

**From:** "O'Sullivan, Meghan"  
**To:** "Kavanaugh, Brett M.", "17324305", "West, Christal R.", "Weinstein, Jared B.", "Rove, Karl C.", "Hughes, Taylor A.", "Silverberg, Kristen", "Bennett, Jessica C.", "Patel, Neil S.", "Miers, Harriet", "Kelley, William K.", "Haenle, Paul T.", "Naranjo, Brian R.", <kr@georgewbush.com>, "Crouch, Jack D.", <TheBartletts@verizon.net>, "Bartlett, Dan", "Devenish, Nicolle", "Libby, Lewis", "Woelk, Christian J."  
**Subject:** RE: Fort Bragg #17 (and compare to 12)  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Jun 2005 18:12:23 -0500  
[FortBragg28June2005#17.doc](#)

All,

I will keep my comments to the bare bones, as I know the speech is near-final. Most of my comments in the text are factual corrections or indications of areas where I think the speech makes the President vulnerable. Below is some important justification:

1. No mention of the more than 30 countries in the Coalition who have stood with us all this time. This would be a major diplomatic faux pas and come at a time when we are urging all these countries to stay in Iraq.
2. Operational battalions. Last year we had 6; this year more than 100. Saying "twice as many" is a major undersell. It is Operation Lightning (not Thunder).
3. Sunni inclusion. Small change in language here as the plan to announce names to join the constitutional commission hit a snag today that may not be resolved by the speech.
4. Issue of why no more troops. I defer to others who may have heard our commanders make these points. To some, they seem to invite criticism – such as the idea that more troops would force us into a defensive posture.
5. Final plea for a clear statement that America has no interest in a long term presence in Iraq unless the Iraqis want it. This speech is a major opportunity to send messages to Sunnis sitting on the fence in Iraq. A clear statement to this effect would go a long distance toward assuring them of our intentions and would help the Iraqi government move Sunnis away from tacit or active support for the insurgency.

Meghan

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Kavanaugh, Brett M.  
**Sent:** Monday, June 27, 2005 3:32 PM  
**To:** 17324305; West, Christal R.; Weinstein, Jared B.; Rove, Karl C.; Hughes, Taylor A.; Silverberg, Kristen; Bennett, Jessica C.; Patel, Neil S.; Miers, Harriet; Kelley, William K.; Haenle, Paul T.; Naranjo, Brian R.; 'kr@georgewbush.com'; O'Sullivan, Meghan; Crouch, Jack D.; 'TheBartletts@verizon.net';

Bartlett, Dan; Devenish, Nicolle; Libby, Lewis; Woelk, Christian J.

**Subject:** Fort Bragg #17 (and compare to 12)

Remarks to the Troops at Fort Bragg, NC  
Tuesday, June 28, 2005  
Draft #17

Thank you and good evening. I am honored to visit Fort Bragg – “Home of the Airborne and Special Operations Forces.” I am honored to be with so many fine Americans who proudly wear our Nation’s uniform. The soldiers of Fort Bragg have contributed mightily to our efforts in the war on terror. And I want you to know: America is grateful for your service – and so is your Commander-in-Chief.

One year ago today, our Coalition gave Iraq back to its rightful owners – the Iraqi people. Five months ago, Iraqis voted in free elections. Two months ago they formed a democratic government whose forces are fighting alongside ours against a ruthless enemy. Tonight I have come here to report to you and to all Americans on the nature of the enemy we face in Iraq ... the situation on the ground ... and the military and political strategy we are pursuing for victory. Our Country is determined, the Iraqi people are committed, and our Coalition is united: We will make the world safer for our citizens and for future generations.

After our Nation was attacked on September 11, 2001, we made a decision that has guided us through every moment and every decision of this conflict: America will not wait to be attacked again. We will take the fight to the enemy.

As a result, the men and women of Fort Bragg have been on the frontlines. Times of war are times of great sacrifice, and that burden falls especially hard on our military families. To all our military families, I thank you for your service in the cause of freedom. In this war, we have lost good men and women who left our shores to defend freedom – and did not live to make the journey home. I have met with families grieving the loss of loved ones who were taken from us too soon. I have been inspired by their strength in the face of such great loss. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank you for your courage and sacrifice.

