

20th century from the Marne and Normandy to Iwo Jima and Inchon Bay. America is home to 25 million military veterans, and we will always be grateful for their unselfish courage.

Today, a new generation of Americans is defending our freedom against determined enemies. At posts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world, our men and women in uniform are taking the fight to the terrorists overseas, so that we do not have to face the terrorists here at home. And by freeing millions from oppression, our Armed Forces are redeeming a universal principle of the Declaration that all are created equal, and all are meant to be free. Those who serve today are taking their rightful place among the greatest generations that have worn our Nation's uniform.

The burden of war falls especially hard on military families, and I thank them for the support they give our troops in their vital work. Some of America's finest men and women have given their lives in the war on terror, and we remember them on Independence Day. We pray for the families who have lost a loved one in freedom's cause. And we know that the best way to honor the lives that have been given in this struggle is to complete the mission, so we will stay in the fight until the fight is won.

In this time of testing, all our troops and their families can know that the American people are behind them. On this Fourth of July weekend, I ask every American to find a way to thank men and

women defending our freedom by flying the flag, sending letters to our troops in the field, and helping the military family down the street. The Department of Defense has set up a web site, americasupportsyou.mil. You can go there to learn about private efforts in your own community. At this time when we celebrate our freedom, we will stand with the men and women who defend us all.

In the summer of 1776, John Adams called the American Revolution "the most complete, unexpected, and remarkable of any in the history of nations." And 229 years later, history has proved him right. The Fourth of July is a day to be proud of our heritage as freedom's home and defender. It is a day to be confident in the future, because the spirit of our Founders still shapes the conscience of our country. Above all, it is a day to give thanks to God for His many blessings on America and for the privilege to call ourselves citizens of this special land. I hope all Americans enjoy a memorable and safe Independence Day celebration.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on July 1 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Interview With Foreign Print Journalists *June 30, 2005*

The President. Just a couple of comments. One, I'm looking forward to going to the G-8. It's always a good opportunity to talk about common values, common in-

terests, ways we can work together to improve the world. I'm looking forward to seeing the leaders. I've got a good personal

relationship with the leaders. It's a good chance to visit.

Agenda items are—important agenda items: Africa, I just gave a speech on the continent of Africa; global climate change, it's important to move the debate beyond the Kyoto era and talk about what we can do together to improve the environment. I'm looking forward to that. One of the things there hasn't been much focus on is, there will be time to discuss progress in the Middle East—the Middle East peace process. Jim Wolfensohn is coming to discuss a way forward, how we can all help the Palestinians improve their security, enhance the entrepreneurial spirit so people can see their lives improve. We're looking forward to that.

Anyway, it's going to be a good trip. I'm looking forward to going to Denmark. The Prime Minister is a friend. He's a good man. He's got a good, strong backbone. When he says he's going to do something, he means it. I'm looking forward to seeing Her Majesty the Queen. It's going to be a good experience. I've never been to Denmark, so I'm looking forward to going.

Charlie, we'll start with you, and then we'll do a couple of rounds, and I'll let you all go get some lunch.

Aid to Africa

Q. All right. My first question really is an aid question, with respect to Africa. Mr. Blair has really been pressing this issue of dramatically increased aid to Africa. You have substantially increased U.S. assistance to Africa, but on the other hand, it falls way short of what Mr. Blair has been asking for. You've been really, I think, fairly cool to both the \$25 billion that he's asked and the commitment for, what is it, seventenths of a percent of GDP for foreign assistance.

The President. A couple of comments on that. One is that our aid increase has been dramatic. We've tripled our aid since I've been President, and I just announced today

that I'll ask Congress to double it by 2010, which is a significant increase.

Secondly, though, you've got to look at Africa as more than just aid. Aid is one aspect of participating on the continent in a compassionate way. Trade is a vital part of lifting people out of poverty.

The other thing is, you know, there's all kinds of ways to calculate generosity. I happen to think that the formula that some people try to use is not an effective way to judge America's generosity or a fair way. For example, we've got a Tax Code structure to encourage private citizens to contribute. And so I will remind our G-8 friends that aid to developing countries is more than just grants from Government. It is grants from Government. It is generous contributions by private individuals, and we contribute billions on an annual basis.

I'm also going to tell people that a compassionate policy is one that focuses less on formulas and more on improving people's lives. And so today I talked about the malaria initiative, for example. There's a great place where the G-8 countries can come together and help nations on the continent of Africa eradicate malaria.

