for them?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you. And it is specifically that point that we are trying to address with this conference, that the Iraqi people and the entire world would know that the international community, represented here by the European Union, by the United States, by the United Nations, by the 80 countries that were in that room, that we have turned a page on whatever differences we might have had about the decision to liberate the people of Iraq from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein.

Now that that is behind us, what we see is an Iraqi Government that is freely elected, that now will write a constitution -- and here, I want to just to say that yes, it must be an inclusive process and a broad process of consultation --, that that Iraqi Government has come to the international community, and it has told us about their plans and their ambitions on behalf of the Iraqi people.

I hope that what the Iraqi people feel and can touch is that yes, there will be concrete aspects, concrete contributions from the international community as a result of this conference, and frankly, as a result of what is already going on in Iraq. There are already European Union projects. There are already projects from the region. There are already projects from many of the countries that were at the table.

But this will spur people to do more, and they will gather together again in Amman to talk about how specifically to meet certain needs. But I hope the Iraqi people will feel also that they have the support of the international community. We understand that the Iraqi people are courageously facing down terror and danger and violence every day; that it is hard in many parts of Iraq to go out of the house and to know whether or not you're going to be safe; that we know that there are those among the international community who are also sacrificing every day their blood so that Iraq can be free.

But I hope that the Iraqi people would feel that the international community is saying, "We admire and respect Iraq's courage. We believe in Iraq's future, and we are confident that the Iraqi people, as they have done over the last couple of years, are going to continue to exceed expectations and are going to build a free, democratic, inclusive Iraq in which all people, men and women, are fully represented."

**FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI:** Thank you very much.

**2005/T10-23**

Released on June 22, 2005