

year. Now that the Senate has acted, I look forward to working together with both the House of Representatives and the Senate to produce a bill for me to sign into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 2611. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this statement.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Energy Legislation *May 25, 2006*

I applaud today's vote in the House to allow for environmentally responsible energy exploration in a small part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A reliable domestic supply of energy is important to America's security and prosperity. This project will keep our economy growing by creating jobs and ensuring that businesses can expand. And it will make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy,

eventually by up to a million barrels of crude oil a day—a nearly 20 percent increase over our current domestic production. I thank the House leadership and Chairman Pombo for their hard work on this issue. I urge the Senate to join the House in passing ANWR legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5429.

Statement on Signing the Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2005 *May 25, 2006*

Today I have signed into law S. 1869, the "Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2005." This Act provides for digital mapping in support of the coastal barrier resources system and authorizes appropriations through fiscal year 2010 for implementation of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

Section 3(c)(2) and section 4(c)(3)(C) and (D) purport to require executive branch officials to submit legislative recommendations to the Congress. The executive branch

shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the Constitution's commitment to the President of the authority to submit for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
May 25, 2006.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

May 25, 2006

President Bush. Thank you all. Good evening. I want to thank Prime Minister Tony Blair for coming to Washington to discuss his recent visit to Iraq. The Prime Minister met with key leaders of the new Iraqi Government that represents the will of the Iraqi people and reflects their nation's diversity. As Prime Minister Blair will tell you, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki outlined an aggressive agenda to bring security to the Iraqi people, to improve electricity and other essential services, and to pursue a strategy for national reconciliation.

The agenda that Prime Minister Maliki has outlined demonstrates that Iraq's new Government understands its duty to deliver real improvements in the daily lives of the Iraqi people. The formation of a new government represents a new beginning for Iraq and a new beginning for the relationship between Iraq and our coalition. The United States and Great Britain will work together to help this new democracy succeed. We'll take advantage of this moment of opportunity and work with Iraq's new Government to strengthen its young democracy and achieve victory over our common enemies.

As we celebrate this historic moment, it's important to recall how we got there and take stock on how far we've come over the last 3 years. The violence and bloodshed in Iraq has been difficult for the civilized world to comprehend. The United States and Great Britain have lost some of our finest men and women in combat. The car bombings and suicide attacks and other terrorist acts have also inflicted great suffering on the Iraqi people. And Iraqis have increasingly become the principal victims of terror and sectarian reprisal.

Yet in the face of this ongoing violence, each time the Iraqi people voiced their opinion, they chose freedom. In three dif-

ferent elections, millions of Iraqis turned out to the polls and cast their ballots. Because of their courage, the Iraqis now have a government of their choosing, elected under the most modern and democratic Constitution in the Arab world.

The birth of a free and democratic Iraq was made possible by the removal of a cruel dictator. The decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power was controversial. We did not find the weapons of mass destruction that we all believed were there, and that's raised questions about whether the sacrifice in Iraq has been worth it. Despite setbacks and missteps, I strongly believe we did and are doing the right thing. Saddam Hussein was a menace to his people; he was a state sponsor of terror; he invaded his neighbors. Investigations proved he was systematically gaming the Oil-For-Food Programme in an effort to undermine sanctions, with the intent of restarting his weapons programs once the sanctions collapsed and the world looked away. If Saddam Hussein were in power today, his regime would be richer, more dangerous, and a bigger threat to the region and the civilized world. The decision to remove Saddam Hussein was right.

But not everything since liberation has turned out as the way we had expected or hoped. We've learned from our mistakes, adjusted our methods, and have built on our successes. From changing the way we train the Iraqi security forces to rethinking the way we do reconstruction, our commanders and our diplomats in Iraq are constantly adapting to the realities on the ground. We've adapted our tactics, yet the heart of our strategy remains the same: to support the emergence of a free Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself.