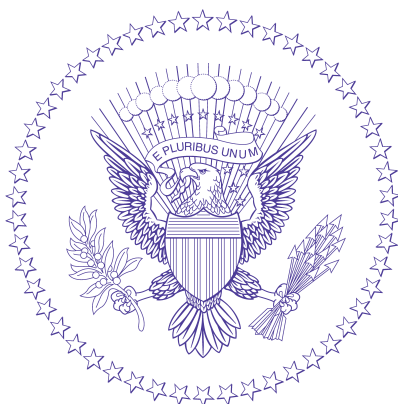


PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES



PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

# George W. Bush



2007

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK I—JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 30, 2007



Published by the  
Office of the Federal Register  
National Archives and Records Administration

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office  
• Internet: [bookstore.gpo.gov](http://bookstore.gpo.gov) • Phone: (202) 512-1800 • Fax: (202) 512-1204  
• Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20401

## *Foreword*

This volume collects my speeches and papers from the first half of 2007.

At the beginning of the year, I delivered an address to the Nation in which I announced a bold new strategy for victory against the terrorists and insurgents in Iraq. I ordered a surge of more than 20,000 additional American troops with a clear mission: to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, protect the local population, and help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind were capable of providing the security their country needed.

I told the American people “Victory will not look like the ones our fathers and grandfathers achieved. There will be no surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship. But victory in Iraq will bring something new in the Arab world—a functioning democracy that polices its territory, upholds the rule of law, respects fundamental human liberties, and answers to its people. A democratic Iraq will not be perfect. But it will be a country that fights terrorists instead of harboring them—and it will help bring a future of peace and security for our children and our grandchildren.”

Throughout these months, my Administration installed talented new leaders to shepherd our new strategy in Iraq and wage the wider War on Terror. In January, I appointed General David Petraeus as the new Commanding General of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. In February, Michael McConnell became the Nation’s second Director of National Intelligence. And in June, I nominated Admiral Michael Mullen to become the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As our new strategy began to demonstrate promising results, I insisted that the Congress not substitute its judgment for that of our commanders in the field. In April, the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed a supplemental spending bill for the war in Iraq that mandated timetables for troop withdrawal, limited the flexibility of our commanders in combat, and appropriated billions of dollars to projects unrelated to the War on Terror. I vetoed this bill and insisted that the Congress pass responsible legislation that would give our troops in the field all of the resources they needed to achieve victory.

While we continued to focus on defeating our enemies, the United States also remained engaged with our allies around the world. In March, the First Lady and I visited Latin America, traveling to Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico to discuss advancing the cause of social justice in the region. In April, I hosted German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Union President Jose Barroso for the U.S.-E.U. Summit in Washington. In May, I welcomed Great Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II to a State Dinner at the White House. The Queen’s visit coincided with the 400th anniversary of the British arrival at Jamestown, Virginia—America’s first permanent settlement. And in June, Laura and I attended the G–8 Summit in Ger-

many and toured Europe, visiting with leaders in the Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Albania, Bulgaria, and the Vatican.

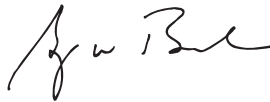
During this time, we also focused on important domestic priorities. In my State of the Union Address in January, I urged the Congress to support greater energy independence by pursuing the goal of reducing America's gasoline usage by 20 percent in 10 years. I called on the Congress to reform the tax code to make health insurance more affordable, as well as to financially support State governments providing health care for the poor and hard-to-insure. I continued to press the case for comprehensive immigration reform that would address the problem of illegal immigration and create a system that was both secure and fair.

In addition to this forward-looking agenda, my Administration also continued to hold the line on legislation that threatened America's deepest moral values. When the Congress once again sent me a bill that would have compelled American taxpayers to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos, I vetoed it.

Finally, this was a time when America paused to mourn. In January, I attended the funeral of President Gerald Ford, who died at his home in California at the age of 93. In April, I had the sad task of speaking to a convocation at Virginia Tech University, where students gathered to grieve 32 victims of an on-campus shooting. And in June, I spoke at the dedication of a new memorial in Washington to the victims of communism.

