

Justice, and Health and Human Services to provide the Virginia Tech community with whatever assistance we can and to participate in a review of the broader questions raised by this tragedy.

I have directed these officials to travel to communities across our Nation to meet with educators, mental health experts, and State and local officials. I have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mike Leavitt, to summarize what they learn and report back to me with recommendations about how we can help to avoid such tragedies.

This week at Virginia Tech, we saw a glimpse of humanity at its worst, and we also saw humanity at its best. We learned of students who risked their own safety to tend to wounded classmates. We heard of a teacher who used his body to barricade a classroom door and gave his life so his students could escape through windows. And we saw the good people of Blacksburg embrace victims of this tragedy and help their neighbors endure and heal and hope.

That hope was expressed in a letter written by a Virginia Tech graduate shortly after the attack. He wrote: "Today there is pain everywhere in our community and our hearts are troubled. Yet I am certain our university will persevere." He contin-

ued, "Evil can never succeed, not while there are men and women like the people of Virginia Tech, who reach every day for success and endeavor for the improvement of the human condition across the planet."

This week, we reflect on what has been lost and comfort those enduring a profound grief. And somehow we know that a brighter morning will come. We know this because together Americans have overcome many evils and found strength through many storms. And we know there will be a day, as promised in Scripture, when evil will meet its reckoning and when every tear shall be wiped away.

May God bless those who mourn, and may God bless our wonderful country. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on April 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 20. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. The proclamation of April 17, honoring the victims of the shootings at Virginia Tech, is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Death of Representative Juanita Millender-McDonald *April 22, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald of California. She was a dedicated public servant who tirelessly and hon-

orably served her country for many years. We hold Rep. Millender-McDonald's family, friends, staff, and constituents in our thoughts and prayers.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

April 23, 2007

*The President.* It's my high honor to welcome General David Petraeus back to the Oval Office, and I appreciate Deputy Secretary England and General Pace joining us. General Petraeus has taken on a very important assignment for the security of our country and for the peace of the world, and that is to help this young Iraqi democracy become stable, evolve into a country that can defend itself and govern itself, and serve as an ally in this war against extremists and radicals who wish to do us harm.

General Petraeus has been there for a brief period of time, on his second tour. About a little over half of the troops, around half of the troops he's requested have arrived on the scene. These troops are all aimed at helping the Iraqi Government find the breathing space necessary to do what the people want them to do, and that is to reconcile and move forward with a government of and by and for the Iraqi people. So, General Petraeus, we welcome you here.

*Gen. David H. Petraeus.* Thank you.

*The President.* It's a tough time there, as the General will tell the Congress. He's here not only to check in with me and other members of my team, but, also, he'll be going up to the Hill, going up to the joint session of the Congress to brief the Members, both Republican and Democrat, about what's going right and what's not going right. He's a straightforward man who is implementing a very good plan to achieve our strategic objectives.

As the General will tell the folks on Capitol Hill, there's been some progress. There's been some horrific bombings, of course. There's also a decline in sectarian violence. And I appreciate you coming, and I really thank you and your family for your service to our country.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

### *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

*Q.* Mr. President, Senator Reid says you're in denial about Iraq and that Congress is going to pass a bill that includes a fair and reasonable timetable for withdrawal. Could you compromise? Could you accept anything that looks like that at all?

*The President.* I believe strongly that politicians in Washington shouldn't be telling generals how to do their job, and I believe artificial timetables of withdrawal would be a mistake. A artificial timetable of withdrawal would say to an enemy, just wait them out. It would say to the Iraqis, don't do hard things necessary to achieve our objectives. And it would be discouraging for our troops. And therefore, I will strongly reject a artificial timetable withdrawal and/or Washington politicians trying to tell those who wear the uniform how to do their job.

I will, of course, be willing to work with the Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, on a way forward. That's what I said during the Cabinet Room. But I also made it clear that no matter how tough it may look, that for the Congress to micromanage this process is a mistake.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

### *Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales*

*Q.* The Attorney General is still getting a lot of criticism over the U.S. attorneys situation. Was his explanation sufficient, or is there more he needs to do to try to turn things around?

*The President.* The Attorney General went up and gave a very candid assessment and answered every question he could possibly answer, honestly answer, in a way that