

you here, along with our distinguished guests tonight.

India and the United States are separated by half the globe. Yet today, our two nations are closer than ever before. The ties that bind us are enriched by the hundreds of thousands of Americans of Indian origin. These citizens contribute a lot to America's vitality. Today, these Americans are leaders in their professions in business and science, in space exploration and technology, and in many other fields. And the United States is a better place because of the thousands of students who come here from India to study in our universities.

Today, our two nations are bound by our common interests. Our trading partnership has grown dramatically in recent years, which brings greater prosperity and opportunity to citizens of both our countries. America and India also understand the danger of global terrorism, which has brought grief to our nations and united us in our desire to bring peace and security to the world.

Above all, India and the United States are bound together by common values. As

two strong, diverse democracies, we share a commitment to the success of multiethnic democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. And we believe that by spreading the blessings of democracy and freedom, we will ensure lasting peace for our own citizens and for the world.

Last year, Mr. Prime Minister, you said that the best is yet to come in the relationship between India and the United States. The good meetings we have had today demonstrate your foresight. America looks forward to working even more closely with India in the coming years to spread prosperity and freedom and peace.

And so tonight, Mr. Prime Minister, as we celebrate the friendship of our two nations, I offer a toast to you, to your gracious wife, and to the great people of India.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gursharan Kaur, wife of Prime Minister Singh. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Singh.

Videotaped Remarks to the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum *June 30, 2005*

On behalf of America, I send greetings to the people of all the African nations represented at the AGOA Forum. I am grateful to all of you who have traveled far to discuss our shared vision for an Africa that is home to democracy, prosperity, and opportunity.

This is a hopeful moment in the history of Africa. The governments of many African nations are being transformed. Many African economies are vibrant and growing. In Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, economic growth is now at its highest level in 8 years.

An important part of Africa's rising prosperity is the African Growth and Oppor-

tunity Act or AGOA. This wise legislation is reducing barriers to trade, increasing exports, creating jobs, and expanding opportunity for Africans and Americans alike.

AGOA is getting results. Political reforms in Africa have inspired confidence among American investors. Last year, U.S. exports to Sub-Saharan Africa increased 25 percent, and America's imports from AGOA countries rose 88 percent. The success of AGOA is proving that open trade and international investment are the surest and fastest ways for Africa to make progress. So last year, I was proud to sign a law extending the benefits of this vital program.

July 19 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2005

Over the next several days, you will discuss further ways to expand and diversify trade so we can sustain economic growth. I am confident that your efforts will lead to greater interest and investment in AGOA nations. You will also be offered practical information about meeting U.S. export requirements and entering U.S. markets. As part of America's long-term commitment to increased trade with Africa, I intend to launch the African Global Competitiveness Initiative, which will give a record number of entrepreneurs access to the information and advice they need to succeed in business and foreign trade.

I appreciate the good work you are doing, and I look forward to our continued partnership on AGOA. Africa is a continent of promise and talent and opportunity, and together we will help the people of Africa realize the bright future they deserve.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped on June 30 at 4:10 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later transmission to the forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request Act July 18, 2005

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and consistent with section 446 of The District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganizational Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request Act.

The proposed FY 2006 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the

District of Columbia. For FY 2006, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of \$7.35 billion.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 18, 2005.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister John Howard of Australia July 19, 2005

President Bush. Thank you all. Laura and I are honored to welcome Prime Minister John Howard and Janette back to the White House. We're really glad you're here. We're looking forward to having, this time, a true family lunch upstairs. It's a chance to—for two old friends, friends who

happen to be old—[laughter]—to visit and to talk and to strategize and to think aloud about how to work together.

I got to tell you, I admire John Howard a lot. He's a man of conviction. He's got backbone. He's not afraid to make the hard decision. He's not afraid to lead, and we're