So I'm going to the G-8 with an agenda, where we've been the leader. The HIV/AIDS initiative was a powerful statement of our compassion and our willingness to take the lead on a lot of issues.

Klaus.

Iraq/War on Terror

Q. Another subject which will be in some way at the G-8 meeting also, Iraq. Denmark is contributing a substantial proportion of the amount of troops to the conflict. Your most recent speech continuously made the link between the conflict and 9/11. How do you react towards those who say that connection has been disproved and that growing skepticism in this country and even more in Europe cannot simply be dismissed by your resolve to stay the course, as you say?

The President. My point was, about September the 11th, is that America was attacked, and now we're at war in a global war on terror. That's the connection with September the 11th. Some in Europe, I recognize, view September the 11th as a terrible moment. We view it as not only a terrible moment but a clear indication that we're at war with an ideology, people that are willing to use terror to spread their ideology. So my speech, if you look carefully at how it was written—I'm confident you did, Klaus—shows that I was making the connection between the attack and the global war on terror that we now face—and the ideology of those who attacked us is very similar to those that have now gone into Iraq to try to stop the progress—and make clear, our strategy is to find the terrorists, bring them to justice before they harm us here, as well as defeat the ideology of hate with an ideology of hope, and that's democracy. Our strategy in Iraq is to promote a stable democracy, in other words, encourage political progress and, at the same time, train up the Iraqis so they can do the fighting.

And I look forward to sharing my thoughts about the progress we are making with your Prime Minister. They've been—Denmark has been a steadfast ally, and I know he has obviously stood strong in the face of political pressures, made a decision based upon what he thought was right for the world, spreading peace.

I strongly believe that we're laying the foundation for peace for generations to come. I reject the notion that certain countries cannot be democratic. I view that elitist—I view that as condemning people to hopelessness. Our policy up to now, prior to September the 11th, was, "Why don't we just kind of tolerate tyranny and hope for the best." It doesn't work that way, and we learned a strong lesson.

The speech, I think you'll see, was that the attack indicated we're at war, and Iraq is part of that war. Otherwise, why would people be pouring into the country trying

to defeat us? Why? Because they fear democracy. They fear the competing ideology that is a hopeful ideology.

Joe.

U.S. Aid to Africa

Q. Mr. President, a question about your malaria program.

The President. Sure.

Q. By the time we get back to the office, there will probably be a statement from some group praising your proposal but saying once again, "Why didn't the President go through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria?" Why do a separate program?

The President. Well, first of all, we are supporting the Global Fund. But like our AIDS Initiative, we also feel it is an effective way to achieve results. See, you just asked a process question. You're assuming somebody is going to—let's focus on the process. What I want the world to do is focus on how best to get the job done, how best to achieve the objective.

And so our strategy has been two-fold: one, support the Global Fund; but on the other hand, target specific countries. And if you noticed, I said in there, this will—we're taking the lead. We want people to follow. We want people in other countries to follow—we want people to follow. And the United States Government is going to take the lead. The Gates Foundation is taking the lead, and I call upon other governments, other foundations, to do the same. So our strategy is one of results, how best to achieve the objective.

Give me your name again.

Q. Olivier. You can call me Mr. Knox. That's fine. [Laughter]

The President. Pretty good. Pretty good retort. [Laughter] Very good. Olivier.

Iran

Q. Thank you, sir. Sir, were you surprised when you heard the allegations that the President-elect of Iran might have been

one of the people who took Americans hostage in Tehran?⁹ And do you have any information that would confirm or refute those charges?

The President. I have no information, but obviously, this is—his involvement raises many questions, and knowing how active people are at finding answers to questions, I'm confident they'll be found. And I spoke to Prime Minister Blair this morning, spoke to Chancellor Schroeder the other day. I look forward to speaking to Jacques Chirac when we get to Scotland.

My message is, is that it's very important at this moment for the EU-3 to send a strong message to the new person there that the world is united in saying that you should not be given the capabilities of enriching uranium, which could then be converted into a nuclear weapon. In other words, we've got a new man who has assumed power, and he must hear a focused message. I was pleased with Gerhard Schroeder's statement here, and Prime Minister Blair can speak for himself. But let me just say, I believe the EU-3's message is going to be a very strong message, and that's where our message is—that's where my attention is focused right now.

In order to achieve a diplomatic objective, it's very important to have clear goals. And we have a clear goal, and that is to say to the Iranians—well, there's a clear understanding that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon. It would be a very destabilizing, dangerous situation. And the world is speaking in one voice, and so the message now to the new leader is a very strong message.

