

and capable AU force, augmented by United Nations help, to save lives.

One thing I'm impressed with is the President's commitment to democracy, rule of law, decency, and education. And to the extent that we can help—continue to help your country, Mr. President, we will do so.

Welcome, I'm glad you're here.

President Yayi. I have come here to, first and foremost, thank Mr. President Bush for all the initiatives that have been taken so far to eradicate poverty on the continents. As you may know, among these initiatives, we have the *agua* initiative, empowerment of women, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the initiative of MCA, that is, Millennium Challenge Account. It is very important for us in Africa because the MCA will help us eradicate poverty. And I would like to thank President Bush for that last initiative he took.

Africa is aware of her responsibility in the roles she has to play, globally speaking, because we have to reach prosperity, and that prosperity has some conditions. We need peace. We need stability. We need security. And Africa—America has a leading role to play in our combat to restore a peaceful continent.

Of course, we have to be together with America to build—succeed in all these challenges, to take up all these challenges. And multilaterally, it should be also a part of concern of the American people. We are aware of the fact that America can really play a very important role to continue building capacity among the institutions like

IMF and the World Bank, and the institution of—[inaudible]—which is very important for us also.

And the efforts should continue being made by the American Government within the G-8 group, because Africa needs a lot from this G-8, and international exchanges also have to be reinforced. The Doha negotiations need to find a solution now—try to make it easier because cotton is but one of our important products in Africa, and in my country, two people out of three live out of cotton. It's the same reality in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, where cotton is a very important product.

So some subsidies granted to some countries like America here cause a kind of dysfunctioning in our country and on the continent also. So America should help us smooth this mechanism. I'm very happy to hear that America is trying to set up a parallel mechanism that would really help promote the production of cotton. So by the time the WTO will also reach an agreement, I think that this problem of Doha will be definitely solved.

Let me end my speech by saying that I want to thank the American Government, thank President Bush, and the American people for all they are doing to really help us eradicate poverty on African Continent.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Yayi spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the White House Summit on Malaria December 14, 2006

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for inviting me to what sounded like a festive occasion. [Laughter] I'm honored to be here. I'm pleased to visit with

you all here at the National Geographic Society, and I want to thank you for inviting me to come to this important conference. I appreciate all of today's speakers,

including my personal favorite—[laughter]—Laura.

As you conclude this summit, we turn our thoughts to those who carry the burden of sickness during this holiday season. There are members of our own families here in America who are ill, and they live in villages halfway around the world. For many of their illnesses, there is a known relief; for many, there is no known relief. Yet for malaria, we know exactly what it takes to prevent and treat the disease. The only question is whether we have the will to act. All of you have heard the call to act, and you have responded, and I appreciate your compassion.

Because of your work, children who once wanted [sic] to die are now preparing to live, and whole regions are replacing suffering and fear with hope and health. We can take pride in the progress we have made, and today we will renew our commitment to a world without malaria.

I've just had a state visit, an important visit, with a remarkable leader from Benin. Mr. President and Mrs. Yayi, welcome to America, and thank you for being here.

The President is committed to a free society. He understands the need to confront illness so his people can live in peace. And, Mr. President, I thank you very much for your commitment and your willingness to work with those who want to help to eliminate malaria in your country.

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who are here, particularly Madam Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. Thanks for coming. I thank Randy Tobias. He's the Director of USAID. He, by the way, led the initiative to help put America squarely in the fight to eliminate HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. Randy, you will have a wonderful legacy in your service to our country, and I want to thank you.

I appreciate Admiral Tony [Timothy]* Ziemer. He is the U.S. Malaria Coordi-

nator. I see a lot of people who are working hard in my administration on these initiatives, and I thank you for your participation. I thank members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. I want to thank Members of Congress—I think that's Senator Leahy, Senator Frist—[laughter]—thank you all for coming. Thank you for taking an interest in it—Congressman Smith. I'd better stop. [Laughter] I think I'm going to leave somebody out. But I want to thank you all for your interest in this initiative.

