

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dave Duncan, pitching coach, William O. DeWitt, Jr., chairman of the board, Frederick O. Hanser, vice

chairman, Stephen Brauer, co-owner, Mercer Reynolds, co-owner, Mark Lamping, president, Walt Jocketty, general manager, and David M. Eckstein, shortstop, St. Louis Cardinals.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 16, 2007

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114)(the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2007, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Tom Lantos, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Thad Cochran, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 17.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Advances in Cancer Prevention in Bethesda, Maryland

January 17, 2007

*The President.* Thanks, Michael. I appreciate you joining us. I love coming to the NIH; it is an amazing place. It is an amazing place because it is full of decent, caring, smart people, all aiming to save lives. And I truly believe the NIH is one of America’s greatest assets, and it needs to be nourished.

And I’m real pleased to be working with Elias and the good folks who work here to make sure that there’s ample resources to fund these incredible projects that are taking place. And we’ll talk about some of them today. The purpose of the meeting is to let the American people understand

what kind of work takes place here and some of the practical applications of the discoveries that are being made. Obviously, we’re all very concerned about cancer. And, John, thank you for joining us.

First, I’m pleased that we’re funding cancer research. We’re up about 25 or 26 percent since 2001. It’s a commitment that I made when I first came to Washington; it’s a commitment we’re keeping. And the reason why it makes sense to spend taxpayers’ money on cancer research is that we can make some good progress, and have. Interestingly enough, this is the second consecutive year there was a drop in

the number of cancer deaths in the United States, and the drop this year was the steepest ever recorded. And the reason I bring that statistic up is that progress is being made. In other words, there are tangible results as a result of the research that takes place around the country, and a lot of it focused here at the NIH.

I had a fantastic experience today with some smart docs talking about how they can use genetic research, which Francis will talk about, to create cures for a lot of diseases. We particularly focused on kidney cancer today. And I strongly believe that it makes sense for us to progress and take advantage of the research that the Human Genome Project has yielded.

However, I really want to make it clear to the Congress that I hope they pass legislation that makes genetic discrimination illegal. In other words, if a person is willing to share his or her genetic information, it is important that that information not be exploited in improper ways. And Congress can pass good legislation to prevent that from happening. In other words, we want medical research to go forward without an individual fearing of personal discrimination.

Finally, I'm real pleased about the announcement made earlier on the HPV virus—vaccine. I don't know if our citizens know, but 70 percent of all cervical cancer comes from HPV virus. And as a result of good work here, and other places, a vaccine has been developed that the Government will dispense to those who qualify, all aiming to continue to build on the progress being made in dealing with cancer.

And so I'm very pleased with the job your folks are doing here, and I'm so grateful for you all to join us. I'm looking forward to hearing what you have to say. You'll be happy to hear my long-windedness is about to end. [Laughter] But thanks for coming.

Michael.

*Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt.* Doctor, we need to

get some background on what's happening here at NIH.

[At this point, *Elias A. Zerhouni, Director, National Institutes of Health, made brief remarks.*]

*The President.* That's good. I wish that people could walk the halls here at the NIH and meet the scientists and employees of this fantastic organization. It is amazing. You talk about young and smart and bright and excited—with all due respect, docs—[laughter]—you've got a lot of really bright people here, which is another subject for another time. But we better make sure we get the right education working to make sure that our scientists are given the tools and encourage young kids to become scientists in the first place, so that these halls remain full of people. Because as Doc said, he said, "If we're not doing it, somebody is going to," and we want it done here in America. We want—I mean, we want to welcome scientists here too.

And the other thing that struck me was that people from around the country—the globe that are here working. So, anyway, you're doing a good job. We're spending about \$28.6 billion here at the NIH, which was doubled from 15 years ago—I think it was, or something like that anyway.

Thank you. Michael.

*Secretary Leavitt.* John, why don't you talk a little bit about, particularly about the Cancer Genome Atlas. I think that's a fascinating development as it relates to HPV and other things that are happening in cancer.

*The President.* Yes, John, first, before you do it—if you don't mind—National Cancer Institute. Tell people what it is, how it works, if you don't mind.

*John E. Niederhuber.* The National Cancer Institute, Mr. President, was one of the first institutes founded on the NIH campus specifically directed at a disease, celebrating its 75th anniversary. It's an institute that has tremendous breadth, and I often like

to tell my friend the Secretary and his colleagues that while we study cancer, cancer really is a model, a disease model that has impacted almost every other disease in one way or another. The things that we have learned by studying this model—our ability to track the best scientists to work on cancer—I think has had tremendous impacts across the breadth of disease. So we're very proud.