Charlie.

Trade With Africa

Q. With regard to trade, African leaders have been pretty loud in pointing out that subsidies and tariffs are a tremendous handicap to the development of trade. Europe, in particular, has been hostile to really lifting tariffs and subsidies. Any chance

of any movement on that, within the context of the G-8?

The President. Well, I appreciate you bringing that up. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, signed by my predecessor and extended by the Congress in my administration, is working. I want to remind people that ultimately it's commerce, trade, economic growth that will overwhelm the need for aid itself. And exports from sub-Saharan Africa to the United States are up 88 percent because we've opened up our markets.

The best approach to dealing with Europe—and our own subsidies for that matter—on agricultural matters, is to go to the Doha round of the WTO and jointly declare that we're going to get rid of all agricultural subsidies. That has been our proposal.

The other thing is, it's very important for African nations themselves to eliminate the barriers of trade intracontinent, between themselves. There are, if you look—at least there was the last time I looked—there were some impediments to trade amongst the African nations. And so the—we've all got responsibilities to make trade freer.

I said in my speech today that it's—the World Bank estimated that a successful Doha round—in other words, a new trading regime that enabled all countries to trade freely, would lift 140 million people out of poverty, in their estimate. And that's why this Doha round is very important. And so we'll spend time articulating how best to continue moving forward on the Doha round. That's probably the most—the place where you're going to find that would be most effective in being able to deal with the subsidies, whether it be the EU or our own subsidies for that matter.

Klaus.

Guantanamo Bay Detainees

Q. Guantanamo is still a very hot topic for many Europeans. After 3 years, there are still prisoners there who haven't had

their case heard. And the U.N. now are talking about investigating secret U.S. prisons and detainee facilities. Is that a thing—in the investigation, the U.S. would cooperate with? And don't you have fears that this is going to harm the U.S. image a lot if this situation goes on for years?

The President. Well, I think—I think if the truth is not told, it's a problem. But let's talk about the truth, in terms of Guantanamo. First of all, there's inspections 24 hours a day, 7 days a week available for the International Red Cross. There's been a lot of press contingents down to take a look at the situation firsthand and a lot of congressional folks going down. In other words, a lot of people—there's a transparent situation there.

I think we probably had about 800 or so people detained there, and remember, Klaus, I made a decision as to what to do with people swept off of a battlefield who didn't wear uniforms. I mean, this is a different kind of war. I made the decision they would be treated humanely, just like the Geneva Accords insist, and they have been.

Of the 800 detained, some 200 or so have been sent back to their countries. In other words, we screened and analyzed and took a look at whether they would be a threat again. I'm in a dilemma—at one point during this process, because people were let back out on the—sent back to a country, and they ended up killing an American. What do I tell the loved one? In other words, these people were fighting. They were fighters. They were on the battlefield.

Secondly, I agree with you. We need to make sure there is a way forward. And that's why I set up military commissions. But the military—and by the way, in a military commission, people would have lawyers; they would have—there would be procedures, court procedures. Unfortunately—or fortunately, I shouldn't—let me take that back—what has happened has been that our court system is analyzing, making a ju-

dicial decision as to whether or not the military—these people should be tried in a military commission or in a civilian court, and we're awaiting a verdict on that. And once that happens, then there will be a way forward.

Joe.

Debt Relief/Development Grants

Q. Mr. President, a question about debt cancellation.

The President. Yes.

Q. The G-8 finance ministers came up with a figure of 18 countries. Shortly after that, a number of African Presidents meeting in Nigeria said, "It's a good start. We'd like more." Is that 18 figure carved in stone, or is there—

The President. Not at all, Joe. There's a—it's a criterion-based agreement, and that other countries will be able to qualify for debt forgiveness as well. So there's a way forward for the other countries that they expressed concerns about.

The other thing is, is that I would hope people would take notice of the initiative that I proposed a couple of years ago, and that is the World Bank, in its desire to help developing nations, give grants as opposed to loans. And we're making progress toward that goal. Jim Wolfensohn did a fine job of making progress toward that goal, and Paul Wolfowitz will continue toward that goal.

But the idea is that we're relieving the pressure on the balance sheet. But governments have got to make good choices. They've got to be willing to invest and fight corruption, kind of like the criterion in our Millennium Challenge Account, which is a very important initiative. It's one I called on Congress to fund. Congress has been reluctant to fully fund our request because we haven't got the money out the door fast enough. And so my message today was, like it has been the last couple of times I've talked about Millennium Challenge Account, we'll do a better job of processing and moving along.

