

oppressive. And the United States welcomes the arrival of women into these oppressive societies. There's no doubt in my mind, empowering women in new democracies will make those democracies better countries and help lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

So Laura and I welcome you to the White House. We're really glad you're here. We're so glad you're here, we're about to throw a reception on your behalf. [Laughter] And we wish you to enjoy it.

May God bless everybody here. May God bless your families, and may God bless our respective nations. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; President-elect Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines; Irina Krasovskaya and Svyatlana Zavadskaya, widows of prodemocracy advocates who disappeared in Belarus; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President. The Women's History Month proclamation of February 27 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks on Election Day in Crawford, Texas

March 7, 2006

*The President.* Thank you all.

*Q.* Was it worth coming?

*The President.* Yes, you bet. It's always good to come home to vote. And I urge all people to vote when given a chance. It's also good to be home in Texas—get a little rest here in my homestead and then

heading over to New Orleans tomorrow and Mississippi.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:43 p.m. at the Crawford Fire Department. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Tour of Recovery Efforts in the Areas Damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans, Louisiana

March 8, 2006

I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank Colonel Setliff for the tour that he just gave the Governor and the mayor and myself, along with Laura and part of our party. I want to thank Colonel Wagenaar for the aerial tour. We just flew over affected parts of Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish and St. Bernard Parish,

and getting a view of the progress that is being made.

I particularly want to thank my friend Don Powell for his hard work in coordinating Federal efforts with the Governor and the mayor. Governor Blanco and Mayor Nagin have been by my side when