

law is going to have on seniors. And millions have signed up, and millions are realizing the benefit of this program. And so it's—we have done the right thing in passing this law. Seniors are given different options. Seniors are going to get an extraordinarily good drug benefit. We have helped modernize Medicare. And looking forward to talking about it.

Good.

Press Secretary Scott McClellan. Thank you all.

The President. Pleasant experience working with you all.

NOTE: The interview began at 2:42 p.m. en route from Golden, CO, to Andrews Air Force Base, MD. In his remarks, the President referred to King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Dubai Ports World *February 21, 2006*

I've just come back from a really good trip to the Midwest and the West talking about our need to change how we use energy—very encouraged by the technology that I saw and inspired by the scientists and engineers that are working on these new technologies.

And I also want to address another issue I just talked to the press about on Air Force One, and that is this issue of a company out of the UAE purchasing the right to manage some ports in the United States from a British company. First of all, this is a private transaction. But it—according to law, the Government is required to make sure this transaction does not, in any way, jeopardize the security of the country. And so people responsible in our Government have reviewed this transaction.

The transaction should go forward, in my judgment. If there was any chance that this transaction would jeopardize the security of the United States, it would not go forward. The company has been cooperative with the United States Government. The company will not manage port security. The security of our ports will be—continue to be managed by the Coast Guard and Customs. The company is from a country that has been cooperative in the war on terror,

been an ally in the war on terror. The company operates ports in different countries around the world, ports from which cargo has been sent to the United States on a regular basis.

I think it sends a terrible signal to friends around the world that it's okay for a company from one country to manage the port but not a country that plays by the rules and has got a good track record from another part of the world, can't manage the port.

And so, look, I can understand why some in Congress have raised questions about whether or not our country will be less secure as a result of this transaction. But they need to know that our Government has looked at this issue and looked at it carefully. Again, I repeat, if there was any question as to whether or not this country would be less safe as a result of the transaction, it wouldn't go forward. But I also want to repeat something again, and that is, this is a company that has played by the rules, that has been cooperative with the United States, a country that's an ally in the war on terror, and it would send a terrible signal to friends and allies not to let this transaction go through.

I want to thank you for your interest in the subject.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks to the Asia Society February 22, 2006

Thank you all. Madam President—it's got a nice ring to it. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your kind introduction; thank you for inviting me here. I'm honored to be here with the members of the Asia Society as you celebrate your 50th anniversary.

I came here today to talk about America's relationship with two key nations in Asia: India and Pakistan. These nations are undergoing great changes, and those changes are being felt all across the world. More than five centuries ago, Christopher Columbus set out for India and proved the world was round. Now some look at India's growing economy and say that that proves that the world is flat. [*Laughter*] No matter how you look at the world, our relationship with these countries are important. They're important for our economic security, and they're important for our national security.

I look forward to meeting with Prime Minister Singh in India and President Musharraf in Pakistan. We will discuss ways that our nations can work together to make our world safer and more prosperous by fighting terrorism, advancing democracy, expanding free and fair trade, and meeting our common energy needs in a responsible way.

I appreciate Ambassador Holbrooke. I appreciate your service to our country. Thanks for being the chairman of the Asia Society. Leo Daly is the chairman of the Asia Society of Washington. Leo, thank you. It's good to see you.

I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps that have joined us today, in particular, Ambassador Sen from India and Ambassador Karamat from Pakistan. Thanks

for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and hear the President give a talk.

Fifty years ago, many Asian nations were still colonies; today, Asians are in charge of their own destinies. Fifty years ago, there were only a handful of democracies in Asia; today, there are nearly a dozen. Fifty years ago, most of Asia was mired in hopeless poverty; today, its economies are engines of prosperity. These changes have been dramatic, and as the Asian continent grows in freedom and opportunity, it will be a source of peace and stability and prosperity for all the world.

The transformation of Asia is beginning to improve the lives of citizens in India and Pakistan, and the United States welcomes this development. The United States has not always enjoyed close relations with Pakistan and India. In the past, the cold war and regional tensions kept us apart, but today, our interests and values are bringing us closer together. We share a common interest in promoting open economies that creates jobs and opportunities for our people. We have acted on common values to deliver compassionate assistance to people who have been devastated by natural disasters. And we face a common threat in Islamic extremism. Today I'm going to discuss America's long-term interests and goals in this important part of the world and how the United States can work together with India and Pakistan to achieve them.

The first stop on my trip will be India. India is the world's largest democracy. It is home to more than a billion people—that's more than three times the population of the United States. Like our own country,