

the good work his country and others have done in the six-party talks on North Korea, New Zealand is prepared to offer support for the energy package as part of the initial actions agreement that came out of the last session of the six-party talks. We've been involved with the Korean issue before, support of the KEDO fund. So we're prepared to be in and support denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We're also participating with the U.S. on another project under the G-8 global partnership for eliminating the weapons of mass destruction still floating around the ex-Soviet countries. And we'll be involved in another partnership with the U.S. on the Ukrainian border, which involves training officials and detecting material which might be crossing borders.

I've talked about the importance to us of the U.S. presence in the Asia Pacific. We cooperate a lot on the Asia Pacific, a lot of common objectives, work well in APEC together. I particularly welcomed the President's support for developing up the concept of a free trade area of the Asia Pacific, which we have to look at again at the Sydney APEC summit.

Also appreciative of the fact that the U.S. is focusing on the problems of the South Pacific. We've had close coordination on

the aftermath of the coup in Fiji, on the issues in the Solomon Islands, on Tonga, where the State Department is shortly to send another envoy to look at the situation there. Quite a considerable Tonga population in the U.S., as well as in New Zealand.

And of course, Timor, which has many of the characteristics of a South Pacific country, we're very active in as well; just sent a new helicopter contingent up there to support the peace effort.

So all in all, we've run through those issues. I've indicated that New Zealand is very supportive of fast-track authority being extended because the Doha round needs that extension. And if at some point in the future the U.S. is in a position to consider negotiating with more countries on FTA, New Zealand is there. And we think we present very, very few problems for the U.S.

So had the opportunity to run over a lot of issues, and a very, very good relationship, and thank the President for the invitation to be here today.

President Bush. Thank you, Madam Prime Minister. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Leaders of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq *March 22, 2007*

I just had a remarkable visit with some remarkable citizens. I want to thank them—Secretary Rice and Secretary England and other members of my administration—for being here to listen to State Department folks, USAID folks, and military folks talk about why they volunteered to go help Iraq succeed.

We have a remarkable country, and we have people from different walks of life,

different levels of experience make the decision to serve America by helping a young democracy survive. They understand what I understand, and that is, success in Iraq is important for the security of the United States. And my first mission was to thank them and their families. The country owes you a debt of gratitude.

And the Congress owes you the money you need to do the job, without any strings

attached. In the recent—in the bill that’s now being debated, there is money to help you do your jobs, in that bill. And Congress needs to get that bill out as quickly as possible, without a lot of extra spending and without a lot of strings to it.

There is money in that bill to make sure our military is funded. And I believe it’s important for our commanders on the ground to have the flexibility necessary to make decisions to succeed. We don’t want you to go into Iraq and then have unnecessary strings placed upon the money so you can’t do your job. Congress needs to get their business done quickly, get the monies we requested funded, and let our folks on the ground do the job.

Secondly, Secretary Rice is headed to the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East is a priority for this administration. She’s going to continue our efforts to involve all parties—the Palestinians, the Israelis, Arabs—to work for a solution that will lead to peace, and that is a Palestinian state

living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

I have been on the phone to some of my counterparts in the Middle East, reminding them that I have a strong commitment to this vision, as does the Secretary. This will be hard work. It’s not easy to get all parties headed in the right direction, but it’s necessary work for this country. And it’s necessary for our Secretary of State, with my strong approval, to be moving the process forward. And that’s what she’ll be doing.

Madam Secretary, I wish you all the best on your trip, and I thank you very much for your service.

In the meantime, thank you all. Please give your families all the thanks in the world. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on House of Representatives Passage of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations

March 23, 2007

Today I’m joined here at the White House by veterans, family members of people serving in combat, family members of those who have sacrificed. I am honored that they have joined me here today.

Here in Washington, members of both parties recognize that our most solemn responsibility is to support our troops in the war on terror. Yet today a narrow majority in the House of Representatives abdicated its responsibility by passing a war spending bill that has no chance of becoming law and brings us no closer to getting our troops the resources they need to do their job.

The purpose of the emergency war spending bill I requested was to provide

our troops with vital funding. Instead, Democrats in the House, in an act of political theater, voted to substitute their judgment for that of our military commanders on the ground in Iraq. They set rigid restrictions that will require an army of lawyers to interpret. They set an arbitrary date for withdrawal without regard for conditions on the ground. And they tacked on billions for pet projects that have nothing to do with winning the war on terror. This bill has too much pork, too many conditions, and an artificial timetable for withdrawal.

As I have made clear for weeks, I will veto it if it comes to my desk. And because the vote in the House was so close, it is