

country with common sense and kind instincts.

Americans will always admire Gerald Ford's unflinching performance of duty and the honorable conduct of his administration and the great rectitude of the man himself. We mourn the loss of such a leader, and our 38th President will always have a special place in our Nation's memory.

President Ford lived 93 years, and his life was a blessing to America. And now this fine man will be taken to his rest by a family that will love him always and by a nation that will be grateful to him forever.

May God bless Gerald Ford.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The related proclamation of December 27 announcing the death of Gerald R. Ford, the proclamation of December 28 on the national day of mourning for Gerald R. Ford, and the Executive order of December 28 providing for the closing of Government Departments and Agencies on January 2, 2007, are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the National Security Council in Crawford *December 28, 2006*

I just had a meeting with my national security team, and this is the first time we've had a chance to sit down with Secretary Gates since he came back from Iraq. General Pace went with the Secretary. They reported firsthand what they saw, what they found. It's an important part of coming to closure on a way forward in Iraq that will help us achieve our objective, which is a country that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. And, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your timely trip, and thank you for this important briefing.

I've got more consultation to do until I talk to the country about the plan. Obviously, we'll continue to work with the Iraqi Government. The key to success in Iraq is to have a government that's willing to deal with the elements there that are trying to prevent this young democracy from succeeding.

We want to help them succeed. And so we'll continue to consult with the Iraqis. I'm going to talk to Congress; not only will I continue to reach out to Congress, but members of my team will do so as well.

I fully understand it's important to have both Republicans and Democrats understanding the importance of this mission. It's important for the American people to understand success in Iraq is vital for our own security. If we were to not succeed in Iraq, the enemy—the extremists, the radicals—would have safe haven from which to launch further attacks, they would be emboldened, they would be in a position to threaten the United States of America. This is an important part of the war on terror.

I'm making good progress toward coming up with a plan that we think will help us achieve our objective. As I think about this plan, I'm always—have our troops in mind. There's nobody more important in this global war on terror than the men and women who wear the uniform and their families. And as we head into a new year, my thoughts are with them. My thoughts are with the families who have just gone through a holiday season with their loved one overseas. My thoughts are with the troops as we head into 2007.

People always ask me about a New Year's resolution; my resolution is, is that they'll be safe and that we'll come closer to our objective, that we'll be able to help this young democracy survive and thrive, and therefore, we'll be writing a chapter of peace. I can't thank our families enough for supporting their loved one who wears the uniform, and I can't thank those who—

soldiers and sailors and airmen and Coast Guard men and women, folks in the Air Force—who represent the United States of America. May God continue to bless them.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Statement on the Death of Former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq *December 29, 2006*

Today Saddam Hussein was executed after receiving a fair trial, the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime.

Fair trials were unimaginable under Saddam Hussein's tyrannical rule. It is a testament to the Iraqi people's resolve to move forward after decades of oppression that, despite his terrible crimes against his own people, Saddam Hussein received a fair trial. This would not have been possible without the Iraqi people's determination to create a society governed by the rule of law.

Saddam Hussein's execution comes at the end of a difficult year for the Iraqi people and for our troops. Bringing Saddam Hus-

sein to justice will not end the violence in Iraq, but it is an important milestone on Iraq's course to becoming a democracy that can govern, sustain, and defend itself and be an ally in the war on terror.

We are reminded today of how far the Iraqi people have come since the end of Saddam Hussein's rule and that the progress they have made would not have been possible without the continued service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

Many difficult choices and further sacrifices lie ahead. Yet the safety and security of the American people require that we not relent in ensuring that Iraq's young democracy continues to progress.

Statement on Signing the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006 *December 29, 2006*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 6344, the "Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006" (the "Act"). The Act amends the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 (Title VII in Division C of Public Law 105-277) (the "1998 Act") and adjusts the authorities and duties of the Director

of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

The executive branch shall construe section 704(f)(5) of the 1998 Act, as amended by section 103(e) of the Act, which prohibits taking certain action if it is contrary to the expressed intent of the Congress, as referring to action contrary to a law.