

Remarks on World AIDS Day *December 1, 2006*

Laura and I welcome our guests. This is World AIDS Day. It's a day for the world to recognize the fact that there are 39 million people living with HIV/AIDS and a day to remember the fact that 25 million people have died of AIDS. It's a day, as well, for the United States to remember that we have a duty to do something about this epidemic, this pandemic.

And today Laura and I met with the Secretary of HHS, as well as Mark Dybul, our U.S. Coordinator for our AIDS effort, and people who are involved with helping to save lives, people from our country and people from around the world who have come to share with us the stories of compassion and courage.

This country is committed—we're committed in helping solve this problem by dedicating a lot of resources to the battle against HIV/AIDS. The American taxpayers have funded over \$15 billion to help groups around this table save lives. Before the PEPFAR program—that's the name of the program that we—that's what we call the program that we dedicate money to, to help save lives—before it became into being, there was about 50,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs. Today, there are over 800,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs, and we thank those who are on the ground in the countries around the world who are using taxpayers' money to save lives. We believe that it's one thing to spend money; we also believe it's another thing to say that we expect there to be results. And the American people need to know, we're

getting good results with your money, and we'll continue to spend it wisely.

We also—as we think about people affected with HIV/AIDS in countries around the world, we remember those who have got HIV/AIDS here at home. And it's very important for the American people to understand we're spending over \$18 billion to help save lives here at home. And I call upon the Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White Act. The bill has passed the United States House of Representatives; the Senate has time to act before it goes on recess. It is an important piece of legislation that will enable us to continue our fight against HIV/AIDS domestically.

I can't thank you all enough for coming, and I thank you for being such decent, compassionate people. The pandemic of HIV/AIDS can be defeated, and the United States is willing to take the lead in that fight. But we can't do it alone. And so for our international partners, we appreciate what you do. For the faith-based community, we thank you for hearing the universal call to love a neighbor. And for the taxpayers, we appreciate your generosity in showing the world the good heart and compassion of the American people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The World AIDS Day proclamation of November 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Agreement *December 1, 2006*

The United States welcomes the recent progress made by the Northern Ireland parties and the British and Irish Governments to implement the agreement reached at St. Andrews, and I recognize the leadership shown by the political party leaders.

The United States fully supports the agreed way forward for Northern Ireland: a power-sharing government by the end of March next year, based on support for the rule of law and policing.

The President's Radio Address *December 2, 2006*

Good morning. I returned home this week from a visit to the Middle East. On my trip, I met with Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq to discuss how we can improve the situation on the ground in his country and help the Iraqis build a lasting democracy.

My meeting with Prime Minister Maliki was our third since he took office 6 months ago. With each meeting, I'm coming to know him better, and I'm becoming more impressed by his desire to make the difficult choices that will put his country on a better path. During our meeting, I told the Prime Minister that America is ready to make changes to better support the unity Government of Iraq and that several key principles will guide our efforts.

First, the success of Prime Minister Maliki's Government is critical to success in Iraq. His unity Government was chosen through free elections in which nearly 12 million Iraqis cast their ballots in support of democracy. Our goal in Iraq is to strengthen his democratic Government and help Iraq's leaders build a free nation that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself and is an ally in the war on terror.

Second, the success of the Iraqi Government depends on the success of the Iraqi security forces. The training of Iraqi security forces has been steady, yet we both agreed that we need to do more, and we

need to do it faster. The Prime Minister wants to show the people who elected him that he's willing to make the hard decisions necessary to provide security.

To do that, he needs larger and more capable Iraqi forces under his control, and he needs them quickly. By helping Iraq's elected leaders get the Iraqi forces they need, we will help Iraq's democratic Government become more effective in fighting the terrorists and other violent extremists, and in providing security and stability, particularly in Baghdad.

Third, success in Iraq requires strong institutions that will stand the test of time and hardship. Our goal in Iraq is to help Prime Minister Maliki build a country that is united, where the rule of law prevails and the rights of minorities are respected. The Prime Minister made clear that splitting his country into parts is not what the Iraqi people want and that any partition of Iraq would lead to an increase in sectarian violence.

Security in Iraq requires sustained action by the Iraqi security forces, yet in the long term, security in Iraq hinges on reconciliation among Iraq's different ethnic and religious communities. And the Prime Minister has committed his Government to achieving that goal.