As I reflected on the similarities between the struggle against communism and the modern totalitarian threat of radical Islam, I told the assembled crowd, "Like the Communists, the followers of violent Islamic radicalism are doomed to fail. By remaining steadfast in freedom's cause, we will ensure that a future American President does not have to stand in a place like this and dedicate a memorial to the millions killed by the radicals and extremists of the 21st century."

As we moved into the second half of 2007, my Administration remained vigilant to ensure that this pledge would be fulfilled.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "G. W. Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

## *Preface*

This book contains the papers and speeches of the 43d President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period January 1–June 30, 2007. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against a tape recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. At the request of the Office of the Press Secretary, the Bush property known as Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, is referred to simply as the Bush Ranch. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed full-text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes, and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. That coverage provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of

the Press Secretary. Also included are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed full-text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and William J. Clinton are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of Michael L. White, Managing Editor, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit. The Chief Editor of this book was Stacey A. Mulligan, assisted by William K. Banks, Loretta F. Cochran, Lois Davis, Kathleen M. Fargey, Joseph G. Frankovic, Stephen J. Frattini, Michael J. Forcina, Allison M. Gavin, Gwendolyn J. Henderson, Diane Hiltabidle, Alfred Jones, Joshua H. Liberatore, Heather N. McDaniel, Ashley Merusi, Amelia E. Otovo, Jennifer M. Partridge, D. Gregory Perrin, Matthew R. Regan, Michael J. Sullivan, and Joseph K. Vetter.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Printing Office under the direction of William J. Boarman, Public Printer.

Raymond A. Mosley  
*Director of the Federal Register*

David S. Ferriero  
*Archivist of the United States*



# *Contents*

Foreword . . . v

Preface . . . vii

Cabinet . . . xi

Public Papers of George W. Bush,  
January 1–June 30, 2007 . . . 1

## *Appendix A*

Digest of Other White House Announcements . . . 835

## *Appendix B*

Nominations Submitted to the Senate . . . 867

## *Appendix C*

Checklist of White House Press Releases . . . 885

## *Appendix D*

Presidential Documents Published in the Federal Register . . . 897

Subject Index . . . A–1

Name Index . . . B–1

Document Categories List . . . C–1



## *Cabinet*

Secretary of State .....	Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of the Treasury .....	Henry M. Paulson, Jr.
Secretary of Defense .....	Robert M. Gates
Attorney General .....	Alberto R. Gonzales
Secretary of the Interior .....	Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of Agriculture .....	Michael O. Johanns
Secretary of Commerce .....	Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Labor .....	Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Health and Human Services .....	Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development .....	Alphonso R. Jackson
Secretary of Transportation .....	Mary E. Peters
Secretary of Energy .....	Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary of Education .....	Margaret Spellings
Secretary of Veterans Affairs .....	R. James Nicholson
Secretary of Homeland Security .....	Michael Chertoff
Chief of Staff .....	Joshua B. Bolten

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency .....	Stephen L. Johnson
United States Trade Representative .....	Susan C. Schwab
Director of the Office of Management and Budget .....	Robert J. Portman
Director of National Drug Control Policy .....	John P. Walters

## Eulogy at the National Funeral Service for Former President Gerald R. Ford

*January 2, 2007*

Mrs. Ford; the Ford family; distinguished guests, including our Presidents and First Ladies; and our fellow citizens:

We are here today to say goodbye to a great man. Gerald Ford was born and reared in the American heartland. He belonged to a generation that measured men by their honesty and their courage. He grew to manhood under the roof of a loving mother and father. And when times were tough, he took part-time jobs to help them out. In President Ford, the world saw the best of America, and America found a man whose character and leadership would bring calm and healing to one of the most divisive moments in our Nation's history.