Olivier.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. One more round after this, so everybody be preparing your questions.

Sudan

Q. On Darfur, sir, the Deputy Secretary of State told the House Foreign Relations Committee this week or last that the United States and Europe shouldn't send troops to Darfur because they would come up against bloodthirsty, coldblooded killers. Does this mean that the bloodthirsty, coldblooded killers can set the agenda in Darfur? And what do you say to some critics who say that your administration is easing off Sudan because of good counterterrorism intelligence cooperation?

The President. That's a preposterous claim. It's not even close to the truth. First, my administration, with Jack Danforth and Colin Powell's good work, helped solve the north-south civil war. And now we're working close—working with parties to get that peace agreement implemented.

Secondly, the strategy, an effective strategy, is to work with the AU—African Union—and use AU forces to help keep the warring parties apart while we continue to press the Sudanese Government as well as rebel groups for a comprehensive settlement. And the United States has helped—worked with NATO and the EU to provide logistical support for the movement of 7,700 troops into Darfur.

Today I announced it will help build 16 additional base camps; it will provide maintenance services, as well as C-130 to help remove Rwandan troops. We spend a lot of time on this important issue. Ours is a nation that called this a genocide. And we take this situation in Darfur very seriously—and, by the way, lead in terms of aid and working with other nations. Canada, by the way, has come up with a big tranche of aid the other day, for which we're grateful.

Charlie.

Zimbabwe

Q. What are you telling or asking Thabo Mbeki now, as Robert Mugabe intensifies his crackdown against his opposition in Zimbabwe?

The President. As you know, Thabo Mbeki was here. You might remember, I did go to South Africa as well. And my message has been very consistent: "You're a great democracy. You're showing the world what is possible after the terrible period of apartheid. In other words, you showed how to reconcile differences, and you're a very strong nation on the continent of Africa. And next door to you is a person that is destroying a country because of bad policy, and it's not right. And the nations in the neighborhood must be strong."

I was asked yesterday, are we willing to tie some of our aid to the position that nations take on Zimbabwe? I said no because I don't want people to suffer as a result of—more people to suffer as a result of Zimbabwe. In other words, our aid is focused at people.

And on the other hand, working with nations and providing help and aid and trade and, you know, partnering does give us a chance to lend our voice to others who are saying, "This has got to change in Zimbabwe." He is a terrible example.

Q. Are you disappointed in Mbeki?

The President. I'm disappointed in Mugabe. He is—Zimbabwe was a bread basket, provided a lot of food on a continent that often needs food, and it's a country being wrecked. And I am—the world needs to speak very clearly about the decisions he has made and the consequence of the decisions he has made.

Klaus.

President's Upcoming Visit to Denmark

Q. You have already expressed your admiration for the Danish Prime Minister, but I wondered if there were other good reasons behind your decision to take the detour to our tiny country like Denmark

and even ruining part of your birthday by doing that? [Laughter]

The President. No, no, it's enhancing it—it's enhancing it. Listen, Denmark has been a great friend of the United States for years. And I hope my visit sends a statement to the Danish people: Thank you for the friendship. I don't expect everybody to agree with the decisions my administration has made—

Q. You know there will be demonstrations in Denmark?

The President. That's fine. Good. That's the great thing about going to a free society, see. One of the things about—a wonderful thing about freedom is, people are able to express their opinions, and I expect people to express their opinions.

On the other hand, I would hope my visit says to the Danish people that America respects you and we share values. And those shared values are important. They're universal values. They're not American values or Danish values. They're universal values, freedom of speech and minority rights, human dignity.

So I'm looking forward to it. Selfishly, I'm looking forward to going to Denmark. I've never been there, and I can't wait to see it. Now, admittedly, I'm not going to take the typical tourist tour. I don't expect you'll find me walking the streets of—you know, in the evening, arm in arm with my wife. On the other hand, I bet I get to see enough of the country to give me a good sense of the beauty of the country. I'm really looking forward to it.

Q. Do you plan to bring all your family members and your wife?

The President. I'm bringing wife, for certain, and a family member. All my family members? It's a lot. [Laughter] If you're talking about my daughters, one of my daughters will be accompanying me. Thank you for asking.

Joe.

Group of Eight/Africa

Q. Mr. President, David Dodge, the Governor of Canada's Central Bank, questions the whole G-8 process, saying it really shouldn't be focusing on Africa and climate change but rather global prosperity and economic imbalances. And he says that a new mechanism, a new institution is needed that includes China, India, and South Africa. What do you think about that?