The work in Iraq is difficult and dangerous. Like most Americans, I see the images of violence and bloodshed. Every picture is horrifying – and the suffering is real. Amid all this violence, I know many Americans

may ask the question: Is the sacrifice worth it? I strongly believe it is. And tonight I will explain why the sacrifice is vital to the security of our citizens.

Many of the world's most ruthless killers are converging on Iraq to fight the advance of peace and freedom. Our military reports that we have killed or captured hundreds of foreign fighters in Iraq who have come from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya. Our intelligence shows that many of the suicide bombers wreaking havoc and murder in Iraq are from foreign countries. They are coming to Iraq, and making common cause with the remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime, because they know that the survival of their hateful ideology is at stake. They know that as freedom takes root in Iraq, it will inspire millions across the Middle East to claim their liberty as well. And when the Middle East grows in democracy, prosperity, and hope, the terrorists will lose their sponsors, lose their recruits, and lose their hopes for turning that region into a base for attacks on America and our allies around the world.

These vicious men have chosen Iraq as their battleground. Some wonder whether Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. Among the terrorists, there is no debate. Hear the words of Osama Bin Laden about Iraq: "This Third World War .... is raging in the land of the two rivers.... The whole world is watching this war." And he says it will end in "victory and glory – or misery and humiliation."

The terrorists know they will emerge from Iraq only one of two ways – emboldened or defeated. To avoid defeat, they are sowing death and destruction. And there is no limit to the innocent lives they are willing to take to achieve their aims.

We see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who exploded car bombs along a busy shopping street in Baghdad – including one outside a mosque. We see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who sent a suicide bomber inside a teaching hospital in Mosul, where he blew himself up in a room used by police guarding the facility. And we see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who sent a person in a wheelchair to blow up a polling station.

The terrorists have killed Iraqi civilians, Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition forces – and our hearts break with every life that is lost. Last

week Iraq's Prime Minister visited our wounded troops recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to thank them for their sacrifices. And he told me that for all the pain and suffering the terrorists have inflicted, it has not brought them any closer to achieving their strategic objectives.

The terrorists – both foreigners and Iraqis – failed to stop the transfer of sovereignty. They failed to break our Coalition and force a mass withdrawal by our allies. They failed to incite an Iraqi civil war. They failed to stop Iraqis from going to the polls and choosing their leaders in free elections. They failed to stop the formation of a democratic Iraqi government that represents Iraq's diverse population. And they failed to stop Iraqis from signing up in large numbers with the police forces and the army to defend their new democracy. With every life they take and every family they destroy, they are turning Iraqis and the civilized world against them.

We know that many of those who kill innocent men, women and children on the streets of Baghdad are followers of the same murderous ideology that took the lives of our citizens in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. And since September 11th, they have killed in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Jerusalem, Casablanca, Riyadh, Mombassa and Bali. The lesson of this experience is clear: The terrorists can kill the innocent – but they cannot stop the advance of freedom. The only way our enemies can succeed is if we forget the lessons of September 11 ... if we abandon the Iraqi people to men like Zarqawi ... and if we yield the future of the Middle East to men like Bin Laden. For the sake of our Nation's security, that will not happen on my watch.

When I spoke to the Nation from the Army War College in May 2004, I reaffirmed our Coalition's goal in Iraq: to see the Iraqi people in charge of Iraq for the first time in generations. I said that America's task in Iraq is not only to defeat an enemy, it is to give strength to a friend – a free, representative government that serves its people, fights on their behalf, and is a beacon of hope in a part of the world that is desperate for reform. And I outlined the steps we would take to achieve this goal: We would hand authority over to a sovereign Iraqi government ... help Iraqis hold free elections by January 2005 ... continue helping Iraqis rebuild their nation's infrastructure and economy ... encourage more international support for Iraq's democratic transition ... and enable Iraqis to take increasing responsibility for their own stability and security. In the past year, we have

achieved several of these objectives – and made significant progress toward the others.

One year ago today, we restored sovereignty to the Iraqi people.