Long before he was known in Washington, Gerald Ford showed his character and his leadership. As a star football player for the University of Michigan, he came face to face with racial prejudice when Georgia Tech came to Ann Arbor for a football game. One of Michigan's best players was an African American student named Willis Ward. Georgia Tech said they would not take the field if a black man were allowed to play. Gerald Ford was furious at Georgia Tech for making the demand and for the University of Michigan for caving in. He agreed to play only after Willis Ward personally asked him to. The stand Gerald Ford took that day was never forgotten by his friend. And Gerald Ford never forgot that day either, and three decades later, he proudly supported the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act in the United States Congress.

Gerald Ford showed his character in the devotion to his family. On the day he became President, he told the Nation, "I am

indebted to no man and only to one woman—to my dear wife." By then Betty Ford had a pretty good idea of what marriage to Gerald Ford involved. After all, their wedding had taken place less than 3 weeks before his first election to the United States Congress, and his idea of a honeymoon was driving to Ann Arbor with his bride so they could attend a brunch before the Michigan-Northwestern game the next day. *[Laughter]* And that was the beginning of a great marriage. The Fords would have four fine children. And Steve, Jack, Mike, and Susan know that, as proud as their dad was of being President, Gerald Ford was even prouder of the other titles he held: father and grandfather and great-grandfather.

Gerald Ford showed his character in the uniform of our country. When Pearl Harbor was attacked in December 1941, Gerald Ford was an attorney fresh out of Yale Law School, but when his Nation called, he did not hesitate. In early 1942 he volunteered for the Navy and, after receiving his commission, worked hard to get assigned to a ship headed into combat. Eventually his wish was granted, and Lieutenant Ford was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS *Monterey*, which saw action in some of the biggest battles of the Pacific.

Gerald Ford showed his character in public office. As a young Congressman, he earned a reputation for an ability to get along with others without compromising his principles. He was greatly admired by his colleagues, and they trusted him a lot. And so when President Nixon needed to replace a Vice President who had resigned in scandal, he naturally turned to a man whose

name was a synonym for integrity: Gerald R. Ford. And 8 months later, when he was elevated to the Presidency, it was because America needed him, not because he needed the office.

President Ford assumed office at a terrible time in our Nation's history. At home, America was divided by political turmoil and wracked by inflation. In Southeast Asia, Saigon fell just 9 months into his Presidency. Amid all the turmoil, Gerald Ford was a rock of stability. And when he put his hand on his family Bible to take the Presidential oath of office, he brought grace to a moment of great doubt.

In a short time, the gentleman from Grand Rapids proved that behind the affability was firm resolve. When a U.S. ship called the *Mayaguez* was seized by Cambodia, President Ford made the tough decision to send in the Marines, and all the crew members were rescued. He was criticized for signing the Helsinki accords, yet history has shown that document helped bring down the Soviet Union, as courageous men and women behind the Iron Curtain used it to demand their God-given liberties. Twice, assassins attempted to take the life of this good and decent man, yet he refused to curtail his public appearances. And when he thought that the Nation needed to put Watergate behind us, he made the tough and decent decision to pardon President Nixon, even though that decision probably cost him the Presidential election.

Gerald Ford assumed the Presidency when the Nation needed a leader of character and humility, and we found it in the man from Grand Rapids. President Ford's time in office was brief, but history will long remember the courage and common sense that helped restore trust in the workings of our democracy.

Laura and I had the honor of hosting the Ford family for Gerald Ford's 90th birthday. It's one of the highlights of our time in the White House. I will always cherish the memory of the last time I saw him this past year in California. He was still smiling, still counting himself lucky to have Betty at his side, and still displaying the optimism and generosity that made him one of America's most beloved leaders.

And so, on behalf of a grateful nation, we bid farewell to our 38th President. We thank the Almighty for Gerald Ford's life, and we ask for God's blessings on Gerald Ford and his family.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the National Cathedral. The proclamation of December 27, 2006, titled Announcing the Death of Gerald R. Ford, was published in the *Federal Register* at 72 FR 421. The proclamation of December 28, 2006, titled National Day of Mourning for Gerald R. Ford, was published in the *Federal Register* at 72 FR 423. The Executive order of December 28, 2006, titled Providing for the Closing of Government Departments and Agencies on January 2, 2007, was published in the *Federal Register* at 72 FR 425.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting January 3, 2007

Thank you all. We just finished our first Cabinet meeting of 2007. I want to thank my Cabinet officers for joining me here. We discussed our priorities for the next 2 years and how we plan to achieve them.

