

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 30, 2003

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The capture of Saddam Hussein marks a new beginning for the Iraqi people who no longer have to live in fear that the former regime will stand in the way of their freedom. While our goal of a free and stable Iraq remains far from finished, I join you in congratulating our armed forces for their success in this important mission.

This event offers a new opportunity for the United States to reevaluate circumstances in Iraq and the world and establish a clear vision for success in Iraq. As I have traveled western Wisconsin to meet with families of service members, there is understandable concern that the sacrifices our armed forces and their families are making are not tied to a coherent overall strategy. Simply stating that we are working toward a free and viable Iraq, while much of the rest of the world is sidelined, is not enough when our troops are facing daily attacks.

In defining a strong vision for Iraq, it must be apparent that our government is doing everything possible to ensure success. This includes moving away from the initial occupation of Iraq and toward collaboration on the future of Iraq with the Iraqi people and the international community.

Establishing the U.S. presence in Iraq as a means to freedom and security, as opposed to occupying power, must continue to be our priority. Granting legitimate political authority to Iraqis in a timely manner is important in this effort to show we are committed to their successful future and not their resources, and will provide an identifiable Iraqi power aside from the U.S. occupation authority.

Further, we must utilize the depths of our diplomacy and engage the international community for its support and assistance in rebuilding Iraq. I applaud your efforts in enlisting former Secretary of State James Baker to discuss debt restructuring with our allies in Europe. It is my hope that this is the beginning of enhanced engagement with those nations that may have disagreed with the United States in going to war with Iraq. Such action is necessary to bridge rifts in important relations and move forward not only toward the stability of Iraq, but also in the global war on terrorism.

We must capitalize on the accomplishment of our armed forces in successfully tracking down Saddam Hussein, and move forward in the mission to ensure a safe and secure Iraq

that is governed by its people. To this end, I urge your administration to work to define a clear road to success in Iraq for the benefit of the American people, our armed forces, international partners, and the people of Iraq.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron", written in a cursive style.

Ron Kind
Member of Congress