In January 2005, despite terrorist threats and intimidation, more than eight million Iraqi men and women voted in elections that were free and fair – and took place on time.

In the year since Iraqis assumed sovereignty, we have continued our efforts to help them rebuild their country. We are improving roads, and schools, and health clinics ... and working to improve basic services like sanitation, electricity, and water. Many Iraqis are frustrated by the uneven pace of these efforts. I am concerned too. Rebuilding a country after three decades of tyranny is hard – and rebuilding while at war is even harder.

In the past year, the international community has stepped forward with vital assistance. Alongside the more than 30 brave nations that make up the Coalition, NATO is in Iraq, establishing a military academy outside Baghdad to train the next generation of Iraqi military leaders. The United Nations is in Iraq to help Iraqis write a constitution and conduct their next elections. Thus far, more than 40 countries and three international organizations have pledged about 34 billion dollars in assistance for Iraqi reconstruction. The United States and the European Union recently co-hosted a conference in Brussels, where more than 80 countries and international organizations came together to coordinate their efforts to help Iraqis provide for their security and rebuild their country. And next month, donor countries will meet in Jordan to discuss our common efforts to support Iraqi reconstruction.

In the past year, we have continued our efforts to equip and train Iraqi Security Forces – and we have made gains in both the number and quality of those forces. Today Iraq has more than 160,000 security forces trained and equipped for a variety of missions – and the number of operational battalions has risen from 6 to over 100 over the past year. And these Iraqi forces have fought bravely – helping to capture wanted insurgents and remove terrorist sanctuaries in Najaf, Samarra, Fallujah, Northern Babil province, and Mosul. And in the past month, Iraqi forces have led a major anti-terrorist campaign in Baghdad called Operation Lightning– which has led to the capture of more than 1,300 (?) suspected insurgents.

The progress in the past year has been significant – and we have a clear path forward. To complete the mission, we will continue to hunt down the terrorists and insurgents. To complete the mission, we will prevent al-Qaida and other foreign terrorists from turning Iraq into what Afghanistan was under the Taliban – a safe haven from which they could launch attacks on America. And the best way to complete the mission is to help Iraqis build a free nation that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself.

As Iraqis grow confident that the democratic progress they are making is real and permanent, more will join the political process. And as Iraqis see that their military can protect them, more will take risks to secure their democracy against the enemies trying to destroy it. So our strategy going forward has both a military track and a political track.

The principal task of our military is to find and defeat the terrorists – and today we are on the offensive. As we pursue the terrorists, our military is helping to train Iraqi Security Forces so that they can defend their people and fight the terrorists on their own. Today Iraqi security forces have many different tasks – securing borders, protecting critical infrastructure, and policing their streets. But their most important mission is fighting the enemies of a free Iraq.

Some Iraqi units have performed better than others. Today the Iraqi units are at different levels of readiness: Some Iraqi units can take on the terrorists and insurgents without Coalition assistance. Some can take on the enemy – but only with Coalition support. Others are just forming and not yet ready to participate in anti-terrorist operations.

Today, most Iraqi units are increasingly capable, but not yet fully independent. We have a rigorous system in place to grade each unit, measure its progress, and move it from dependency to self-sufficiency. We are building up the Iraqi Security Forces as quickly as possible, so they assume the lead in defeating the terrorists and insurgents. To prepare Iraqi forces to fight the enemy on their own, we are taking three new steps.

First, we are partnering Coalition units with Iraqi units. These Coalition-Iraqi teams are conducting operations together in the field. These combined operations are giving Iraqis a chance to experience how the most professional armed forces in the world operate in combat.

Second, we are embedding Coalition “Transition Teams” inside Iraqi units. These teams are made up of Coalition officers and non-commissioned officers who live, work, and fight together with their Iraqi comrades. The U.S. forces involved in this effort remain under U.S. command. They are providing battlefield advice and assistance to Iraqi forces during combat operations. Between battles, they are assisting the Iraqis with important skills – such as urban combat, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance techniques.