The Congress has changed; our obligations to the country haven't changed.

Tomorrow Members of the 110th Congress will take their oaths of office, and I congratulate them. I welcome their arrival

into town. I'm looking forward to working with them and so are members of my Cabinet. We've all been entrusted with public office at a momentous time in our Nation's history, and together we have important things to do. It's time to set aside politics and focus on the future.

I've been encouraged by the productive meetings that I've had with many of the new leaders of Congress, people from both parties. I want to thank them for coming down to the White House and talking to me about their ambitions and their goals for our country. I'm hopeful that Republicans and Democrats can find common ground to serve our folks, to do our jobs, to be constructive for our country.

One area where we must work together is that we've got to make sure we spend the people's money wisely. Over the past few years, pro-growth economic policies have generated higher revenues. Together with spending restraint, these policies allowed us to meet our goal of cutting the budget deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule. We did so without taxing the working people. We kept taxes low.

It's now time to take the next step. Next month I will submit a 5-year budget proposal that will balance the Federal budget by 2012. This budget will restrain spending while setting priorities. It will address the most urgent needs of our Nation, in particular the need to protect ourselves from radicals and terrorists, the need to win the war on terror, the need to maintain a strong national defense, and the need to keep this economy growing by making tax relief permanent.

By balancing the budget through pro-growth economic policies and spending restraint, we are better positioned to tackle longer term fiscal challenges facing our country, namely the entitlement programs. These programs need to be reformed for the sake of younger Americans. We need to reform Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid so future generations of Ameri-

cans can benefit from these vital programs without bankrupting our country.

Another area where we can work together is to reform the earmark process. One important message we all should take from the elections is that people want to end the secretive process by which Washington insiders are able to get billions of dollars directed to projects, many of them porkbarrel projects, that have never been reviewed or voted on by the Congress.

Some of the earmarks are not even included in the legislation. They are stuffed into committee reports that have never been passed and are never signed into law. Earmarks often divert precious funds from vital priorities like national defense, and each year they cost the taxpayers billions of dollars.

I appreciate the fact that Senator Byrd and Congressman Obey, the Democrats who will lead the appropriations process in the new Congress, heard the same message. For this year's budget, they pledged to maintain current levels of spending without additional earmarks. They agreed to a temporary moratorium on all earmarks. And this is a good start, and I appreciate their position. I also appreciate the fact that House Republicans last fall passed strong earmark reform ideas—put forth earmark reform ideas. And I appreciate their hard work, but we need to do more.

Here's my own view to end the "dead of the night" process: Congress needs to adopt real reform that requires full disclosure of the sponsors, the costs, the recipients, and the justifications for every earmark. Congress needs to stop the practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language, and Congress needs to cut the number and cost of earmarks next year by at least half.

To help rein in wasteful spending and restore fiscal discipline in Washington, I call on Congress to give the President the tool that 43 Governors have, a line-item veto.

These are just a few of the issues that we're going to need to work on in the year ahead. This new year brings new opportunities for progress, and I'm looking forward to working with the new Congress.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

## The President's News Conference With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany

January 4, 2007

*President Bush.* Madam Chancellor, thank you. Welcome back to Washington. It's good to welcome you here to the White House. And Laura and I are looking forward to feeding you dinner. I'm not so sure it's going to be as good a dinner as the barbeque you fed us—[laughter]—but we'll try.

This new year marks the beginning of Germany's Presidency of both the EU and the G-8. And we just had a wide-ranging discussion about a lot of issues. We talked about the Chancellor's ambitious agenda for both those leadership roles. We discussed how we can continue to work together to promote prosperity and security and peace.