I appreciate John Fahey—he's the president and CEO of National Geographic Society—and Gil Grosvenor. I want to thank Ray Chambers, who is the chairman of the board of Malaria No More. I thank all the social entrepreneurs who are here. I think people will understand that there is a call to act when we see a crisis at hand, and I want to thank you for acting. I appreciate Isaiah Washington, who is the emcee of this event. I want to thank all the program participants. Thank you all for coming.

By bringing together such a wide variety of people, this summit is sending a clear message that we are determined to defeat malaria. We are also sending a broader message about America's purpose in the world. In this new century, there is a great divide between those who place no value on human life and rejoice in the suffering of others and those who believe that every life has matchless value and answer suffering with compassion and kindness.

The contrast is vivid, and the position of America is clear: We will lead the cause of freedom, justice, and hope, because both our values and our interests demand it. We believe in the timeless truth, to whom much is given, much is required. We also know that nations with free, healthy, prosperous people will be sources of stability, not breeding grounds for extremists and hate and terror. By making the world more hopeful, we make the world more peaceful. And by helping others, the American people must understand, we help ourselves.

* White House correction.

One area in which America has a tremendous potential to help is in the fight against malaria. At home, malaria was eliminated decades ago. It is possible to eliminate malaria. In Africa, malaria remains a persistent killer. I think our citizens will be amazed to hear that last year, about a million Africans died of malaria. The vast majority were children under five, their lives ended by nothing more than a mosquito bite. In some countries, more people die of malaria than HIV/AIDS, and last week, a new study showed that people who contract malaria become more likely to spread HIV. The burden of malaria costs sub-Saharan Africa an estimated \$12 billion a year. And if the disease continues to spread, the cost in lives and lost productivity is going to grow exponentially worse. Now is the time to act.

Allowing Africa to continue on that path is just simply unacceptable. So we are acting, and we're leading. And with partners across the world, we are helping the people of Africa turn the tide against malaria. The goal of defeating malaria is a challenging goal, yet it can be done. It's not going to require a miracle; it just requires a smart, sustained, focused effort. And that's what we're here to talk about.

Experts have identified four key steps for combating malaria in Africa: distributing insecticide-treated bed nets, expanding indoor insecticide spraying, providing antimalaria medicine to pregnant women, and delivering cutting-edge drugs to people with the disease. These are four things that, if done, will save lives. They are not impossible things to do. I believe that our country must help and continue to take the lead. That's why last year, I announced an initiative to increase our commitment to fighting malaria in Africa. And I want to thank the Members of Congress for supporting this initiative.

We're spending \$1.2 billion over 5 years to provide bed nets and indoor spraying and antimalaria medicine in 15 African countries. We are focusing our efforts to

eradicate malaria on 15 countries. We are insisting on measuring. This project is measurable. We can determine whether or not nets are being distributed or medicine is being provided. But more importantly, we can measure whether or not we're saving lives. We look—work toward this historic goal to cut the number of malaria-related deaths in half. That's what we're headed for, as quickly as possible.

The malaria initiative is off to a strong start. We have launched the program in three countries: Uganda, Angola, and Tanzania. I want our fellow citizens to hear this startling statistic: In a short period of time, more than 6 million people have benefited. It's in our interests that the 6 million people we've helped—lives have been improved. In Uganda, groups funded by our malaria initiative distributed more than 300,000 nets and almost 300,000 doses of medicine to children and pregnant women. In Angola, the initiative supported a spraying campaign that protected the homes of more than a half a million people. And in Tanzania, the initiative paid for local health clinics to distribute more than 130,000 nets and spray homes for more than a million people. We're in action. Your taxpayers' money is working to save lives.

The statistics are impressive, and behind them are the stories of families with renewed hope in the future. Not long ago, the Zanzibar islands off the coast of Tanzania were a hotbed of malaria infection. Then, with the support of the malaria initiative, local groups launched a campaign called "Kataa Malaria," which is Swahili for "Reject Malaria." Workers went door-to-door to teach people how to use bed nets, they launched a campaign of TV and radio ads, and they spoke in mosques about malaria prevention and treatment. Now the people of Zanzibar are beginning to see results. One island reported that in the first 9 months of this year, the number of malaria cases dropped almost 90 percent compared to the same time last year. One man said this: "Personally, the initiative gives me

a leap of faith. The ultimate outcome is that we should have a malaria-free Zanzibar. There is no turning back.”

