

Statement Honoring Former President Gerald Ford's Birthday July 14, 2006

President Gerald Ford's story is a true American story. It is the tale of a son of the Midwest who achieved great things through hard work, dedication, courage, and humility. President Ford played football at Michigan, received a law degree from Yale, served in the Navy during World War II, and for decades he represented western Michigan as a Republican Congressman from Grand Rapids.

Then came his appointment with history. He assumed the Presidency at a perilous moment for our country. A President had resigned; the United States was involved in a cold war; the economy was sputtering;

and America's confidence was deeply shaken.

Few leaders have ever faced such challenges upon taking office. Yet President Ford met them with steadfastness and courage. His leadership helped heal a wounded nation.

Since leaving office, President Ford has set a high standard for grace and character. He has never forgotten his roots or lost sight of the things that matter, including his deep love for his wife and partner, Betty.

Laura and I join all Americans in wishing President Ford a happy birthday.

The President's News Conference With President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in Strelna, Russia July 15, 2006

President Putin. Dear ladies and gentlemen, I have just completed my meeting with the President of the United States. The Russian party is satisfied with the results of this meeting. The meeting has reaffirmed that Russia and the United States remain reliable and mutually interested partners. We have been able to reach a whole range of agreements on key issues on the bilateral and international agenda.

We have adopted a joint statement, the basis of which are our parallel initiatives on the secure development of nuclear energy. Its main goal is to contribute to the sustainability and reliability of the supply of this type of energy resource and the parallel reduction of the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons. We believe that this will be possible in the case of the creation of a system of international enrichment centers integrated into a single net-

work and, of course, under strict control on the part of the IAEA.

It is equally important to pay a close attention to the development of innovative technology in the creation of new-generation reactors. The most productive way to go is to carry out this work on the basis of broad international cooperation. Such an approach will have a positive and stabilizing effect on the progress of international political and economic processes.

We have also supported the United States proposal on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. The Russian initiative on the creation of multilateral centers for the provision of nuclear fuel cycle services and the idea of a global partnership in this area complement each other very well, and we'll jointly work towards integrating these two initiatives. In order to achieve this, we'll have to resolve problems that have to do