

resulted in the appointment of Chief Justice John Roberts.

Harriet Miers would come to the Supreme Court with a background in private practice and high-government service, and this puts her in strong company. Indeed, since 1933, 10 of the 34 Justices came to the Supreme Court directly from positions in the executive branch, such as the one Ms. Miers now holds. And no Supreme Court nominee in the last 35 years has exceeded Harriet Miers's overall range of experience in courtroom litigation; service in Federal, State, and local government; leadership in local, State, and national bar associations; and pro bono and charitable activities.

Throughout her life, Ms. Miers has excelled at everything she has done. She's been a leader and a trailblazer for women lawyers, and her work has earned the respect of attorneys across the Nation. I chose Harriet Miers for the Court both because of her accomplishments and because I know her character and her judicial philosophy. Harriet Miers will be the type of judge I said I would nominate, a good, conservative judge.

She shares my belief that judges should strictly interpret the Constitution and laws, not legislate from the bench. She understands that the role of a judge is to inter-

pret the text of the Constitution and statutes as written, not as he or she might wish they were written. And she knows that judges should have a restrained and modest role in our constitutional democracy. Like Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Byron White, who were also nominated to the Supreme Court directly from legal positions in the executive branch, Harriet Miers will be prudent in exercising judicial power and firm in defending judicial independence.

When she goes before the Senate, I am confident that all Americans will see what I see every day: Harriet Miers is a woman of intelligence, strength, and conviction. And when she is confirmed by the Senate, I am confident that she will leave a lasting mark on the Supreme Court and will be a Justice who makes all Americans proud.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on October 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Earthquake in Pakistan *October 8, 2005*

The people of the United States offer our deepest sympathies for the loss of life and destruction caused by the earthquake that struck outside of Islamabad. Our initial deployments of assistance are underway,

and we stand ready to provide additional assistance as needed. My thoughts and prayers are with those affected by this horrible tragedy.

Interview With Matt Lauer of NBC's "Today" Show in Covington,
Louisiana
October 11, 2005

Mr. Lauer. Two of the volunteers this morning are the President of the United States and the First Lady. President Bush, good to see you again; Mrs. Bush, nice to have you here.

The First Lady. Hi, Matt.

Recovery From Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Mr. Lauer. Eight trips to this region for you since September 2d—six, I believe, for you, Mrs. Bush. Give me a sense of the biggest change you've seen over the past 6 or 7 weeks in this area.

The President. I think we've seen the spirits change. I mean, the storm hit; it was an overwhelming moment for a lot of people. And then they're beginning to realize, people—the local people are beginning to realize there's hope; there's a chance to rebuild lives. And a lot of people care about them.

I've seen some infrastructure change. The debris is being cleared, and roads are being rebuilt. And it's a remarkable spirit here in this part of the world. I mean, people say, "Look, we're going to rebuild our lives," and they've realized a lot of people from around the country want to help them.

Schools in Flood Ravaged Areas

Mr. Lauer. And as you see the progress, you also see how much remains to be done.

The First Lady. Sure.

Mr. Lauer. Schools still need to be reopened—

The First Lady. That's true.

Mr. Lauer. —health facilities and all that sort of thing.

The First Lady. Well, I'm worried about the schools. I'm really interested in that. But I'm also proud that so many people have gone to school, so many parents have

put their kids in school wherever they are, if they're in Houston or Fort Worth or Baton Rouge or wherever, and I think that's really important.

Responsibility for Response to Hurricanes

Mr. Lauer. So much more visibility on your part, President Bush, following Hurricane Rita and, as I mentioned, the eight trips to this region, as compared to what was seen as a slow and inefficient Federal response after Hurricane Katrina. Is this one of those situations where you're trying to get a second chance to make a first impression?

The President. I do my job as best I can. One of the things that we do is we respond to crises. And as I told the people, if I didn't respond well enough, we're going to learn the lessons. If there's any mistakes made at the Federal level, I, of course, accept responsibility for them.

On the other hand, there's a lot of good that's taken place, a lot of people are working hard. We had chopper drivers pulling people off roofs. We had, you know, people working long hours to save lives, and the story will unfold. I mean, the facts of the story will come out over time, and the important thing is for Federal, State, and local governments to adjust and to respond.

Plans for Rebuilding

Mr. Lauer. I talked to a prominent Democrat in Louisiana who has said that this type of appearance, while it's great to see you guys rolling up your sleeves and grabbing a hammer and helping with this piece of wall here, that it's a photo op, and they want to see a plan on paper, your plan to rebuild this region. Do you have that kind of a plan?

The President. Well, Matt, you see, I don't think Washington ought to dictate to