We spent time talking about Afghanistan, and I appreciate very much, Madam Chancellor, your support for the people of Afghanistan. You take your NATO commitments seriously. We're proud to serve alongside such a strong ally.

We talked about Iran, and I thanked Chancellor Merkel's strong support for a Chapter VII Iranian—Chapter VII United Nations Security Council resolution on Iran. It was an important message to send Iran, that the free world wants there to be a peaceful future. And we don't see a peaceful future with the Iranians developing a nuclear weapon. And so I want to thank you for your leadership, Madam Chancellor. We're going to continue to work together on the Iranian issue. It's important for us to follow through in order—

on this Chapter VII resolution in order to solve this issue peacefully.

We talked about the Israeli-Palestinian issue. And Madam Chancellor had a good idea to convene the Quartet, which I agreed to. I think the Quartet ought to meet at an appropriate time. Condoleezza Rice will be going to the Middle East here shortly. She'll come back to report to not only me but also to the Chancellor, about how we can move the process forward. We're committed—strongly committed to a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace, two democracies supporting each other's rights to exist. I'm optimistic that we can achieve that objective. I'm looking forward to working with the Chancellor to do so.

We talked about Lebanon. And one thing is for certain, this administration—and I'm confident Chancellor Merkel as well—will support the Siniora Government. Isn't it amazing that young democracies are constantly attacked by radicals and extremists, and Lebanon is such an example. And I believe those of us who are fortunate enough to live in free societies have an obligation to support democracies like that of Lebanon.

We talked about Darfur. I appreciate very much Chancellor Merkel's deep concern for the suffering that goes on in Darfur. You may realize that my administration has called the suffering there a genocide. We take the issue very seriously. We expect the Bashir Government to make



more progress toward allowing there to be not only security but goods and supplies provided to the people that suffer there. And Madam Chancellor understands the issue. I appreciate the fact that German planes are flying relief into Darfur. Your great country is making a strong commitment, and we look forward to working with you as the head of the EU as well, to help end the suffering there in that part of Africa.

We talked about trade. We're committed to the Doha round. We've got hard work to do to overcome our obstacles. But we spent a—we had a good, frank discussion on the subject. Jose Barroso and his trade minister will be coming to the United States on Monday. We'll continue to further our dialog on Doha. But I believe we can get a deal done; it's just going to take a lot of will and a lot of hard work to do it. I know it is going to be necessary if we really do want to deal with global poverty, to have a successful round at Doha. Trade is the best way to help poor nations develop their economy so that people can realize the benefits of wealth moving throughout their society.

We talked about climate change. And I assured the Chancellor that I've been committed to promoting new technologies that will promote energy efficiency, and at the same time, do a better job of protecting the world's environment. And I believe there's a chance now to put behind us the old, stale debates of the past and focus on technological developments that will enable us to be good stewards of the environment, and at the same time, enable us to become less dependent on oil and hydrocarbons from parts of the world that may not like us.

Here in the United States, we're going full-steam ahead with new technologies that will change the way we drive our cars and power our homes and light our streets. And so, Madam Chancellor, we've discussed a lot. We'll have a chance to further our discussions over dinner. I'm so happy you're

here. I appreciate you taking time to come and visit. The floor is yours.

*Chancellor Merkel.* —and the G-8 Presidency and the fact that this trip here to Washington happens today are certainly not a matter of coincidence, but it is clearly an expression of the fact that we share values, that there are a lot of common interests between our two countries, and that there is also a lot of need for enhanced cooperation between the European Union and the United States of America. We clearly are in need of that cooperation in order to make further progress in solving the problems besetting the world of today.

There are a lot of issues that we debated here today that have clearly a connection to our presence in the European Union. The Doha round is one issue that comes to mind. We would like to cooperate very closely on that. We are all aware of the fact that this window of opportunity that we have is closing fast. We need to act swiftly. And it was with great pleasure that this is, indeed, an issue that is very important not only to the European Union but also to the United States of America.

We will have to further exchange also our views with the G-20 in order to achieve an objective that is in our interest and is in their interest, that helps them to get access to our markets and that also helps us.

