

President Bush. From our perspective, it is a—it is a statement about how important our relations with Singapore is. We've made a statement before on economic relations when we signed a free trade agreement. And that was an important agreement. It's important for our economy. It's important for the economy of Singapore. This agreement takes our relationship beyond just economics. It's a strategic relationship. It is one that will have long-term consequences for both our peoples. But I happen to believe that it'll have long-term consequences for peace in the region, and that's very important.

This is a relationship based upon mutual trust, shared values, but it's also a relation-

ship that recognizes that we have an active role to play, both countries have an active role to play, in laying the foundations for peace in the region of the world that—in the Far East. And it's an important region.

One of the points that the Prime Minister has made to me, and he keeps reminding me that our involvement in the Far East is very important. And we will stay involved in a constructive way. And this agreement is a constructive agreement. It's a constructive way to stay involved.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore July 12, 2005

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong reaffirm the strong U.S.-Singapore partnership and will open a new chapter in strategic cooperation by signing the "Strategic Framework Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Singapore for a Closer Cooperation Partnership in Defense and Security."

The Agreement is a natural step in the expansion of bilateral ties. President Bush and then-Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong first announced their intention to conclude this agreement in October 2003. It was born out of a shared desire to address common threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which called for even closer cooperation between the United States and Singapore. The Agreement recognizes Singapore's role as a Major Security Cooperation Partner and will expand the scope of current cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism, counter-proliferation,

joint military exercises and training, policy dialogues, and defense technology. The Agreement will further enhance regional stability by supporting the continued security presence of the United States in South-east Asia.

The President and Prime Minister agree that the U.S. presence in the region has promoted peace and stability, which are crucial for regional cooperation and economic development. The President and Prime Minister instruct their senior officials to meet to continue close coordination on strategic issues in the period leading up to their next bilateral meeting.

The President and the Prime Minister acknowledge progress in the war on terror. The Prime Minister commends the President for the United States' resolute and steadfast stance in the war on terror and expresses Singapore's continued support in this endeavour.

The two leaders welcome the successful election of the first Iraqi National Assembly. President Bush expresses appreciation for Singapore's contributions to Iraq's reconstruction and stabilization. He commends the professionalism of the Singapore Armed Forces personnel who have been deployed in support of Iraq operations over the past two years and of the Singapore Police Force, which has provided critically important training.

The President and Prime Minister express optimism about the outlook in Southeast Asia. They welcome successful elections, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and renewed economic growth in the region and agree that these trends should be encouraged. The two leaders note the progress countries in the region have made in disabling terrorist networks through enhanced cooperation among ASEAN nations and with the international community. The President and Prime Minister condemn the terrorist attacks in London and call on governments around the world to fight terrorism together. They agree that a sustained, long-term effort is needed to defeat terrorism and reaffirm their commitment to continue working closely on law enforcement, non-proliferation, and other appropriate measures to address all aspects of the war on terror.

The President and Prime Minister express satisfaction with the seamless cooperation between the United States and Singapore in responding to the humanitarian disaster caused by the tsunamis in the Indian Ocean. The two leaders note the increasing importance of the Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention (REDI) Centre in light of growing concern over

transnational-public-health threats such as SARS and avian influenza. They also note the importance of the Straits of Malacca, and President Bush pledges U.S. support for the region's initiatives for maritime security.

The President and Prime Minister welcome the successful implementation of the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement and the growth in bilateral trade since it became effective on January 1, 2004. They express satisfaction with growing commercial ties between our two countries and are confident that trade and investment relations will continue to expand.

The President and Prime Minister pledge to sustain the close cooperation between the United States and Singapore in key regional and global multilateral institutions. The President reaffirms U.S. support for ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The two leaders note the central role of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in supporting trade and investment liberalization and in promoting cooperative efforts to strengthen regional security. With the forthcoming first Meeting of the East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005, they agree that the future development of cooperation among countries in the region should be open, transparent, and inclusive. The President and Prime Minister reaffirm the warm and strong ties between the United States and Singapore, which are grounded in historical cooperation, common interests, and shared strategic perspectives.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Honoring NCAA Championship Teams

July 12, 2005

Thank you all. Please be seated. Not you. * Welcome to the South Lawn of the White House for championship day. Today we have the largest group of NCAA champs ever gathered at the White House, and we want to thank you all for coming. I am honored to be joined on stage by the captains of the 15 teams that we're honoring today. Thank you all for being here. Congratulations for being such strong leaders.

I appreciate the Members of Congress who have come today. Welcome. We're proud you're here. I want to thank the coaches and athletic directors who are here today. But most of all, I want to congratulate the men and women who have conducted themselves in the field of play in such a manner that they're called champions. Welcome.

UCLA has won more NCAA championships than any school in the Nation, so it's fitting that three of the champs here today wear the uniform of the Bruins. Back in December, the UCLA men's water polo team won the national championship with an overtime victory against Stanford. Congratulations, and welcome. This spring the UCLA women's water polo team beat Stanford to win the national championship. Welcome to the UCLA women's polo team. And finally, the UCLA men's team won the national championship. I had an honor to meet all three teams. I'm glad you're here. Thanks for coming. Congratulations on a job well done.

And then we have the Georgia Bulldogs, who are well represented today. [Applause] It's the South Lawn. Behave yourselves. [Laughter] The Georgia men's golf team posted a wire-to-wire victory at the NCAA champions. In the final round, interestingly enough, all five of Georgia's golfers shot

the same score, even par. That's called consistency. The Georgia women's swimming and diving team brought home their fourth NCAA championship. Interestingly enough, the Lady Bulldogs won all five of the relay races. And finally, the Georgia women's gymnastics team is with us today. They started the championship meet seeded number 12 and came out number 1. Congratulations to the teams from Georgia.

Two of the teams here made history by winning their schools' first national championships in their respective sports. The Northwestern's women's lacrosse team posted an undefeated season. Twenty-one straight victories got them here to the White House. Congratulations to you all.

And then the Michigan women's softball team is here today. One of the women asked me if I wanted to hit against her. I said, "I don't think so." [Laughter] This will interest you. The first 33 games that the Michigan women's softball team played were on the road. It turns out it's a little chilly in Michigan about softball time. They won 32 of the 33. It was an auspicious beginning to a championship season. Welcome to the Michigan women's team.

Two of the teams here are celebrating a championship for the second year in a row. The Stanford women's tennis team finished with an undefeated season and a repeat national championship. They beat the Texas Longhorns in the finals.

The Minnesota women's hockey team—the Gophers beat Harvard last year to come to the White House; they beat Harvard this year to come to the White House. Congratulations to the mighty Gophers of Minnesota.

The Auburn men's swimming and diving team is celebrating a three-peat. Congratulations. Glad you all are here. Thanks for the Speedo. [Laughter] I'm not going to

* The President's remarks were directed to team captains.