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Coalition Provisional Authority Statement on Tuesday Terrorist Attacks

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MR. BREMER: General Sanchez and I have statements for the Iraqi people. First I offer my condolences and those of the coalition, to families of the dead, to the wounded and to their families. Indeed, civilized people the world over join you in outraged grief. Yesterday's terrorist attacks match any every perpetrated in their pure cynicism, in their pure evil. Their purpose was clear: incitement of sectarian violence among Iraq's Muslims.

In spite of the death toll, in spite of the wounded, as Iraqis from across the political spectrum have made clear in statements, the effort to provoke sectarian violence has failed and it will fail. The coalition and the United States government are committed to helping Iraq win this war against terrorism. We offer our complete support to the Iraqi people and to their security forces.

It is increasingly apparent that a large part of this terrorism comes from outside the country. And we are strengthening border protection to counter it. There are 8,000 border police on duty today and more are on the way. We are adding hundreds of vehicles and doubling border police staffing in selected areas. The United States has committed \$60 million to support border security. These are practical measures and they will have an effect.

But I want to take note of the contrast in the events on Monday and Tuesday. The Monday pre-dawn agreement on the transitional administrative law demonstrated what can happen when a broad range of Iraqis work and talk and reason together with the goal of achieving justice, harmony and progress. This is the path to a democratic Iraq. Tuesday showed us the dark vision of the evildoers. They fight to ward off harmony and are happy to pave the road to power with the corpses of their innocent victims. The terrorists are dead set against the vision of a democratic Iraq, a vision shared by an overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people. We know from the intercepted letter written by the terrorist Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi that he wants to provoke sectarian violence for the specific purpose of thwarting the movement towards democracy. Zarqawi wrote that democracy is coming to Iraq, and that once Iraq was democratic there would be no further pretext for attacks. Zarqawi and like-minded terrorists are in a losing race against time. They will lose because they have not thwarted the desire of the Iraqi people for democracy. They will lose because they have underestimated the resilience of the Iraqi people. And they will lose because they have underestimated the willingness of the coalition to support the Iraqi people.

After the mourning period is over, the transitional administrative law with the region's broadest guarantees of individual liberties will be signed. On June 30th the coalition will hand over sovereignty to the Iraqi people.

Next year there will be three elections ending in a directly elected sovereign Iraqi government. The war against terrorism is not over. But I am certain that democracy and harmony will triumph over the evil-doers.

General Sanchez.

GEN. SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Let me also express my condolences and the condolences of the entire coalition military force to the families of those killed and injured in the barbaric attacks yesterday in Karbala and here in Baghdad. There is absolutely no justification for these brutal attacks on innocent civilians who were merely practicing their faith.

The terrorists will not succeed. With each attack, the resolve of the Iraqi people and the coalition, it only grows stronger. With each attack, more and more Iraqis commit themselves to protect their country. Today more than 200,000 Iraqis are serving in the security forces, and that number continues to grow every day. More than 130,000 coalition troops stand side by side with the Iraqi security forces in a partnership to provide security for this country.

Make no mistake, we will continue our offensive operations to kill or capture those responsible for these atrocities. We will work alongside our Iraqi partners every day until this mission is complete. Together we know that we can provide the security for a free, democratic and sovereign country. This is our mission and we will not walk away from it.

Thank you.

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