There will be a G-8 meeting later on in the year, and there will be issues related to that that will deal with the climate change, is one. I was delighted to hear that there is a readiness here, and we shall continue to work on this; our experts, indeed, work on this.

On the one hand, we obviously need economic growth; but on the other hand, a reduction, also, of greenhouse gases. We were at one on this. And energy efficiency is the primary goal that we need to attain. There are a lot of areas where we are confident we can cooperate, starting from biofuels to new technologies that we are going to develop. Between the European

Union and the United States, I think there is a wide scope for further talks on this.

We also talked about this project of a future common market, the joint efforts to make our economic forces so efficient that these economies, our two economies that, after all, rest on one and the same values, can be rendered more efficient. There will be close contacts; we will set up a working group that will further explore those issues and that will then prepare for the EU-U.S. summit.

It's certainly an uphill battle. I always describe it as a sort of thick board that needs to be chalked at. And what we're dealing here with is, for example, patent laws, international financial markets, protection of intellectual property rights, and so on.

We also talked about the international situation, the situation particularly here in the Middle East. We thought that, for example, in the framework of the Quartet, the European Union can do a lot in order to bring about a solution to the problems besetting the Middle East. I'm delighted to hear that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is going to go to the region shortly. I think this is the right point in time to take some time and reflect what the Quartet can actually do in order to bring about a solution.

We would like the European Union to speak with one and the same voice, saying we want a two-state solution; we want the recognition of Israel, of the state of Israel by the Palestinians; we want to strengthen President Abbas; and we also want to strengthen, to bolster the evolution of a strong Lebanon. We discussed this today too, and we also discussed the measures that we think need to be taken.

We cooperate very well in Afghanistan. It was an issue that we discussed at greater length during the NATO meeting in Riga. There will be by the end of January, a NATO meeting on that particular issue. I think this is going to be actually very important, that particular meeting—in order

to take up where we left off in Riga—to concentrate on military projects, obviously, but also to give a very strong boost to civilian projects so that we might continue to build on what we agreed during the last NATO meeting.

Obviously, we also talked about the situation in Iraq. Allow me to say, although Germany is not militarily present in Iraq, we have every interest in seeing Iraq taking a turn for a more peaceful development, where people no longer need to be in fear of their lives, and that politically we shall do everything we can in order to give support to such a positive development.

Well, my impression is that over the next 6 months during our Presidency there is a lot on the agenda. There are a lot of common interests, as I said, and a lot of areas where I feel we can tackle problems together. And I think this dialog is just the beginning of a very intensive dialog we shall continue to have during our Presidency; this is, after all, a sixth meeting already. So I think we may safely speak of a continuous exchange of views. Thank you yet again for the invitation, Mr. President.

#### *Iraq*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. You spoke for nearly 2 hours today with Iraq's Prime Minister. Do you both agree now on the need to send more U.S. troops to Iraq to deal with the rising violence in that country?

*President Bush.* Well, Ben [Ben Feller, Associated Press], my thinking is taking shape. I'll be ready to outline a strategy that will help the Iraqis achieve the objective of a country that can govern, sustain, and defend itself sometime next week. I've still got consultations to go through. Whatever decision I make, though, will be all aimed at achieving our objective.

I did have a good discussion with Prime Minister Maliki. It did nearly last for 2 hours. I talked about a lot of topics with him. One thing I was looking for was will—to determine whether or not he has the

will necessary to do the hard work to protect his people. And I told him, I said that, "You show the will, we will help you." And that's—I'm in the process of making up my final decision as to what to recommend—what recommendations to accept. One thing is for certain: I will want to make sure that the mission is clear and specific and can be accomplished.

*Situation in the Middle East/Syria*

Q. Madam Chancellor, Mr. President, concerning the Middle East and the revival of the Quartet: Did you consider to enlarge the mandate of the Quartet? And there have been talks in Europe about including Lebanon problems, maybe even talks to Syria and broadening the mandate of this, since last summer during the conflict of the northern border between Israel and southern Lebanon, you learned that all these problems are interlinked.

