

Statement on United States Military Personnel Recommendations From Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

January 5, 2007

I am pleased to accept the recommendations of Secretary Gates for several key positions in our Nation's Armed Forces. These leaders are accomplished military professionals whose experience, skill, and dedication will enable them to successfully lead our troops as they protect our country.

General George Casey has been a strong and effective commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. I have come to depend on his wise counsel and solid judgment in our efforts to protect the American people in the war on terror. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. General Casey will succeed General Peter Schoomaker, who has done an outstanding job in helping transform the U.S. Army to confront the challenges of the 21st century. I wish General Schoomaker all the best as he retires from active duty after a distinguished career.

Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus will succeed General Casey. General Petraeus is a soldier of vision and determination. His service in Iraq has equipped him with expertise in irregular warfare and stability operations and an understanding of the

enemy we face. I am confident that General Petraeus has the right experience, leadership skills, and judgment to be an outstanding commander of MNF-I.

Admiral William J. Fallon, currently the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, has earned a reputation as one of our country's foremost military strategists. His experience and leadership will be critical to helping our country achieve victory over the radicals and extremists who threaten freedom. He will be an excellent commander of U.S. Central Command.

Admiral Fallon will succeed General John Abizaid, who has overseen some of our military's most extraordinary efforts to spread freedom and democracy. He has earned the respect and admiration of a grateful nation, and his service is a model for those who wear our country's uniform. As he retires, I express my deep appreciation for all he has done for America.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth.

The President's Radio Address

January 6, 2007

Good morning. Earlier this week, the newly elected Members of the House and the Senate took their oaths of office and became part of the 110th Congress. I congratulate them all, and I look forward to working with them over the next 2 years.

Since the November elections, I've had a number of productive meetings with the new leaders in Congress, including Speaker

of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. I was encouraged by our discussions, and I'm confident that we can find common ground in our efforts to serve our fellow citizens and to move our country forward.

One area where we are already finding agreement is in our effort to spend the people's money wisely. This week, I announced that I will submit a 5-year budget proposal that will balance the Federal budget by 2012, while making the tax relief we passed permanent. Some Democrats have indicated that balancing the budget is a top priority for them as well. By holding the line on spending and continuing our progrowth policies, we can balance the budget and address the most urgent needs of our Nation, which are winning the war on terror and maintaining a strong national defense, keeping our economy growing and creating jobs.

We also see bipartisan agreement emerging on reforming the earmark process in Congress. Earmarks are spending provisions that are often slipped into bills at the last minute, so they rarely get debated or discussed. Many earmarks divert precious funds away from vital priorities like national defense and education to wasteful porkbarrel projects. I appreciate Democratic leaders who have pledged to maintain our current levels of spending without additional earmarks this year. And I support the temporary moratorium on all new earmarks announced by the Democrats.

This is a good start, but I believe we can do more. This week, I proposed my own earmark reforms, which would make the earmark process more transparent, end the practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language never included in legislation, and cut the number and costs of earmarks by at least half. These commonsense reforms will help prevent billions of taxpayers' dollars from being spent on unnecessary earmarks.

Another area where Democrats and Republicans can work together is in the effort to improve our schools. We have done so before. In my first year as President,

Democrats and Republicans saw that our schools were failing too many students, so we worked together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. This good law gave our schools new resources, and in return, we asked them to show results. By setting high standards and measuring student progress, we're holding schools accountable for teaching every student to read, write, add, and subtract.

Since No Child Left Behind was passed, we have seen major improvements in student achievement all across America. In reading, 9-year-olds have made larger gains in the last 5 years of the test than in the previous 28 years. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test. And in both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and starting to close the achievement gap.

This year, the No Child Left Behind Act is up for reauthorization. I'm confident that both parties can work together to help our Nation's students. By reauthorizing this important legislation, we can help make our schools a gateway to opportunity for every child.

With this new Congress and new year, Democrats and Republicans will have many opportunities to serve the American people. We must rise to meet those opportunities and build a stronger and more compassionate nation for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso
of the European Commission
January 8, 2007

President Bush. I'm very pleased to welcome back my friend Jose Barroso. Thank you. We just had a great discussion about the importance between—of relations between the United States and the European Union. Jose has got a really important job, and I think he's doing it really well.

Our discussion was frank; it was open. We talked about the importance of the transatlantic relationship and how we can work to improve it. We talked about the importance for Europe and the United States to resolve any differences we have when it comes to the Doha round for trade, so that we can promote international trade. We both recognize that the best way to help impoverished nations is to complete this Doha round and to encourage the spread of wealth and opportunity through open and reasonable and fair trade.

Jose and I talked about the Middle East. There's no question that the Israeli-Palestinian issue is on a lot of people's minds. We are dedicated to a two-state solution, two democracies living side by side in peace. And we talked about ways that we need to work together to see if we can't bring that vision to fruition.

We're going to talk about Darfur here at lunch. I know that Jose is as committed as I am to helping solve what I've called a genocide. It is outrageous that people are being treated the way they are, and I'm confident Europe and the United States can work with other friends and allies around the world to help solve that difficult problem.

We talked about Iran. We talked about Syria. We talked about Iraq. We talked about a lot of issues. We also talked about the importance of energy independence and, at the same time, being wise stewards of the environment. We are very hopeful that the use of technologies and good policy

will help us diversify our energy supplies and be able to assure future generations that the environment of the world will be better off.

And so I thought it was a constructive dialog. Glad to have you back.

President Durao Barroso. Thank you very much, George. It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet again, President Bush. We have now these very regular meetings, and it's always a great occasion to exchange views on such important subjects.

In fact, we have considered bilateral and global issues. On bilateral, I underlined the importance we give to further—to make go further, go faster, to go deeper in our economic transatlantic partnership. This is the most important economic relation in the world, the relation between the United States of America and the European Union. And we believe we can achieve more if we look at it in a comprehensive manner. And I hope that now there will be some concrete work so that in our regular institutional summit, between the European Union and the United States, we can achieve some more complete results.

Of course, the most crucial factor is the succession—successful negotiations for Doha. Doha is not just about trade; it's also about development; it's about having a multilateral approach to trade. There is now the defining moment. We are really at defining moment, and we had a very good exchange, and we gave instructions to all negotiators to come with a solution as soon as possible. And of course it is important to engage also others, because this is a real global agreement that we are trying to build. And it will be a very important signal for the world community if we show that it is possible to have a global approach to trade and development.