

policies, all aimed at making sure every American can realize the American Dream.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Resignation of Andrew S. Natsios as Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

December 2, 2005

Andrew Natsios has served as a key member of my administration for more than 4 years. He has exemplified the compassion and generosity of the American people and our deep commitment to helping and improving the lives of those who are suffering. Under his leadership, USAID has implemented important reforms and

helped us combat AIDS and malaria, rebuild Afghanistan and Iraq, provide humanitarian aid in Sudan, and assist victims of the tsunami and the recent devastating earthquake in South Asia. I thank him for his dedicated service to our country, and I wish him and his family well.

The President's Radio Address

December 3, 2005

Good morning. Earlier this week, I visited Arizona and Texas to observe firsthand our efforts to protect our Southwest border. And I met with customs and border protection agents who are working tirelessly to enforce our laws and keep our borders secure.

Illegal immigration and border security are issues that concern Americans. We're a nation built on the rule of law, and those who enter the country illegally break the law. In communities near our border, illegal immigration strains the resources of schools, hospitals, and law enforcement. And it involves smugglers and gangs that bring crime to our neighborhoods. Faced with this serious challenge, our government's responsibility is clear: We're going to protect our borders.

Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 60 percent, and

our border agents have caught and sent home more than 4.5 million illegal immigrants, including more than 350,000 with criminal records. Yet we must do more to build on this progress.

This week I outlined my comprehensive strategy to reform our immigration system. The strategy begins with a three-part plan to protect our borders. First, we will promptly return every illegal entrant we catch at our border with no exceptions. For illegal immigrants from Mexico, we are working to expand an innovative program called interior repatriation, in which those caught at the border are returned to their hometowns far from the border, making it more difficult for them to attempt another crossing. For non-Mexican illegal immigrants, we're changing the unwise policy of catch-and-release to a policy of catch-

and-return, and we're speeding up the removal process.

Second, we must fix weak and unnecessary provisions in our immigration laws, including senseless rules that require us to release illegal immigrants if their home countries do not take them back in a set period of time.

Third, we must stop people from crossing the border illegally in the first place. So we're hiring thousands more Border Patrol agents. We're deploying new technology to expand their reach and effectiveness, and we're constructing physical barriers to entry.

Comprehensive immigration reform also requires us to improve enforcement of our laws in the interior of our country, because border security and interior enforcement go hand in hand. In October, I signed legislation that more than doubled the resources for interior enforcement, so we'll increase the number of immigration enforcement agents and criminal investigators, enhance worksite enforcement, and continue to go after smugglers, gang members, and human traffickers. Our immigration laws apply across all of America, and we will enforce those laws throughout our land.

Finally, comprehensive immigration reform requires us to create a new temporary-worker program that relieves pressure on the border but rejects amnesty. By creating a legal channel for willing employers to hire willing workers, we will reduce the number of workers trying to sneak across the border, and that would free up

law enforcement officers to focus on criminals, drug dealers, terrorists, and others who mean us harm.

This program would not create an automatic path to citizenship, and it would not provide amnesty. I oppose amnesty. Rewarding lawbreakers would encourage others to break the law and keep pressure on our border. A temporary-worker program will relieve pressure on the border and help us more effectively enforce our immigration laws.

Our Nation has been strengthened by generations of immigrants who became Americans through patience, hard work, and assimilation. In this new century, we must continue to welcome legal immigrants and help them learn the customs and values that unite all Americans, including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language. In the coming months, I look forward to working with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform that will enforce our laws, secure our border, and uphold our deepest values.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:03 a.m. on December 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception *December 4, 2005*

Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. The annual reception for the Kennedy Center Honors is always a memorable event, and Laura and I are happy you all could join us. We

extend a special welcome to this year's honorees and to their families and friends.

The Kennedy Center Honors are presented for exceptional accomplishment in the performing arts. Once again, the Center