Third, we are working with the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense to improve their capabilities to coordinate anti-terrorist operations. We are helping them develop modern command and control structures. We are also providing them with civilian and military leadership training, so Iraq’s new leaders can more effectively manage their forces and resources in the fight against terror.

Despite the high casualties, threats, and intimidation, the Iraqi government is having no trouble finding new recruits. Today thousands are now in training to serve their nation in uniform. With each engagement with the enemy, Iraqi soldiers grow more battle-hardened, their officers grow more experienced – and Iraq’s new military leaders learn who has what it takes. One soldier who has seen them in the fight is [redacted] b(3) 10 USC 130b [not present]. Here is what [redacted] says: “I was totally impressed by how they conducted operations. They had command and control, pretty good fire discipline, and they didn’t harass civilians.” Brave Iraqis like these are sacrificing for the future of their country – and Americans are proud to fight alongside such steadfast and courageous allies.

Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. Prime Minister Ja’afari told me that, like free people everywhere, the Iraqi people want to be defended by their own countrymen. And I told the Prime Minister that we will help them achieve this objective, so Iraqis can secure their own liberty – and American forces can come home to a proud and grateful Nation.

We will stay as long as we are needed – and not a day longer. We have no desire to have a long term presence in Iraq, unless the Iraqis ask for one. I recognize that Americans want our troops to come home. So does their Commander-in-Chief. Some believe the best way to bring them

home is to set a fixed deadline for withdrawing U.S. forces. Let me explain why I believe that would be a grave mistake. Setting an artificial timetable would send the wrong message to the Iraqis – who need to know that America will not cut and run before the job is done. It would send the wrong message to our troops – who need to know that we are serious about completing the mission they are risking their lives to achieve. And it would send the wrong message to the enemy – who would know that all they have to do is to wait us out.

Others ask me, if completing the mission is so important, why don't you send more troops? I tell them that if our commanders on the ground say we need more American troops, I will send more troops. But that is not what the commanders tell me they need. They tell me that sending more Americans would force us into a defensive posture – protecting our positions instead of going after the terrorists (is this defensible?). They tell me that sending more Americans would suggest that we intend to stay forever – when we are in fact working for the day when Iraq can defend itself and we can leave. And they tell me that sending more Americans would undermine our strategy of encouraging Iraqis to take the lead in this fight. Like any war, the war on terror has days of progress and days of setbacks. And as they fight, our troops can know that I will continue to be guided by the only advice that should matter – the sober judgment of our military leaders.

As we help Iraqis take the fight to the enemy, the other critical element of our strategy is to help ensure that the hopes expressed by the Iraqi people at the polls in January are translated into a lasting democracy. In April, Iraqis formed a democratic government. And this month, they agreed to expand their constitutional drafting committee to include more Sunni Arabs. Many Sunnis who opposed the January elections are now clamoring to be part of the political process and to shape Iraq's future through democratic means. This is important progress – yet some Iraqis remain fearful of the past and uncertain of the future.

To build confidence in the future, Iraq's leaders need to meet key deadlines in the months ahead. In the coming weeks, the Transitional National Assembly will draft a new Constitution for a free Iraq. In October, it plans to submit that constitution to the Iraqi people for approval. If it is approved, by the end of this year the Iraqi people will return to the polls to choose a fully constitutional government.

With each step forward, Iraqis are gaining confidence. In January the Coalition set up telephone hotlines to allow Iraqis to call in with information about terrorists. My top commander in Iraq, General Casey, reports that the number of actionable tips coming in has gone from under 50 in January to almost 450 last month in Baghdad alone. Iraqis are losing their fear and stepping forward with vital intelligence – and this is dealing severe blows to the enemy.

These changes are happening gradually, and from a distance they can be hard to see – but the people in the best position to judge know they are real. Our troops in the field believe in the mission and they see the progress with their own eyes. As Army Specialist Joseph Rankin [not present] puts it, “I know we are doing good and everybody around us sees it.” Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines want more than our support – they want their accomplishments to be recognized.