*The President.* And you've been working with cancer for how long?

*Dr. Niederhuber.* Do I have to tell? [Laughter]

*The President.* Your hair looks—[laughter].

*Dr. Niederhuber.* Well, I've been in the business over 30 years.

*The President.* Have you? Fantastic!

[*Dr. Niederhuber, Director, National Cancer Institute, made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Dr. Niederhuber.* It's a very exciting time in my long career, which you were kind enough to point out to me, sir. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, I wanted the taxpayers to understand, the citizens to understand we've got a man of expertise here—[laughter]—setting you up for success.

*Dr. Niederhuber.* I've never experienced a time when science has been so exciting and been moving at such a rapid pace. This is just an unbelievable opportunity. I'm very honored to be here.

*The President.* Thanks for serving.

*Dr. Niederhuber.* I'm honored to be here, sir.

*The President.* A man who went through all the initials. [Laughter]

*Secretary Leavitt.* Elias mentioned the fact that the whole goal here is to become far more personalized. I want Francis to talk for a moment, but as I pass it to him, I want to relate a story that I think ties this together.

About 5 years ago, I participated in a conversation with a man in a small group, and they were talking about the potential

for genetics. And he wasn't a scientist; he wasn't a doctor. But he listened to it, and he said, "There's something to this genetics business." He said: "I'm 70 years old. Last month, I was diagnosed with macular degeneration. When my father was 70 years old, he was diagnosed with macular degeneration—when my grandfather was 70 years old." He said, "If there's anything I can do so that my grandson doesn't have to go through what I am and my father and my grandfather have, I want to do it."

This genetic discrimination legislation you talked about is so important to this—moving this forward, because it means that if people like that step up and help and make information about them and their health history available, not only will it benefit them, but it will benefit generations in the future. And it would be an unfortunate thing if anyone were then to be discriminated because of their willingness to contribute to science that way. Dr. Collins has been heroic in his advocacy, not just for this legislation but also the genetic HapMap. And I'd like—

*The President.* The genetic what? [Laughter]

*Secretary Leavitt.* He'll explain that to you later.

[*Francis S. Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, made brief remarks.*]

*The President.* Well, thank you for being on the leading edge of change for the good of mankind.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Becky, you've been through this in a very personal way. I think the President would be—we all would be interested—

*The President.* Where are you from?

*Rebecca Fisher.* I'm from Oakton, Virginia. I drove here—

*The President.* Which is?

*Ms. Fisher.* Outside of Vienna. Last stop on the Orange Line. [Laughter]

[*Ms. Fisher, librarian, Center for the Study of Intelligence, made brief remarks.*]

*Secretary Leavitt.* That's compelling.

*The President.* Yes, that's strong. Thank you.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Not every cancer is one that we can identify at hereditary. And, John, you might want to talk a little bit about the cancers that are not hereditary and what we're doing to make progress on those as well.

[*Dr. Niederhuber made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Dr. Niederhuber.* And that gives me an opportunity, if I might, Mr. Secretary, to introduce our other guest today, Dr. Grace Butler. I'm going to say a few words about Grace, Mr. President, because she is a big helper to the NCI. She's a—

*The President.* She's also a Texan.

*Dr. Niederhuber.* Also a Texan, you're right. She's professor emeritus at the University of Houston. She's had over 30 years of teaching and administrative experience in higher education. More importantly, for today's session, Grace is a stage-three colorectal cancer survivor. And as a result of that experience—much like Becky has committed much of her post-education years to working with us to fight this disease and—she's founded a nonprofit organization called Hope Through Grace.

Grace, I think you have some comments you'd like to make today.

*Grace L. Butler.* I do. Thank you, John. I thank you so much, Mr. President—

*The President.* Thank you, Doctor.

[*Ms. Butler, president and founder, Hope Through Grace, Inc., made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Ms. Butler.* And I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence, for your listening, and for your understanding and your empathy.

*The President.* Thank you for answering a call.

Michael.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Mr. President, I think we could summarize today by saying that the future of medicine is personalized to prevent and to preempt. We've heard today about progress that's being made, the elimination of discrimination—of genetic discrimination. There's a very important—it's a vital step in reaching that vision. We've seen good examples of the progress, and we thank you for the time you've taken. You may wish to sum up.

*The President.* Well, thanks for coming. I'm excited, and I appreciate the work being done here in Washington, the work being done at the grassroots level. I thank you for your articulate presentation, both of you all. And this Government needs to support what's happening in order to save lives, and we will.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. at the National Institutes of Health.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 18, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary

date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with