

You are vital to the Nation's defenses, the ones most likely to first encounter a terrorist, the ones who will be the first on the scene should there be an attack. You have dedicated your careers to serving others. That is a noble calling. In these challenging times, with the Nation relying on your efforts, you deserve the full support of our governments, and you can count on that support.

It's an honor for me to be here with those who defend us and protect us. May God bless you and your families, and may

God continue to bless our great country. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:49 p.m. in the field training facility. In his remarks, he referred to Albert Rigoni, president, Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

## Statement on Senate Action To Block Votes on Judicial Nominations *July 22, 2004*

Today a minority of Senators employed filibuster tactics to bar confirmation votes on three excellent judicial nominees from Michigan to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit—Judge Richard Griffin, Judge David McKeague, and Judge Henry Saad. Each of these nominees is eminently qualified, has the support of a majority of Senators, and would be confirmed if given an up-or-down vote.

These filibuster tactics are shameful and inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional obligation. All three of these fine men are distinguished jurists. Together they have more than three decades of experience on the Michigan State and Federal courts. All three have been rated either well-qualified or qualified by the American Bar Association. The vacancies these judges have been nominated to fill have been designated judicial emergencies by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Yet all three nominees have been waiting more than 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the Senate. By blocking votes on these nominations, a

minority of Senators is continuing a crisis that has delayed the administration of justice in the Sixth Circuit.

Prior to this Congress, the filibuster had never been used to block the confirmation of a judicial nominee. But in recent months, the use of this obstructionist tactic by some Democrats has become commonplace. With today's action, 10 appeals court nominees have now been filibustered.

The Senate minority's unfair treatment of these nominees demonstrates the breakdown in the judicial confirmation process. More than 18 months ago, I proposed a plan that would ensure that judicial nominees receive timely hearings and up-or-down votes no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. I again urge the Senate—Republicans and Democrats alike—to put an end to the partisan politics of the past and ensure judicial nominees are given the timely up-or-down votes they deserve. The Senate owes it to these fine men and women and to the American people.

## Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Provide Funding for the United States Military

July 22, 2004

My most solemn duty as President is to protect the lives of the American people, and I have worked consistently for the largest defense buildup in a generation. America continues to be at war, and the legislation passed today by the Congress delivers the funding necessary to ensure that our troops are the best paid, the best equipped, and the best trained in the world.

I also commend the Congress for continuing to provide the resources necessary

to support the critical missions of our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. As I have said repeatedly, our troops will have what they need to do their job, and I am pleased that a bipartisan majority in the Congress continues to stand with me to support our military.

I look forward to signing this legislation into law.

## Remarks to the National Urban League Conference in Detroit, Michigan

July 23, 2004

*The President.* Thanks for the warm introduction. It's really good to be here. You know, Marc, you're right, the National Urban League is a vital and important part of the American scene. And I think the reason why is, not only is the mission important but the people involved in the Urban League are dignified, decent American citizens. And I am honored to be in your presence.

I see some friends like Willard, who is—I don't know if you remember, Willard, but we were on the porch of the Governor's mansion in Texas. I'm not saying you drank all my beer, but—[*laughter*]. Never mind. [*Laughter*] That's unfair. [*Laughter*] But thanks for having me.

Marc, I appreciate your leadership. I've had the opportunity to work with Marc. I look forward to continue working with Marc. He's a good man. He cares deeply about the country, the people in our country. He is—he has had a lot of experience. He has, after all, been a mayor. It's a heck of a lot tougher job than being President. After all, you've got to fill the potholes—

[*laughter*]—and empty the garbage. And he did a fine job as mayor. He's doing a fine job for this very important organization.

Speaking about mayors, the mayor of Detroit was here. He's cutting a ribbon, which most mayors do. He's a fabulous mayor, by the way. He's standing a little taller, as if he needed to, because the Detroit Pistons are now the NBA champs. I told him, I said—I asked Kwame if he took credit for it. He said, "Of course." [*Laughter*]

I appreciate so very much Mike Critelli, who is the chairman. Thank you, Mr.—Mike, it's great to see you again. And Charles Collins, senior—the vice chairman—these are distinguished gentlemen who are helping to lead a very distinguished board of directors. It was my honor to meet with members of the board before I came out here today. And I appreciate your service to our country.

Rick, thank you very much. Rick Wagoner is the CEO of General Motors,