President Bush. Your first part of your question? I didn't hear the first part of your question.

Q. I was just referring—

President Bush. Broaden the Quartet, is that what you said?

Q. That broaden—mandate of the Quartet, that you take care of more than the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

President Bush. My view is the Quartet ought to stay focused on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, because when we solve that problem, a lot of other problems will be easier to solve.

Secondly, Syria knows exactly what she needs to do in order to reenter the nation—reenter the—you know, to be viewed as a nation that's constructive. And my own view is, is that we need to proceed with the Hariri tribunal as fast as possible and hold people to account. If they murder somebody, they need to be held to account. People need to—they need to bring this to conclusion.

So my attitude on Syria is they can be a much more constructive partner, and they

haven't been. They don't need to be told that in meeting after meeting after meeting. They get told that right here in a press conference like this. They know exactly what they need to do. And it's their choice to make.

Chancellor Merkel. I think that the Quartet actually has its work cut out for it, looking at the Middle East conflict, first and foremost. I mean, it needs to be spelled out clearly what one actually wants to achieve, and the players in the region need to have the necessary willingness to bring about a solution. They can be supported by the Quartet, and international unified opinion can be set up through the Quartet.

But I think the main task, really, is to push matters along, to give a support to Prime Minister Siniora to develop a truly sovereign Lebanon. I think Syria needs to be given a push there. And Syria, I think looking at, for example, the efforts made by the European Union, looking at the fact that the Foreign Minister of Germany went there to talk to them, Syria has been given a lot of opportunities. Unfortunately, they have allowed those opportunities to pass without taking any action. We expect Syria to change, but unfortunately so far, we haven't received any optimistic messages to that effect.

*Death of Former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq/War on Terror*

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned that you see national reconciliation as a crucial goal there for your policy. Why then haven't you condemned the taunting that Saddam Hussein faced on the gallows from Shiite officials? And on a related subject, can you be more specific as to which day next week you'll be unveiling your Iraq policy?

The President. The second part of your question, no. [Laughter] First part of your question—I want you to anticipate the speech. I want you to be thinking about it. I want you to be internalizing it.

Q. [Inaudible]

*The President.* Thank you. I talked to Prime Minister Maliki about the videotape that was released during the execution of Saddam Hussein. He said he's going to fully investigate what happened. I appreciate that very much. One thing is for certain: A horrific chapter in Iraqi history has been closed, and now we're talking about a more hopeful chapter for the Iraqi people. And that's what I spent most of my time talking to him about.

We expect there to be a full investigation of what took place. The Iraqi people want to move forward. They want to forget that terrible part of their past, and they want to live in peace. And it's in our Nation's interest to help them do so.

So I spent a lot of time talking about the strategy to help achieve that objective, and that objective is a country that is an ally in this war on terror, a country that sends a strong example to reformers and women throughout the Middle East that it's possible to live in a free society that can work for the common good. I believe Prime Minister Maliki has the will necessary to make the tough decisions. That's one of the things I learned today. And in the meantime, he said he's going to fully investigate what took place.

*Q.* Sir, do you have a personal reaction, though—

*President Bush.* My personal reaction is, is that Saddam Hussein was given a trial that he was unwilling to give the thousands of people he killed. He was given a fair trial, something he was unwilling to give thousands of Iraqi citizens, who he brutalized. I wish obviously that the proceedings had been—gone in a more dignified way. But nevertheless, he was given justice; the thousands of people he killed were not.

#### *Europe-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* I have a question to the President and then a question to the Chancellor. Mr. President, now Germany tries to have a new action of the Middle East Quartet. And the debate always is how can Euro-

pean powers influence a superpower like the United States? Whether Germany objected Iraq or Tony Blair got along in Iraq, they had not much influence, the pessimists say. Can you give us one example where you changed your mind after talking to a European leader?

And, Mrs. Merkel, there are actually few successes of the Quartet over the past time. Were the efforts so weak or are the problems so great that they simply have not been able to achieve progress? And what does this mean? What does this spell out for renewal of efforts?

