

May 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

The draft legislation also provides for access to wilderness areas by Indian people for traditional cultural and religious purposes. Access by the general public may be limited in order to protect the privacy of religious cultural activities taking place in specific wilderness areas. In addition, to the fullest extent practicable, the Department of the Interior will coordinate with the Department of Defense to minimize the impact of any overflights during these religious cultural activities.

I further concur with the Secretary of the Interior that all or part of 39 of the WSAs encompassing 420,400 acres are not suitable for preservation as wilderness and should

be released for multi-use management.

Also enclosed are a letter and report from the Secretary of the Interior concerning the WSAs discussed above and a section-by-section analysis of the draft legislation. I urge the Congress to act expeditiously and favorably on the proposed legislation so that the natural resources of these WSAs in New Mexico may be protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

*Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Dan Quayle, President of the Senate.*

## White House Statement on Haitian Migrants

May 24, 1992

President Bush has issued an Executive order which will permit the U.S. Coast Guard to begin returning Haitians picked up at sea directly to Haiti. This action follows a large surge in Haitian boat people seeking to enter the United States and is necessary to protect the lives of the Haitians, whose boats are not equipped for the 600-mile sea journey.

The large number of Haitian migrants has led to a dangerous and unmanageable situation. Both the temporary processing facility at the U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo and the Coast Guard cutters on patrol are filled to capacity. The President's action will also allow continued orderly processing of more than 12,000 Haitians presently at Guantanamo.

Through broadcasts on the Voice of America and public statements in the Haitian media, we continue to urge Haitians not to attempt the dangerous sea journey to the United States. Last week alone, 18 Haitians perished when their vessel capsized off the Cuban coast.

Under current circumstances, the safety of Haitians is best assured by remaining in their country. We urge any Haitians who fear persecution to avail themselves of our refugee processing service at our Embassy

in Port-au-Prince. The Embassy has been processing refugee claims since February. We utilize this special procedure in only four countries in the world. We are prepared to increase the American Embassy staff in Haiti for refugee processing if necessary.

The United States Coast Guard has picked up over 34,000 since the coup in Haiti last September 30. Senior U.S. officials are seeking the assistance of other countries and the United Nations to help deal with the plight of Haitian boat people, and we will continue our intensive efforts to find alternative solutions to avoid further tragedies on the high seas.

The President has also directed an intensification of our ongoing humanitarian assistance efforts in Haiti. Our current programs total \$47 million and provide food for over 600,000 Haitians and health care services which reach nearly 2 million. We hope other nations will also increase their humanitarian assistance as called for in the resolution on Haiti passed by the OAS foreign ministers on May 17.

*Note: The Executive order is listed in Appendix E at the end of this volume.*