

Bob, we know it hasn't been easy. We admire you all the more for what you've overcome and what you're still overcoming.

And, Ava and Christine and Nicole Bloom, many of us knew your dad. And I know life is hard without him. He was such a fine guy. But one thing we've all seen this evening is that he has fine daughters, and I know he would be really proud of you.

Someone who is not here tonight is Tony Snow. When Tony called me and told me the outcome of his surgery, my heart just sank. But I know Tony is a fighter. And, Tony, we're all looking forward to the day when you come back to the White House.

Last week, we all heard the news about Elizabeth Edwards, and, again, your heart just sinks for what she and her family faces. And so to Bob Woodruff, the Bloom girls, Elizabeth Edwards, Tony Snow and, of

course, our men and women in uniform, Laura and I and millions of other Americans are praying for you and your families.

May God bless you, and thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:40 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Brian Wilson, vice president and bureau chief for Washington, DC, FOX News; Helen Thomas, syndicated columnist, Hearst Newspapers, and member, White House press corps; ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff, who was injured in Iraq on January 29, 2006; Ava, Christine, and Nicole Bloom, daughters of former NBC reporter David Bloom, who died in 2003 while reporting in Iraq; and Elizabeth A. Edwards, wife of 2008 Presidential candidate John R. Edwards.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Somalia *March 28, 2007*

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

Consistent with section 1226 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364) and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration on Somalia. This report on our comprehensive regional strategy toward Somalia includes information about our strategy in the Horn of Africa and the efforts we are undertaking to eliminate the terrorist threat and promote stability in Somalia.

Sincerely,

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ike Skelton, chairman, and Duncan Hunter, ranking member, House Armed Services Committee; Tom Lantos, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Silvestre Reyes, chairman, and Peter Hoekstra, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Carl Levin, chairman, and John McCain, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and John D. Rockefeller IV, chairman, and Christopher S. Bond, ranking member, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29.

GEORGE W. BUSH

## Remarks Following a Meeting With the House Republican Conference March 29, 2007

I want to thank the Republican leadership and the Republican Members of Congress for coming down to have a very frank and open discussion about issues facing our country. Yesterday I gave a speech, making it clear that I'll veto a bill that restricts our commanders on the ground in Iraq, a bill that doesn't fund our troops, a bill that's got too much spending on it. I made that clear to the Members.

We stand united in saying loud and clear that when we've got a troop in harm's way, we expect that troop to be fully funded; and we've got commanders making tough decisions on the ground, we expect there to be no strings on our commanders; and that we expect the Congress to be wise about how they spend the people's money.

We spent time talking today about our strong belief that we've got to keep taxes low. And so we had a very productive session, a session of friends talking amongst friends, all aiming to put a strategy together of how we can work together to secure this Nation and keep it prosperous. And so I appreciate you all coming. You're welcome back at the White House any time you want to join us.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the North Portico at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen March 29, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Madam Speaker, Mr. Leader, Members of Congress, Secretary Powell, distinguished guests: You know, the Speaker and I had the honor of having our picture taken with you, and as I walked into the rotunda, a place that occasionally I get invited up here and I walk into, I was impressed by the fact that I wasn't amongst heroes who were statues; I was impressed that I was amongst heroes who still live. I thank you for the honor you have brought to our country. And the medal you're about to receive means our country honors you, and rightly so.

And I want to thank Senator Carl Levin and Sergeant Rangel. *[Laughter]* Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your leadership on this issue. I have a strong

interest in World War II airmen; I was raised by one. He flew with a group of brave young men who endured difficult times in the defense of our country.

Yet for all they sacrificed and all they lost, in a way, they were very fortunate, because they never had the burden of having their every mission, their every success, their every failure viewed through the color of their skin. Nobody told them they were a credit to their race. Nobody refused to return their salutes. Nobody expected them to bear the daily humiliations while wearing the uniform of their country.

It was different for the men in this room. When America entered World War II, it might have been easy for them to do little for our country. After all, the country didn't do much for them. Even the Nazis asked