He’s right; there’s no turning back. We’re going to continue to expand the malaria initiative to reach other countries across Africa as quickly as possible. Earlier this year, Laura announced that four nations will join the initiative in ’07: Senegal, Malawi, Rwanda, and Mozambique. Today I am going to announce eight more countries will join in ’08: Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Zambia, Kenya, Liberia, Ethiopia, and Benin. President, I can assure the people that you are determined to beat malaria. And it’s that determination by the leadership of a country that is required for our initiative to be as successful as quickly as it possibly can. You can count on us as a steady, reliable partner.

Defeating malaria is going to require a lot more work than just the action of the U.S. Government. Defeating malaria requires cooperation between government and grassroots volunteers. I want to thank the leadership of Malaria No More, which is energizing the grassroots and raising money and mobilizing thousands of volunteers to fight malaria. There’s a lot of people out of our country who, if called to serve and to love, will do so. Rick Warren has got a church called Saddleback Church. He believes like I believe: To whom much is given, much is required. They’re going to send thousands of volunteers into African villages and clinics. These groups rely upon the skill of doctors and nurses. And for doctors and nurses who are serving in Africa to help achieve the goal of eliminating malaria, I thank you on behalf of a grateful nation.

I am pleased to announce that I am going to expand a Federal program called Volunteers for Prosperity, which allows organizations that recruit skilled volunteers to receive Federal grants more easily. I believe it’s in our interests to use taxpayers’ money to encourage these private-sector initiatives. Organizations involved with the

malaria initiative will find it easier to receive Federal funds, I hope. The point is, we’re going to try to eliminate as much bureaucracy as possible to get money into the hands of those who are recruiting and encouraging volunteers to be on the front-line of fighting malaria.

I want to thank all the grassroots volunteers who are here. I want to thank you for doing what you’re doing. I hope that you can do more, and I hope that this summit, which Laura and her team put together, enables you to go out and recruit, because the quicker we eliminate malaria, the better off the world will be.

Defeating malaria requires cooperation between Government and the private sector. When I announced the malaria initiative, I called on foundations and corporations to participate. In other words, I said, “You’ve got to be with us; the Government alone can’t solve the problem. We can address it, we can fund it, but we need your help.” I want to thank the Gates Foundation. Melinda, thank you for being here. This foundation is a fantastic example of social entrepreneurship. It was caused to be because of fantastic business entrepreneurship. It is now using the business acumen and the rewards of being smart to fund unbelievable programs. And I’m proud of what you’re doing.

I want to thank the Red Cross. And, Bonnie, thank you very much. You’ve trained thousands of health workers in sub-Saharan Africa, and you’re going to train more. I want to thank the Global Business Coalition that thus far has brought more than 200 companies together to raise money for bed nets and other supplies. Two hundred is a little short, as far as I’m concerned. In other words, I view it as a good start, kind of a down payment. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank ExxonMobil and Marathon Oil, who funded—which have funded antimalaria projects in some of Africa’s most heavily affected nations. I think it’s in your corporate interests that the people

of Africa see that you're willing to invest in the future of their countries. America's businesses and foundations are showing a lot of wisdom and generosity. I appreciate your support.

Defeating malaria requires cooperation between our country and the international community. We have given nearly \$2 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS—and I want to thank the leader of the fund, who is here today by the way—Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. And nearly a quarter of that money has been used for antimalaria projects. We support the efforts to fight malaria being led by the WHO and the new leader, as well as UNICEF and my friend Ann Veneman, and the World Bank, where Paul Wolfowitz has made antimalaria projects a high priority. Some of our allies in Europe have committed resources to these efforts, and frankly, they should commit more. This is a global effort to fight malaria. The United States is proud to take the lead. I encourage other countries—to whom much is given, much is required—to step up and give. I want to thank those who understand that malaria is a global problem, and we've got to work to solve it together.

Defeating malaria requires cooperation between America and African nations. The malaria initiative is based on partnership, Mr. President, not paternalism. Leaders like you know your people, you know their problems, and you are determined to solve them. Our job is to help you. I fully understand that many times people have got great ambitions and great intentions, but they have no money to do—to help. And that's why this Government is committed to providing money and technology to help the leaders accomplish the objectives that we've set forth.