The President. You know, the G-8 conferences used to be focused strictly on global—you know, economic—our respective economies, and it's an economic discussion. And it's an interesting growth out of just talking about economics to just understanding that together we can make a difference by helping developing nations grow their economies as well. It's really what you're talking about.

The ultimate success on the continent of Africa is going to be whether or not strong economies develop, being able to give people a chance to succeed. And many of the initiatives we're focused on will lay the conditions for economic growth. And you can't grow if you're at war. That's why I talked about the peacekeeping initiatives. You can't grow if you've got a huge part of the future of your nation being wiped out because of HIV/AIDS. It's very difficult to grow if you don't educate your women, and that's why I announced a very strong initiative for the education of girls on the continent of Africa. These are projects—it's hard to grow when you've got a million people dying of malaria because of the inability to treat a mosquito bite.

I mean, there's something very practical about dealing with—dealing with, on the continent of Africa, the nations, helping nations, partnering nations. And I think it speaks to the admonition that "To whom much is given, much is required." And so I find this an important part of an agenda.

It shouldn't be the only agenda. We're definitely talking about the environment, definitely talking about Africa. But we'll

also be talking about the Palestinian conflict. There's a chance for G-8 nations, developed nations to help the Palestinians. We'll be talking about our economies. There's always a nice discussion about currency, for example—an interesting part of the dialog. And I find it interesting to talk with other nations about what they are doing to stimulate their economies.

I suspect this G-8—in other words, there will be very—current events will be discussed one way or the other. Iraq, of course, will be discussed. But obviously, one of the interesting parts of this G-8 that folks will be looking at will be the recent issues within the EU. And my message there will be the same as it was here when Jose Barroso and others came, Juncker came, and I said, “Look, we want Europe to succeed. We want there to be a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. And we want Europe to be successful in its enterprise, and we want it to be growing.” I mean, after all, we've got enormous trade with Europe, and trade is an important part of raising standards of living. If that's the case, you want your trading partner to be healthy. And so we'll be discussing—I'm confident there will be some discussions about what has taken place.

I'm looking forward to it. In other words, a broad agenda makes sense to me.

G-8 Membership/Kyoto Protocol

Q. But just a quick follow up—

The President. Yes.

Q. What about including India and China and South Africa?

The President. Well, no, India and China and South Africa will be there. Absolutely. There will be some African nations there. There will be India, China, Brazil, and Mexico—I can't remember all the nations—but yes, there will be a forum or a discussion including those countries.

I'm particularly interested in discussing energy with China. One of the—we had a problem with Kyoto because Kyoto would have—we didn't think the way forward to

really achieve an objective we wanted because, first of all, Kyoto would really have hurt our economy a lot. Kyoto didn't include countries like India and China. And now is the chance to work with developed nations and developing nations to develop a way to share technologies, for example, that will enable us to achieve the objective we want.

And the United States recognizes there's warming, and that some of that is caused by manmade emissions. But we also recognize that we're dependent upon foreign sources of oil. We want to diversify away from fossil fuels, and we want to help developing nations do the same. And so we have a great opportunity, because of the presence of these nations at this moment to discuss how to go forward. And so, he's right. They should be included, and they are.

Final question, Olivier.

First Lady's Upcoming Visit to Africa

Q. Thank you, sir. Sir, you're coming back stag from Europe—

The President. Coming back?

Q. Stag. Your wife is going on to Africa.

The President. That's an accurate statement.

Q. We understand from African sources that she's going to South Africa, Tanzania, and—

The President. Interesting way to put it. You could have said, “You're coming back alone from Europe,” or “You're coming back sans”—

Q. Oooh! [*Laughter*]

The President. But you say, “You're coming back stag.”

Q. If I'd known, I would have gone with the sans. [*Laughter*] You beat me to it, sir. [*Laughter*]

Communications Director Dan Bartlett. Where's Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News] when you need him? [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right. [*Laughter*] Classic moment, wasn't it?

Q. Absolutely.

The President. Were you there for that?

Q. I was not, but I—

The President. We're laughing about the fact that one of their comrades, a very important person in the White House pool went over to Paris, France, and fired off a series of questions to Jacques Chirac in French.

Q. My mother e-mailed the corrected French. [Laughter]

The President. That's good. [Laughter] I corrected his French too—[laughter]—and didn't even know what he was saying. [Laughter] This is all off the record, because this will hurt Gregory's feelings. Please. Holland [Steve Holland, Reuters], you're copiously taking notes. [Laughter]

Q. It's going right to him. [Laughter]

The President. Good. [Laughter]

Communications Director Bartlett. He just had twins.

