

## Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland

May 25, 2007

First, I applaud the bipartisan effort to get a emergency supplemental bill to my desk. The Speaker and the leader said they would get it done by Memorial Day recess, and they have, and I appreciate that very much.

You know, this effort shows what can happen when people work together. We set a good bill that didn't have timetables or tell the military how to do its job, but also sent a clear signal to the Iraqis that there's expectations here in America, expectations that we expect—about how to move forward. I look forward to continuing to work with the Prime Minister and his Government in meeting those expectations.

I also am honored to be here at this place of compassion and healing on Memorial Day weekend. It's a weekend which gives us a chance to honor those who have served this country, whether it be in this war or in previous wars.

In being here, I also want to honor the healers here at Bethesda. It's—health care here is remarkable. They're dealing with some of the very tragic injuries in this war. People come here without much hope, and they leave, in many cases, healed and ready to move on with their lives. So I thank the doctors and the nurses.

I also thank the soldiers and their families who I met here, people who are remarkably brave and courageous. I'm constantly amazed at the strength of character of those who wear the uniform. To be the Commander and Chief of such men and women is really an awesome honor.

And so to our troops and their families: May God bless you. And may God continue to bless our country.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

## Statement on Congressional Passage of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations

May 25, 2007

Congress voted yesterday to provide our troops with the funding and flexibility they need to protect our country, and I was pleased to sign the bill today. Rather than mandate arbitrary timetables for troop withdrawals or micromanage our military commanders, this legislation enables our service men and women to follow the judgment of commanders on the ground.

This important bill also provides a clear roadmap to help the Iraqis secure their country and strengthen their young democracy. Iraqis need to demonstrate measur-

able progress on a series of benchmarks for improved security, political reconciliation, and governance. These tasks will be difficult for this young democracy, but we are confident they will continue to make progress on the goals they have set for themselves.

I am pleased that Congress removed billions of dollars in unrequested spending. I would like to have removed even more, but this package was part of the effort to move forward and ensure our troops in harm's way have the resources they need.

I congratulate Members of Congress for coming together in a bipartisan fashion and providing the necessary funding for our troops and support for the Iraqi people.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 2206, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–28.

## The President's Radio Address *May 26, 2007*

Good morning. This Memorial Day weekend, Americans honor those who have given their lives in service to our Nation. As we pay tribute to the brave men and women who died for our freedom, we also honor those who are defending our liberties around the world today.

On Wednesday, I met with some of the courageous young men and women who will soon take their place in the defense of our Nation, the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy. Since its inception, the Coast Guard has patrolled and protected America's shores. And in this time of war, the Coast Guard has assumed new responsibilities to defend our Nation against terrorist infiltration and help stop new attacks. I was proud to stand with the class of 2007 and thank them for their bold decision to wear the uniform.

The men and women of the Coast Guard are fighting alongside soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have also volunteered to protect America. We live in freedom because patriots such as these are willing to serve, and many have given their lives in defense of our Nation. On Monday, I will lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in their country's cause.

One of those who gave his life was Sergeant David Christoff, Jr., of Rossford, Ohio. The day after the attacks of September the 11th, David walked into a recruiting station to become a United States marine. Asked why he made the decision to serve, David said, "I don't want my

brother and sister to live in fear." David eventually deployed to Iraq, where he fought street by street in the battle of Fallujah and earned a Purple Heart for wounds suffered in action.

While on leave back home, David learned his company was headed for combat in Afghanistan. But he knew there was also a job to finish in Iraq. So he asked to be reassigned to a unit headed for Iraq, and last May, he died in Anbar Province, where the marines are taking the fight to Al Qaida. When his family received his belongings, his mother and his father each found a letter from David. He asked that they pray for his fellow marines and all those still serving overseas.

On Memorial Day, our Nation honors Sergeant Christoff's final request. We pray for our men and women serving in harm's way. We pray for their safe return. And we pray for their families and loved ones, who also serve our country with their support and sacrifice.

On Memorial Day, we rededicate ourselves to freedom's cause. In Iraq and Afghanistan, millions have shown their desire to be free. We are determined to help them secure their liberty. Our troops are helping them build democracies that respect the rights of their people, uphold the rule of law, and fight extremists alongside America in the war on terror. With the valor and determination of our men and women in uniform, I am confident that we will succeed and leave a world that is safer and more peaceful for our children and grandchildren.