

the terrorists and the insurgents. And we will continue to support them in that effort that they talked about: the need to establish control over the militias and other unauthorized armed groups and enforce the rule of law. And we will support them in these efforts to achieve that important objective. They talked about the need to rebuild infrastructure and strengthen their economy, and we agree with that assessment.

And finally, they talked about the need to make sure that all Iraqis share in the benefits of this new democracy. A new Iraqi Government represents a strategic opportunity for America—and the whole world, for that matter. This Nation of ours and our coalition partners are going to work with the new leadership to strengthen our mutual efforts to achieve success, a victory in this war on terror. This is a—we believe this is a turning point for the Iraqi citizens, and it's a new chapter in our partnership.

The Secretaries began building this new partnership during their trip. In other words, the Iraqi leaders saw that we are committed to helping them succeed. They need to know that we stand with them. And the Iraqi people need to know that we stand with them, that we understand the strategic importance of a free Iraq in the Middle East, and that we understand the need to deny safe haven to the terrorists who have caused such turmoil and havoc inside of Iraq.

There's going to be more tough days ahead. These Secretaries know that. They're realistic people. They have brought

an assessment of what they saw on the ground, and some of it's positive, and obviously, there's some difficult days ahead because there's still terrorists there who are willing to take innocent life in order to stop the progress of democracy. But this Government is more determined than ever to succeed, and we believe we've got partners to help the Iraqi people realize their dreams.

Last December, the Iraqi people voted to have a free government. I know it seems like a long time ago for the American people, but what we have begun to see now is the emergence of a unity government to represent the wishes of the Iraqi people. Last December, millions of people defied the terrorists and killers and said, "We want to be free; we want a unity government." And now what has happened is, after compromise and politics, the Iraqis have come together to form that Government. And our Secretaries went over there to tell them that we look forward to working with them as partners in peace.

So I want to thank you all for going. I appreciate your dedication to the cause of peace. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki, Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and President Jalal Talabani of Iraq.

Remarks on Presenting the Preserve America Presidential Awards May 1, 2006

Thank you all. Thanks for the introduction. [Laughter] Laura and I welcome you here to the White House. We are privileged to have some of our country's really great community leaders and preservation-

ists here in the Rose Garden. This is a fitting place, we think, to honor those who work hard to preserve our Nation's history and protect the natural beauty of the country.

This is a—this Rose Garden is one of America's historic treasures. I spend a lot of time mowing out here. [Laughter] The commitment of the folks here to preserve the unique treasures in your own communities means that you celebrate our Nation's history, and you help instill a love of our Nation's natural beauty for future generations. And that's why we have such an event, to encourage people to preserve and instill—preserve what is important and instill love for the—for our natural treasures.

I appreciate not only the First Lady of the United States being here, but I appreciate the first lady of Florida being here—*mi cunada*. Thank you. Give Brother my best. [Laughter] Tell him he's doing a fine job. [Laughter]

I want to thank Administrator Steve Johnson of the EPA. Thank you for being here, Steve. Lynn Scarlett, who's the Acting Secretary of the Department of Interior; Fran Mainella, who is the Director of the National Park Service; and Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming—thanks for coming. Appreciate you being here, Senator. Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule.

I appreciate Bruce Cole, who's the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, joining us. And it's good to see my old friend John Nau. He's the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; he's the chairman of the Texas Historical Commission—and he's a fine lad. [Laughter] It's good to see Bobbie too. Thanks for coming. And we appreciate all the members of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Thank you for serving. Thank you for your dedication to our country.

Laura and I want every American to have a chance to learn about this country's history, and one of the best ways to do so is to visit our country's great historical landmarks. So in 2003, we created—actually, she created—she told me to create, which I did—[laughter]—the Preserve America Presidential Awards, to recognize outstanding contributions to America's cultural

and natural heritage. By the efforts—their efforts, today's award winners have drawn tourists to historic sites and towns; they've revitalized communities and our natural spaces; and they've opened up new opportunities for learning.

The first Preserve America award winner we honor this year is Mission San Luis. It's a project that has reconstructed the former western capital of Spanish Florida in Tallahassee. The mission was burned to the ground over 300 years ago. And the State of Florida, in partnership with local and private groups, successfully recreated nearly every detail of the mission. The reconstruction team used original mission documents to ensure the highest level of historical accuracy. By their painstaking effort, they have helped Mission San Luis rise from the ashes to an educational, cultural, and historical resource reflecting Florida's beginnings. Congratulations, and welcome.

Our second award recipient is the State of Maryland. Through a new program called Maryland Heritage Areas, the State is protecting areas of historical significance and increasing heritage, tourism, and educational opportunities. State and community leaders are investing in projects to highlight special parts of American history, including the location where Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad helped slaves escape to the North and Fort McHenry, the site that inspired Francis Scott Key to write America's national anthem. And I appreciate the good folks of Maryland for highlighting the amazing sites you've got in your State. And welcome; thank you for coming.

Our third award recipient is a company named Tauck World Discovery, which is helping protect one of America's most precious natural resources. Since 2003, this company has been running an innovative volunteer program in Yellowstone National Park. Under this program, tourists who come to appreciate the scenic landscape can also help keep those vistas beautiful by contributing a good day's work. Pretty

interesting concept, isn't it? Since the program began, guests have donated almost 10,000 hours of labor on projects throughout the park. By their good work, the good people at Tauck are inspiring Americans to lend a hand in preservation and making sure that Yellowstone is a natural wonder for the years to come. And we welcome you both. Thank you for coming.

Our fourth award recipient is Hampton Hotels. Probably surprises you, doesn't it? Under their "Save-a-Landmark" program, Hampton Hotels is helping communities rehabilitate roadside attractions along America's great highways. Their efforts have helped preserve landmarks along Route 66, to restore the Jesse Owens Park in Alabama, to refurbish one of the country's classic theme parks in New Jersey, and to save the world's largest Santa Claus in Alaska. [*Laughter*] Each of these landmarks represents a piece of cultural and regional history. By saving them for future generations, they are helping to celebrate the diversity of America and provide educational opportunities for families as they travel across our great land. Thank you very

much; appreciate what you're doing. Congratulations.

All of these award winners set such a wonderful example for our fellow citizens. You've taken the lead in preservation, and we appreciate it. You're showing what is possible when local citizens decide to make a difference in the community in which they live, and your work is preserving America for generations to come.

And so Laura and I welcome you to the Rose Garden. We thank you for your efforts. May God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Columba Bush, wife of Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Barbara E. "Bobbie" Nau, wife of Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Chairman John L. Nau III; and Robin Tauck, president and chief executive officer, and Arthur Tauck, chairman of the board, Tauck World Discovery. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks to the American Hospital Association May 1, 2006

Thank you very much. It was on this stage 2 nights ago that I had the pleasure of showing up with a George W. Bush look-alike. [*Laughter*] So I walked in, and Dick said, "Is it really you?" [*Laughter*]

Thanks for your introduction, Dick. Thanks for the invitation to be here. I want to, first, thank all the good people of the American Hospital Association. I appreciate the important voice that you provided for our hospitals, but more importantly, I appreciate the compassionate care you give to our citizens.

I have come to talk about a comprehensive health care strategy that will make health care more affordable and available for all our citizens. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to use this forum as an opportunity to discuss our vision for moving forward.

I do want to thank George Lynn, who is the chairman of the American Hospital Association board of trustees. I want to thank all the trustees who are here. I appreciate the leadership of the American Hospital Association. I want to thank the