Iraqis are putting their own lives on the line for this progress. More than 2,000 Iraqi Security Forces have been killed in the line of duty. And in the months since the elections, more than 50 Iraqi civilian officials at the national, regional, and local level have been kidnapped (?) (we can say “scores” have been killed – many of them were shot at in the cars and never kidnapped) and killed. These courageous civilian leaders – who live in towns and cities across Iraq, but whose names we never hear – recognize that they cannot sit on the sidelines in this battle for Iraq’s future.

The democratic progress Iraqis have achieved in the past year is having effects beyond Iraq’s borders. Across the broader Middle East, people are rising up to claim their freedom. In the last few months, we have witnessed elections in Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, and Lebanon. And these elections are inspiring democratic reformers in places like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. We are seeing the rise of a new generation whose hearts burn for liberty – and they will have it. By advancing freedom in a troubled region, we are removing a source of violence and instability – and laying the foundation of peace for our country and the world.

Dangerous enemies oppose this progress. And there is only one course of action against them: We must fight until the terrorists are broken. The commander in charge of Coalition operations in Iraq<sup>1</sup>, General Vines,

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<sup>1</sup> Vines is also commanding general of Ft. Bragg

put it well the other day: “We either deal with terrorism and this extremism abroad – or we deal with it when it comes to us.” America has made its choice, and we will settle for nothing less than the defeat of the terrorists who threaten us.

Before that day comes, there will be more tough moments that test America’s resolve. We are fighting against men armed with crude weapons and blind hatred who are capable of any atrocity. They wear no uniform; they respect no laws of warfare or morality. And they take innocent lives to create chaos for the cameras. They are trying to shake our will in Iraq – just as they tried to shake our will on September 11, 2001. They will fail. The terrorists do not understand America. The American people do not falter under threat – and we will not allow our future to be determined by the car bombers and assassins.

America and our friends are in a conflict that demands much of us. It demands the courage of our fighting men and women ... it demands the steadfastness of our allies ... and it demands the perseverance of our citizens. We accept these burdens – because we know what is at stake. We fight today, because Iraq now carries the hope of freedom in a vital region of the world – and the rise of democracy will be the ultimate triumph over radicalism and terror. We fight today, because the long-suffering people of Iraq – ruled for decades by an enemy – do not deserve to be betrayed by their friends. Above all, we fight today because terrorists want to attack our country and kill our citizens – and Iraq is where they are making their stand. So we will fight them there ... we will fight them across the world – and we will stay in the fight until the fight is won.

America has done difficult work before. From our desperate fight for independence, to the darkest days of a Civil War, to the hard-fought battles against tyranny in the 20th Century, there were many chances to lose our heart, our nerve, or our way. But Americans have always held firm, because we have always believed in certain truths. We know that if evil is not confronted, it gains in strength and audacity, and returns to strike us again. We know that when the work is hard, the proper response is not retreat, it is courage. And we know that this great ideal of human freedom is entrusted to us in a special way – and that the ideal of liberty is worth defending.

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In this time of testing, our troops can know: The American people stand behind you. And next week, our Nation has an opportunity to make sure that support is felt by every soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine at every outpost across the world. This Fourth of July, I ask every American to find a way to thank the men and women defending our freedom – by flying the flag ... sending letters to the troops in the field ... or finding ways to support the families of those who serve and the children of our fallen heroes.

To the soldiers in this hall, and our servicemen and women across the globe: I thank you for your courage under fire and your sacrifice for our Nation. I thank those of you who have re-enlisted in an hour when your country needs you. And to those watching tonight who are considering military service, I have a message: Your courage is needed – and there is no higher calling. We live in freedom because every generation has produced patriots willing to risk their lives for a cause larger than themselves. Your generation is taking its rightful place among the greatest generations that have worn our Nation's uniform. And like the generations that came before you, your sacrifices will not be in vain. When the history of this period is written, names like Fallujah and Mazar-e-Sharif will be remembered as great turning points in the story of freedom.

After September 11, 2001, I told the American people that the road ahead would be difficult – and that we would prevail. Well, it has been difficult. And we are prevailing. Our enemies are brutal – but they are no match for the United States of America – and they are no match for the men and women of the United States military.

Thank you. And may God bless America.

*Drafted by: Bill McGurn, Marc Thiessen, and Chris Michel, Office of Speechwriting  
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