The President. He had twins?

Communications Director Bartlett. Yes, last week.

The President. Fantastic. Gender?

Communications Director Bartlett. A boy and a girl.

The President. Weight? Health?

Q. Good. Good.

The President. Mother?

Communications Director Bartlett. Strong. They're in the fives. I think both of them are 5 pounds.

The President. That's good, 5. How big were yours?

Communications Director Bartlett. Same, midsize.

The President. We're back—where were you?

Q. Well, we heard that your wife is going—

The President. I'm flying alone, yes. [Laughter]

Q. You're flying alone, *sans* First Lady. She's going to South Africa, Tanzania, Rwanda. My question to you is, what message is she bringing from the United States, and what can she get across that a diplomat or a rock star could not?

The President. Her message is: One, the United States is committed to Africa, and we've got a good record; secondly, that our commitment to Africa is aimed at helping people. She'll be talking about educating young girls, and she'll be talking about our HIV/AIDS initiative. Her presence shows commitment. This is the second time she's been to Africa since I've been sworn in as President. Plus, she's a darn good diplomat. She speaks clearly, and she is a—she's a compassionate soul when she speaks, which is—she's a genuinely compassionate person. And people will see her compassion. And there will be no problem with her getting any news coverage, so, in other words, she'll be seen, which makes her an effective representative.

And part of people knowing that the United States cares is for the messenger to have a platform. And so she'll have a—she'll have the ability to talk from her heart about the specific initiatives that we're very much involved in.

All right, listen, thank you all. Looking forward to it. Klaus, see you over there? Are you going to be there?

Q. I leave that to my colleagues.

The President. You're going to lateral me. You're going to transfer me off. [Laughter] Well, I'm sure they're going to be as professional as you were.

Q. I hope so.

The President. Nice to see you again. Thank you. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:48 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to James D. Wolfensohn, Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement; Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark; President-elect Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; President Jacques Chirac of France; Paul D. Wolfowitz, President, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; President

Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; European Commission President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso; and European Council President Jean-Claude Juncker. A reporter referred to Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick. Journalists participating in the interview

were Charles Cobb of AllAfrica.com; Klaus Justsen of Jyllands-Posten; Joseph DeCapua of Voice of America; and Olivier Knox of Agence France Press. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 3. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration in Morgantown, West Virginia

July 4, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Happy Fourth of July. Thanks for coming. I am honored to celebrate Independence Day in Morgantown, West Virginia. I appreciate you all being here. The history of this land dates back to the earliest days of our Republic. Turns out George Washington used to drop by this part of the State. And I appreciate a warm welcome for another George W.

Coming to West Virginia is becoming a Fourth of July tradition for me. And every time I come here, I appreciate the beauty of West Virginia, and I appreciate being with decent, hard-working, patriotic Americans who call the Mountain State home.

Today we gather to celebrate the 229th anniversary of America's independence. Across our great land, families will gather to fly the flag, to watch the fireworks, and count our blessings as Americans. We are grateful for the bounty and opportunity of our land. We are grateful for our liberty, and we are grateful for the men and women in uniform who keep our country safe. [Applause] Thank you all.

I bring greetings from First Lady Laura Bush. She said, "You go over to West Virginia and tell them how much we love them."

Audience member. We love her!

The President. I love her too. [Laughter]

I appreciate Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito. I appreciate her service. I

appreciate her love for the great State of West Virginia. Thank you, Shelley Moore. I want to thank the mayor of Morgantown, West Virginia, Ron Justice, for serving the people. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming out today. I want to thank all the local and State officials who are here. I want to thank David Hardesty, the president of West Virginia University. I appreciate you. I appreciate being on this fine campus, and I appreciate the good work that the folks do here to educate the people of West Virginia.

The history we celebrate today is a testament to the power of freedom to lift up a whole nation. On Independence Day, we remember the ideals of liberty that led men from 13 Colonies to gather in Philadelphia and pen a declaration of self-truths. And we remember the band of patriots who risked their lives to bring freedom to a new continent.

On July 4, 1776, more than 5 years of the Revolutionary War still lay ahead. From the Battle of New York to the winter at Valley Forge to the victory at Yorktown, our forefathers faced terrible losses and hardships. Yet, they kept their resolve. They kept their faith in a future of liberty, and with their hard-won victory, we guaranteed a home for the Declaration's proposition that all are created equal.