

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AFTER MEETING WITH
IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Roosevelt Room

2:56 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: I want to thank you all for coming. Laura and I have really enjoyed our visit.

We're talking today to people who have decided to try to help improve the lives of folks in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I just marvel at the fact that Americans from around our country have heard a call to help somebody realize the benefits of freedom. You know, governments can help, and we will help. And obviously, we've got a brave military trying to secure freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. But one of the real powerful parts of developing civil societies in these two countries is the fact that fellow citizens are willing to interface with citizens in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We've heard stories about Afghan women education programs and Iraqi Fulbright programs and programs to help hospitals and programs to welcome intellectuals -- all aimed at helping these societies that were once brutalized by tyrants realize the great benefits and blessings of liberty. We've got -- I'm sure a lot of our citizens don't realize this, but there are thousands of, we call them social entrepreneurs, who are figuring out ways to help improve the human condition in these two liberated countries.

And I want to thank you all very much. It's heartening to hear your stories and it makes me -- once again gives me great reason to be proud of our country and the people who live here. So thank you all for coming. God bless your work.

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2:58 P.M. EST