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President Bush Meets with President Barzani of Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq

The Oval Office

 [In Focus: Renewal in Iraq](#)

2:46 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT BUSH: It's my honor to welcome President Barzani of the Kurdistan regional government of Iraq to the Oval Office. He's a man of courage; he's a man who has stood up to a tyrant.

He wore this outfit because it wasn't all that long ago if he had worn this outfit and was captured by Saddam Hussein's thugs, he would have been killed for wearing it. He feels comfortable wearing it here because we're a free land, and he feels comfortable wearing it in his home country because Iraq is free.

We had a very good discussion. The President was very helpful on the current constitution. I assured him that America will stand with the people that desire a free and democratic Iraq. The President is -- has got a clear vision of the future of Iraq, one where different religions and different backgrounds -- people of different religions and backgrounds can live together in peace.



And so, Mr. President, welcome. It's an honor to have you here.

PRESIDENT BARZANI: (As translated.) Mr. President, allow me on behalf of the people of Kurdistan and myself to thank you, very much. We in Kurdistan, particularly, and also in Iraq, generally, we highly value the courage and bravery of your leadership. I hope that everybody would realize what the fact on the ground is about Iraq. It was a brave decision that you have made -- you have liberated a people from a dictatorial regime that has hurt a lot of the people.

At this time we express our condolences and we express our sympathy to the families of your brave men and women in uniform, those who have sacrificed their lives in order to make other people free and liberated. There is no doubt that if we step back from this and not be determined, be rest assured that the terrorists will come to the gates of you and us and they will fight us. Therefore, we have to

think about nothing else but victory. And I'm quite confident that with your leadership, with your support and support of the United States military and United States people, and also the -- heroes of the people of Iraq, in general, the people of Kurdistan, we will achieve success at the end.

For those who are anti-democratic and also those who are against the process, they are very limited; and those who are supportive of your leadership, supportive of democratic process, they are many, and they highly appreciate the sacrifices that have been made by the American people and the American army. There are also many in Iraq, in general, and also in Kurdistan, all of them are appreciative.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, sir. Thanks for coming.

END 2:50 P.M. EDT

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