

Statement on the Report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education

September 26, 2006

Today Education Secretary Margaret Spellings released the report of a commission whose focus was to help make America's higher education system more affordable and more accessible and to provide parents and students with information that will help them make better-informed choices. I strongly support the thrust of this important report and look forward to working with Secretary Spellings, the higher education community, the Congress, and the States to ensure that our higher edu-

cation system remains the finest in the world.

America's colleges and universities have always played an important role in advancing innovation, opportunity, and prosperity throughout our Nation and the world. We must all work to provide our students with the knowledge and skills they need to shape a hopeful future for our country.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this statement.

Statement on the Death of Byron Nelson

September 26, 2006

I was saddened to learn today of the passing of Byron Nelson. Byron Nelson was a legend in the game of golf, setting extraordinary standards for excellence on the course. More importantly, he was a true

gentleman and role model for generations of golfers. Laura and I join fellow Texans and the sports world in extending our sympathies to his wife, Peggy, and his family and friends.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Military Commissions Legislation

September 27, 2006

Earlier this month, I discussed with the American people a CIA program that has proven to be one of our most effective tools in the war on terror. Under this program, suspected terrorists have been detained and questioned about threats against our country. Because a Supreme Court decision put the future of this program in question, I asked Congress to provide legislation to save this important tool.

Today the House passed legislation that would allow this vital program to continue

and help keep our country safe. The "Military Commissions Act of 2006" addresses the Supreme Court's ruling regarding the application of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and clarifies the standards for U.S. personnel who detain and question unlawful enemy combatants. The act also creates a comprehensive statutory structure for military commissions so that we can prosecute suspected terrorists.

I appreciate the House's commitment to strengthening our national security. I urge

the Senate to act quickly to get a bill to my desk before Congress adjourns.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 6166.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan

September 27, 2006

President Bush. Tonight it's my honor to host a dinner with President Musharraf of Pakistan and President Karzai of Afghanistan. These two men are personal friends of mine; they are strong leaders who have a understanding of the world in which we live; they understand that the forces of moderation are being challenged by extremists and radicals. And we're working closely together to help improve the lives of the people in Afghanistan and the people in Pakistan.

President Musharraf kindly greeted me to Pakistan. I had the great privilege of meeting many in his Government. I met people in the civil society there. I met those who were helping the Pakistan citizens who were—whose lives were turned upside down by the devastating earthquake. I saw the compassion of this Government, and I was very proud that the American people were helping them recover.

I also had the opportunity to visit President Karzai. He's leading a young democracy. It's a democracy that was formed as a result of the Afghan people voting, having shed itself, with American help, from the Taliban regime.

We've got a lot of challenges facing us. All of us must protect our countries, but at the same time, we all must work to make the world a more hopeful place. And so today's dinner is a chance for us to strategize together, to talk about the need to cooperate, to make sure that people have got a hopeful future.

It's very important for the people in Pakistan and Afghanistan to understand that America respects religion, and we respect the right for people to worship the way they see fit. We welcome Muslim leaders here in the White House. I look forward to having dinner with friends of mine who don't happen to share the same faith I do, but nevertheless share the same outlook for a hopeful world.

As we work for a more hopeful world, we will continue to make sure that extremists, such as Usama bin Laden, that wants to hurt my friend here as well as upset the democracy in Afghanistan is brought to justice. The main thing I was looking forward to talking about is how the United States Government and the people of the United States can help these two countries provide a foundation for hope. And so I want to thank you for coming. We're proud to have you here, Mr. President.

President Musharraf. My pleasure.

President Bush. Proud to have you here, Mr. President. Let's go eat dinner. Thank you, sir.

President Musharraf. Thank you very much.

President Karzai. Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.