



For Immediate Release
Office of the Vice President
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Remarks by Vice President Cheney and Kurdish Regional Government President Barzani After Meeting

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani's Private Office
Irbil, Iraq

12:46 P.M. (Local)

 [Photos](#)

PRESIDENT BARZANI: (As translated.) On behalf of the people of Kurdistan, I would like to welcome very warmly Mr. Vice President, Dick Cheney, the Vice President of the United States for a very helpful visit in Kurdistan region. Indeed, this is a historic day; it's a very historic day for our people. We, at this time very well -- this is a very important message for everybody. As far as we are concerned, this is another evidence for the confirmation of the support of the United States for Iraq, for the people of Iraq, and also for the support of the people of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan region, and another evidence of the support of the United States for the democracy process and building a free, federal, democratic Iraq.

We understand very well the importance of this visit. Indeed, I would like to reiterate our commitment that we will continue to play a positive role in order to build a new Iraq -- an Iraq with a foundation of a great federal, democratic, pluralistic, free Iraq.

I would like also, Mr. Vice President, to assure you that we have committed to the constitution of Iraq, and we will continue to be playing a positive role, to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. We will be part of the solution for all the efforts inside Iraq and out for the neighboring countries. We will also continue to be a factor for stability, a factor for peace and stability in all the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation for President Bush, for yourself, the people of the United States, and also the United States military, for the sacrifices that they have given, and also for the great decision that they have taken in order to liberate the people of Iraq from the dictatorial, tyrannical regime.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the families of the



victims, for all the sacrifices they have given. And we highly appreciate these sacrifices. I would also like to assure you that we will stay together, we will be with you in one trench, and without any hesitation or reservation, to fight terrorism and also to succeed in our efforts in the democratic process, and also in building a free and prosperous Iraq.

Once again, I would like to welcome you very warmly, and thank you very much for this visit.

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Let me thank President Barzani for his most gracious hospitality today, for welcoming me on my first visit to Iraqi Kurdistan. It's a visit that's long overdue.

Just about 17 years ago this month, when I was Secretary of Defense, the United States launched Operation Provide Comfort, to save hundreds of thousands of Kurdish men, women and children under threat from Saddam Hussein's regime after the Gulf War.

That operation, of course, followed just by three years the nightmare of Saddam Hussein's brutal campaign against Iraqi Kurds, including the use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians at Halabja.

Provide Comfort was an extraordinary mission that led to the establishment of the American "no fly zone" over Northern Iraq. It also led to the establishment of a very special friendship between the United States and the people of Iraqi Kurdistan. The results have been quite remarkable for all to see, in terms of the development and the prosperity of this part of Iraq. The transformation that has occurred in less than two decades sets an extraordinary example, I believe, for the rest of Iraq and for what is possible, with patience and resolve, when the United States and the people of Iraq join together in a common effort and strategic partnership.



President Barzani and I, and his associates, have been talking today about the overall situation in Iraq, as well as what's happening here in Iraqi Kurdistan. We are certainly counting on President Barzani's leadership to help us conclude a new strategic relationship between the United States and Iraq, as well as to pass crucial pieces of national legislation in the months ahead.

We think it's important to lay the foundation for the kind of relationship that will bind our people together for the future as we build on the experiences and shared sacrifice that we've been -- that we've worked on together in the past.

So, Mr. President, let me thank you once again for your hospitality, and say that I look forward to having the opportunity to return the same when you visit Washington in the near future.

END 12:56 P.M. (Local)

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