

In our meetings with the new Iraqi government, I was struck by how much courage these new leaders must have. As I mentioned, we had extensive discussions with Prime Minister Allawi. This is a man who was nearly axed to death in his apartment in London in 1979 by one of Saddam's assassins. He awoke in time to move his head out of the way, but his leg was nearly cut off. He spent a year in the hospital. His wife suffered a nervous breakdown from which she never recovered. He is labeled by that terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as the number-one on his hit list. Prime Minister Allawi knows what it is to be number one on someone's hit list.

The new president, a man who is an Arab sheikh from the largest tribe. They call them tribes. We were talking about this at lunch, by the way. I think it may be better understood if you use the word "clans" as we vaguely think of them in Scotland. I'm no expert on Scotland. I think I know more about Iraq. But I think we're talking about basically clans – enormous, enormous ones, though. He's from the Shammar tribe. In fact, this is so big that there's a large branch up north which is Sunni Arab and a large branch in the south, which is Shia-Arab. He himself is one of the Sunnis. He became the rotating president of the previous Interim Governing Council when his predecessor was assassinated in a car bomb attack. Deputy Prime Minister, whom we met with, Barham Salih, a Kurd, narrowly escaped an attempt on his life two years ago when assassins went after him in northern Iraq. These men know the dangers they're facing and they continue to do so.

My current military assistant—and I'm privileged to have him—Brigadier General Frank Helmick, recently came back from seven months as assistant division commander of that distinguished 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. And he has a personal story about an Iraqi he knew very well. In fact, Frank worked with this man every day, in charge of tracking the daily distribution of fuel and oil for some 8 million Iraqis in the North. One day when General Helmick was on his way to their daily meeting, he was informed that his Iraqi colleague had been the victim of an attempted drive-by assassination and that he survived, but he was in the hospital. Frank went to visit him in the hospital and discovered that not only had he been wounded, much worse, his son had been killed. General Helmick told the man how sorry he was and this Iraqi replied, "General, yesterday you lost one of your soldiers. Today, I lost my son. This will make us more determined." We are lucky that so many Iraqis have that kind courage."

While much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done. And as difficult as it is to be patient, especially when American blood is being spilled, we must recognize that our enemy's one hope is for our impatience. Paradoxically, I believe, the more patience the enemy thinks we have, the sooner we will win. Their only hope is that they will somehow outlast us, that we will withdraw our support for the Iraqi people before they have the capacity to defend themselves and their new government.

The enemy hopes to outlast us, because they have so much to lose. Liberty for others not only comes at the cost of their own former license and privilege, but puts them at risk for the same fate that Saddam is encountering now. And for the foreign terrorists, including associates of Al Qaeda, the success of democracy in Iraq will be a major defeat.

Fighting on even after the capture of Saddam Hussein last December, the murderers and torturers of his regime, as well as their terrorist allies with their perverse ideology of evil, have been seeking through death and destruction to prevent the emergence of a new and free Iraq. In a remarkable letter that coalition forces intercepted in January, a letter from an al Qaeda-associated terrorist who you may have heard about—he's the most notorious one in Iraq today, a man named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was writing to his al Qaeda associates in Afghanistan where, by the way, he used to run a terrorist training camp before the liberation of that country. He wrote that the prospect of democracy in Iraq spells in his words "suffocation" for the terrorists, the prospect of Iraqis fighting in their own defense. "When the army and police are linked," Zarqawi says, "to the inhabitants of this area by kinship, blood and honor, how can we fight their cousins and their sons and under what pretext after the Americans pull back? Democracy is coming, and there will be no excuse thereafter."

And in this 10-page screed, he outlines his strategy of hoping that by killing Kurds and Americans and Iraqi police and, most of all, Shia Muslims to create enough chaos and civil war that he can prevent this specter of