

my decision to go into Iraq. And the Government of both countries didn't agree, and I understand that. War is terrible. It's an awful thing. And yet we're still able to maintain good relations.

When people are dealing with the subject of war, there is a lot of emotion. And I fully understand that. So I view the relationships both as not only important and vital, but I do view them as mature. As I said, this is the third Prime Minister with whom I will have dealt, and I—there is a certain camaraderie that takes place by virtue of our close ties and close history. And I bear no ill will whatsoever, and I understand the strategic importance of being close to our friends and to have a capacity to talk among ourselves.

As I say, there's a lot we can get done by working together. The great competition for our respective economies, in the long run, will be coming from the Far East. And therefore, the more close our relationships and the more we're able to deal with cross-border issues on trade and other issues, the more we'll be able to work in concert to keep our standard of living high. And Vicente is—you've heard him talk a lot about his worries about China's trade into the hemisphere and his concerns about job losses as a result of competition. And I believe that rather than, kind of, walling

ourselves off, I believe that cooperation, like we have done through the NAFTA process, dealing with disputes in an open-handed way, will enable us to be able to leave in place something beyond our respective times in office, so that future leaders can compete confidently.

And obviously, that's part of a policy. I would like to extend this kind of cooperative spirit beyond just the three of us. That's why the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas—which 28 of 32 members, if I'm not mistaken, supported the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas—that's the concept behind this notion of having a hemisphere that trades freely in order to be competitive—help us be competitive, which will help maintain standards of living. That's, after all, one of the key goals of any government.

Good, we'll see you all down there. Thank you. Looking forward to it.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:09 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico; and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 28. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks Announcing the Resignation of Andrew H. Card, Jr., as White House Chief of Staff and the Appointment of Joshua B. Bolten as White House Chief of Staff

March 28, 2006

Earlier this month, Andy Card came to me and raised the possibility of stepping down as Chief of Staff. After 5½ years, he thought it might be time to return to private life, and this past weekend, I accepted Andy's resignation.

Andy Card has served me and our country in historic times: on a terrible day when

America was attacked; during economic recession and recovery; through storms of unprecedented destructive power; in peace and in war. Andy has overseen legislative achievements on issues from education to Medicare. He helped confirm two Justices to the Supreme Court, including a new Chief Justice.

In all these challenges and accomplishments, I have relied on Andy's wise counsel, his calm in crisis, his absolute integrity, and his tireless commitment to public service. Andy is respected by his colleagues for his humility, his decency, and his thoughtfulness. They have looked to him as a leader and a role model, and they, like me, will miss him.

On most days, Andy is the first one to arrive in the West Wing and among the last to leave. And during those long days over many years, I've come to know Andy as more than my Chief of Staff. He is leaving the White House, but he will always be my friend. Laura and I have known Andy and his wife, Kathi, for more than 20 years, and our close friendship will continue.

With me today is Joshua Bolten, who will be the new White House Chief of Staff. Josh is a man with broad experience, having worked on Capitol Hill and Wall Street and the White House staff and for nearly 3 years as a Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Josh is a creative policy thinker. He's an expert on the budget and our economy. He's respected

by Members of Congress from both parties. He's a strong advocate for effective accountable management in the Federal Government.

He's a man of candor and humor and directness, who's comfortable with responsibility and knows how to lead. No person is better prepared for this important position, and I'm honored that Josh has agreed to serve.

The next 3 years will demand much of those who serve our country. We have a global war to fight and win. We have great opportunities to expand the prosperity and compassion of America. We've come far as a nation, yet there's a lot on the road ahead. I'm honored to have served with Andrew Card. I've got great confidence in my next Chief of Staff.

Congratulations, Josh.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:31 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chief of Staff Card and Chief of Staff-designate Bolten.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting *March 28, 2006*

Good morning. We've just finished our third Cabinet meeting of this year. I want to thank my Cabinet members for joining us. We talked about the war on terror. We talked about a war on terror that requires all of us involved in Government to respond and to protect America and help spread freedom.

My Cabinet officials obviously have got many responsibilities in their agencies, but we talked about their need to assume additional responsibilities to make sure that we're using every element of national

power to win the war on terror and to secure the peace.

This morning we had briefings from General Abizaid, Ambassador Khalilzad, and General Casey. We heard from the Ambassador about work toward a unity government. I'm pleased to hear from Zal that the Iraqis are now back at the table discussing the formation of a government, the process by which they will conduct a government once a unity government is formed, as well as, obviously, beginning to continue to—or continuing to discuss who will fill the key slots in the government.