African leaders also understand, in the long run, that defeating malaria requires more than nets and sprays and drugs. It requires changing the conditions that help malaria thrive: poverty and the lack of education and unresponsive governments and

corruption and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. To help African leaders overcome these challenges, this administration has doubled development aid to Africa during my Presidency, and I propose to double it again by the end of this decade.

We've created the Millennium Challenge Account to support nations that govern justly. It doesn't make any sense for us to send taxpayers' monies to countries that steal the money. We give to—and part of the Millennium Challenge Account, headed by Ambassador Danilovich, is to encourage countries to invest in their people and to encourage economic freedom. And so far, we have signed compacts with five African nations, and we're working on more.

We launched one of the most important initiatives in American history, as far as I'm concerned, and that is the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which thus far has brought lifesaving drugs to more than 800,000 people on the continent of Africa in 5 short years.

Development aid is one thing, but so is the capacity for us to help nations through trade. I appreciate the work of my predecessor, President Clinton, and subsequent Congresses to pass and now extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which has enabled me to report to you that between Africa and America, trade has doubled since 2001.

In all these ways, we stand with the people of Africa in their time of need. And by doing so, we help lift a burden of unnecessary suffering, and we help reduce the appeal of radicalism, and we forge lasting friendships on a continent that is growing in strategic importance.

As we come to the end of this historic summit, every citizen can be proud of the work our Nation is doing to fight disease and despair. Our development agenda in Africa and beyond is the most ambitious commitment America has made since the Marshall plan. And once again, our efforts are showing the world what kind of country America is. We're a nation of optimistic

people and generous people and decent people who value human life. We're a nation that believes that we're fortunate and that through our fortune, we ought to help others. We're a compassionate people who care deeply about the future of the world. And it is my honor to lead such a people.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the National Geographic Society. In his remarks, he referred to President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin and his wife, Chantal de Souza

Yayi; Gilbert M. Grosvenor, chairman of the board, National Geographic Society; Richard D. "Rick" Warren, pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA; Melinda French Gates, cochair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, chairman, American Red Cross; Richard G.A. Feachem, executive director, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; Margaret Chan, director-general-elect, World Health Organization; and Ann M. Veneman, executive director, United Nations Children's Fund.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom *December 15, 2006*

The President. Please be seated. Thank you all for coming. Welcome. Mr. Vice President, members of my Cabinet, Laura and I are pleased you could join us on this special occasion. We're delighted to welcome our distinguished honorees as well as their families and friends to the White House. Thanks for coming.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is our Nation's highest civil honor. The Medal recognizes high achievement in public service, science, the arts, education, athletics, and other fields. Today we honor 10 exceptional individuals who have gained great admiration and respect throughout our country.

Norman Y. Mineta personifies the terms "public servant" and "patriot." He served as an Army intelligence officer, the mayor of San Jose, California, 10-term U.S. Congressman, and a Cabinet member under Presidents of both parties. He was my Secretary of Transportation. No Secretary of Transportation ever served longer or confronted greater challenges than Norm Mineta.

On September the 11th, 2001, he led the effort to bring thousands of commercial and private aircraft swiftly and safely to the

ground. Norm was calm, and he was decisive in a moment of emergency. He showed those same qualities in the months and years afterward, ably transforming his Department to face the dangers of a new era.

Norm Mineta's whole life has been an extraordinary journey. At the age of 10, he was sent with his mom and dad to an internment camp for Japanese Americans. Such wrongful treatment could have left a person bitter, but not Norm Mineta. Instead, he has given his country a lifetime of service, and he's given his fellow citizens an example of leadership, devotion to duty, and personal character. Mr. Secretary, you're a good friend and a great man, and our country honors you.

With us today is Warren O'Neil, who will accept the Medal of Freedom on behalf of his brother, John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil. Buck O'Neil passed away in October, after a baseball career spanning more than seven decades. He joined the Negro League in 1938, as a first baseman for the Kansas City Monarchs. Buck O'Neil won two batting titles and played on nine championship teams, and as a manager, guided the Monarchs to four league titles. After finishing his playing career, Buck O'Neil