

June 25 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

on the team. I'd hate to be the opposition for the University of Minnesota Duluth next year. *[Laughter]*

It is my honor to welcome to the White House the Senators from the State of Minnesota: Senator Wellstone, welcome; and Senator Mark Dayton—many of you don't know this, that he was a fine goalie when he played at Yale University. I know because I witnessed him in the nets. However, having seen some of the replays of the champions' games, Mark, I'm afraid you couldn't have stopped many of the shots coming from these champs. *[Laughter]*

It's good to have the Members of the United States Congress here, too: Jim Oberstar, thank you for coming; and Jim Ramstad, thank you, sir. I appreciate you all being here.

It is my honor to welcome the first-ever team from the University of Minnesota Duluth to the White House. The mighty Bulldogs accomplished an extraordinary feat by winning the first NCAA women hockey championship in only the second season of their existence. That's pretty darn good.

What makes this team special is its international character. Players from Europe, Canada, and the United States all worked together to become champs. As Coach Miller said, it took a perfect mix of players from all over to win the title. But I know something about sports; it also takes a great coach to win a title, too, and this team has got an extraordinary coach. She's had great success with the Canadian national team, before our great Nation borrowed her to lead the Bulldogs. *[Laughter]* Her name is associated with a spectacular rise

in women's hockey. And she served as a role model for all the champs.

Coach Miller, congratulations.

I want to thank some of the girls from the Washington, DC, area who are here, as well. I see members of the Best Friends, Brownies, and Girl Scouts. Thank you for coming. It reminds me of what a true champ is. A champ is somebody who wins not only in the ice but who, when off the ice, sets a good example for youngsters to follow. What champs do is they set high standards, and they work hard, and they make the right choices to achieve those standards and goals. And that's exactly what the University of Minnesota Duluth did. You set the highest of standards.

I know you worked hard. I bet you made sure they worked hard. *[Laughter]* Your team made the right choices off the ice, and that's why they're champs. And so I want to congratulate you all for setting the right example.

For those of you who aren't from the United States, hang around; it's a pretty special place. *[Laughter]* But we welcome you here. We welcome you to the greatest house in our country, the people's house, and congratulate you from the bottom of our hearts.

Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kathryn A. Martin, chancellor, Shannon Miller, women's hockey coach, and Brittney Ralph, women's hockey team captain, University of Minnesota Duluth.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and an Exchange With Reporters

June 26, 2001

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the President Mbeki to the Oval Of-

fice. It's good to see you again, sir. The last time we visited was in the Governor's

Mansion in Texas. We had a great discussion about our country's relations. I look forward to furthering that discussion.

We have a lot of interests that—to discuss. We have the interest of trade and prosperity. My administration has made a commitment to work with leaders like President Mbeki on the continent of Africa to provide hope for people. And we look forward to a great relationship with you, sir. You've provided imaginative, real leadership that a lot of people in this Nation admire, and our relationship is only going to grow stronger as a result of your visit here.

So we welcome you to the United States. We welcome the dialog we'll have here in the Oval Office and then over lunch with the respective delegations.

Mr. President.

President Mbeki. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Let me say, thank you very much, indeed, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to see you. I've been looking forward to this, because for us, Mr. President, our relations with the United States are very important.

You know the challenges we face in South Africa, Mr. President, and the challenges we face on the African Continent. And quite clearly, we need your support and involvement in order to solve those problems.

I'm happy we are able to meet today so we can look, as you said, Mr. President, at the matter of the bilateral relations, as well as what we might do on the wider scale. And I think that, Mr. President, the moment has come for us, as Africans, really to turn the corner, to deal with all of these problems of violence and conflict and poverty, disease, and so on.

And I've been very, very pleased—I must say this, Mr. President—that what we discussed in Austin, Texas, about what might be done, that you have kept to that particular route, those present agreements, with some understandings, has been very inspiring to us. And I'm sure that this visit

will help us to get along, as we definitely need to.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you. I'm so glad you're here. Thanks.

HIV/AIDS

Q. Mr. President, neither of you have mentioned the AIDS scourge directly in your opening statements here. How high on the list of priorities for discussing the scourge is this on your agenda?

President Bush. Well, it's an incredibly important part of our dialog. The AIDS pandemic in Africa is terrible, and our Nation intends to do something about it. As a matter of fact, our Nation is doing something about it. We provide more money than any nation in the world to fund a strategy to defeat AIDS, and we will continue to work with nations that can afford to put money into the trust to do so.

I was so pleased to see—not only to announce that our Government put money into an international trust, but the Gates Foundation, a private foundation here in America, contributed \$100 million. And yesterday Tommy Thompson and Colin Powell went to the U.N. to discuss this important issue. And we will discuss it, and we'll discuss it in depth, just like we did in Austin, Texas. The President is concerned, as am I.

I discussed it in Europe. I talked to the Europeans. I said, "We've made a down-payment into the international trust to battle AIDS." They should contribute, I said. And I hope they do. I hope the European Union will follow suit. Part of our discussion that night in Sweden was the United States taking the lead in the AIDS pandemic, not only in the continent of Africa but around the world. And this is a big issue, as far as we're concerned. We've got to do something about it.

Mr. President.

President Mbeki. Yes, indeed, as the President says, we actually did discuss this matter, even then, last year in May, when

we met in Texas. It clearly is an important matter. That's why I mentioned the matter of diseases on the African Continent. AIDS, indeed, is one of those.

We have to respond in a comprehensive way. One of the matters we'll discuss with the President is this African recovery program that we're working on. And one of the major priority areas in that African recovery program is precisely this area.

So we certainly will discuss this. And we have to do something, because in many instances, these are diseases which are not only caused by poverty, some of them, but also cause poverty. So if you're talking about an African recovery, you cannot but discuss AIDS and really confront it. Malaria, tuberculosis, all sorts of communicable diseases are a particular matter of what has to happen—we have to address them.

South African Government's Response to AIDS

Q. Mr. President, President Mbeki, last week the New York Times published an

editorial accusing your government of, in its words, dooming half a generation of young people to an early, protracted, and expensive death because of its failure to distribute anti-retrovirals. How do you explain the amount of criticism that you're coming in for in the United States for what is a perception that you're not doing enough on HIV?

President Mbeki. Well, I'll—we've said—all I would say to that, really, is that people must look at what we're doing in South Africa, not their perception of what they think we're doing but what we're doing actually in the country. And I don't think on the basics of facts an accusation like that can be sustained.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Thabo Mbeki
June 26, 2001*

President Bush and President Mbeki committed to build on and strengthen the already excellent ties between the United States and South Africa. We committed ourselves to achieving our shared goals of building a stronger strategic partnership and promoting economic growth and democracy in Africa and globally.

We reaffirmed that our governments will meet regularly, to consult on bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues of shared importance, and that ongoing cooperative efforts, begun under the direction of the Binational Commission, shall continue and be enhanced in the critical areas of agriculture; conservation, environment, and

water; defense; health; housing; human resource development and education; justice and anti-crime; science and technology; sustainable energy; and trade and investment. We will establish a joint secretariat to direct and coordinate the consultations and to provide recommendations to both governments.

We discussed the Millennium Africa Recovery Program (MAP) and agreed to work together for a prosperous, democratic Africa. We affirmed our support for the MAP's core goals of conflict resolution, good governance, sound economic management, and fighting HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.