

## Remarks at “Christmas in Washington”

*December 11, 2005*

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Laura and I have really enjoyed the program tonight. We want to thank all the entertainers for their wonderful performances. I thank Dr. Phil and Robin for being such fine emcees for this event. I want to thank Carrie Underwood, CeCe Winans, Ciara, Jane Monheit, Rascal Flatts, The Click Five, and all the performers and choirs that were here.

We particularly want to thank George Stevens, the executive producer of “Christmas in Washington,” and his wife, Liz, as well as Michael Stevens, who’s the producer and director of “Christmas in Washington,” and his wife, Ali, who is the talent producer for “Christmas in Washington.” I thank Dick Parsons, who is the chairman and the CEO of Time Warner, and his wife, Linda.

In this season of giving, we count our blessings, and we remember that we are called on to do good works for those in need. On a special day in Bethlehem, the birth of a child brought hope to the world. And at this time of year, we are especially

grateful to those whose work brings hope and health to children.

“Christmas in Washington” supports the Children’s National Medical Center. All year long, the doctors and nurses and staff of this hospital are providing care, restoring health, and putting the light back into the eyes of children. I thank tonight’s sponsors and contributors for their support of this important work.

As we celebrate the holidays, we also remember the men and women who serve and defend America. Our military men and women and their families have the support and the gratitude of our entire Nation.

To all Americans, Laura and I wish you a joyful and peaceful holiday season. God bless you all, and Merry Christmas.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7 p.m. in the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to television host Phillip “Dr. Phil” McGraw, and his wife, Robin; and Laura, wife of Richard D. Parsons. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 15.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Iraqi Out-of-Country Voters

*December 15, 2005*

I’ve just had the really enjoyable experience of visiting with some Iraqi citizens who voted in the elections today. And you might notice, they’ve got their—got the little ink-stained fingers there.

And, first of all, I was struck by how joyous they were to be able to vote for a Government, a permanent Government under a new Constitution. We take it for granted in America because we tend to—we vote quite often in this country. These

good folks got to vote for the first time for a permanent Government.

And there’s a lot of joy, as far as I’m concerned, in seeing the Iraqi people accomplish this major milestone in the march to democracy. Millions of people voted. And I haven’t seen all the tabulations of the vote, but we’re certain that the turnout was significant and that the violence was down.

And, first, I want to congratulate the Iraqi citizens for being courageous and—

in defying the terrorists and refusing to be cowed into not voting. I believe freedom is universal. I believe the Iraqi citizen cares just as much about freedom and living a free life as the American citizen does.

Secondly, I want to thank our Embassy for doing such good work there and working with the Iraqi citizens to get this vote off. And I want to thank the international community for participating in these elections. This is a major step forward in achieving our objective, which is an ally—having a democratic Iraq, a country able to sustain itself and defend itself, a country that will be an ally in the war on terror, and a country which will send such a powerful example to others in the region, whether they live in Iran or Syria, for example.

I've assured these good Iraqis citizens that the United States will stay with them and complete this job. They've expressed concern about listening to the commentary that we'll leave before the job is done; they don't have to worry. We're doing the right thing. And we've got partners in peace with the Iraqi citizens.

This is a crucial part of the war on terror, as is the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act was passed 4 years ago. It gave our law enforcement the tools necessary to help protect the—America, the same tools that law enforcement uses, for example, against drug dealers. The PATRIOT Act is set to expire. The House of Representatives, recognizing the value of the PATRIOT Act, voted in a bipartisan way to extend the PATRIOT Act, and now there are Senators who are filibustering the PATRIOT Act. That is a bad decision for the security of the United States. I call upon the Senate to end the filibuster and to pass this important legislation so that we have the tools necessary to defend the United States of America in a time of war.

I want to thank you all again for coming. May God bless your citizens. May God bless a free Iraq. I appreciate you being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:47 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Senators John McCain and John Warner

*December 15, 2005*

*The President.* It's my honor to welcome two good friends, the chairman, John Warner, and of course, John McCain—Senator John McCain, here to the Oval Office. We share a common goal and that is to protect the American people and to win the war on terror.

Senator McCain has been a leader to make sure that the United States of America upholds the values of America as we fight and win this war on terror. And we've been happy to work with him to achieve a common objective, and that is to make it clear to the world that this Government

does not torture and that we adhere to the international convention of torture, whether it be here at home or abroad. And so we have worked very closely with the Senator and others to achieve that objective as well as to provide protections for those who are on the frontline of fighting the terrorists.

And so I appreciate your hard work, Senator. You're a good man who honors the values of America. I also appreciate the strong support that you've given—both of you have given in the war on terror. The central front of that war is Iraq. Part of