*President Bush.* I don't know if I'd call this "change of mind," but one thing that my European friends have taught me is that the United Nations is an important body in order to be able to convince parliaments of hard work that needs to be done. For example, getting resolutions on Iraq at the United Nations is important for a country like Denmark or Holland, in order for them to go to their parliaments and say, "We have U.N. approval."

As you probably are aware, I've really never felt like the United States needs to get United Nations approval to make decisions necessary for our security. But I have come to realize that other countries do rely upon the United Nations, and I respect that a lot. So there's an area, for example, where I have been taught a lesson by my allies and friends.

I listen to Angela Merkel a lot. She has got a lot of wisdom. I don't know if this helps her or hurts her for me to say this, but nevertheless, my consultations with Angela are very productive and very important.

The United States needs to have good relations with Europe in order for us to achieve big objectives, whether it be trade or peace or security, it's—the relations between Europe and the United States are vital. And sometimes the relations are—can be difficult. Not every country agrees, throughout Europe. And yet Angela always gives me good advice as to how to deal

with the common problems we face in order to make sure that our alliance works for the common good. And I appreciate that very much.

*Chancellor Merkel.* I simply think that we ought to try time and again to achieve some sort of results in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Looking at another field, for example, the adoption of the resolution on Iran, after all, we were able, looking at the past months, to forge a uniform position of the international community and have that reflected in a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. I think that's an enormous success, although things went obviously more slowly than if the EU and the United States, for example, had negotiated together.

But by including Russia and China time and again in these negotiations, what evolved out of that process is an international community that is credibly being able to show Iran where there is a redline. And I think it's essential to see that the European Union, the United States, China, and Russia need to pull in the same direction on a number of other international issues.

And I think it's very important that that goes for the Quartet, for example, too, because that's where I think that we will be able to make—it's an ideal forum where we can actually be able to make a difference and in a coherent fashion.

If that Quartet were to be more active, therefore, in the future, the Presidency and

also the Commission would obviously also have to meet a very specific task in fulfilling that—its part of the mandate. We need to make it clear, particularly to the not so constructive parts of Hamas, that they cannot play us off each other—us, that is the EU and the United States—but that we pull in the same direction, that we move in concert.

And I must say I am a strong believer in this multilateral effort in these international fora, because it shows clearly where the redline is to those who do not wish for democracy. And this is what we need to do, time and again make it clear to them where the limits are, where the redlines are.

*President Bush.* No back rubs. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:35 p.m. in Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso and Trade Minister Pascal Lamy of the European Commission; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. Chancellor Merkel referred to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany. A reporter referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. Chancellor Merkel spoke in German, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks on the Nomination of John D. Negroponte To Be Deputy Secretary of State and J. Michael McConnell To Be Director of National Intelligence

*January 5, 2007*

Mr. Vice President, thank you. Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. I am pleased to announce that I

intend to nominate Ambassador John Negroponte to be our next Deputy Secretary of State and Vice Admiral Mike



McConnell to be America's next Director of National Intelligence.

Under the leadership of Secretary Rice, the men and women of the State Department are working to expand freedom and defend America's interests around the world. The Deputy Secretary of State is a key role in shaping American foreign policy and in guiding our diplomats deployed around the globe. The Deputy Secretary also helps our Nation's chief diplomat manage the State Department and helps coordinate with other Federal Agencies so that America speaks to the world with one voice.

I have asked John Negroponte to serve in this vital position at this crucial moment. John Negroponte knows the State Department well. After all, he started there in 1960 as a foreign service officer in the administration of President Eisenhower. In the four and a half decades since, he has served our Nation in eight foreign service posts, spanning three continents. He served as Deputy National Security Adviser to President Reagan. He represented America at the United Nations. He served as our first Ambassador to a free Iraq. And for nearly 2 years, John has done a superb job as America's first Director of National Intelligence.

John Negroponte's broad experience, sound judgment, and expertise on Iraq and in the war on terror make him a superb choice as Deputy Secretary of State. And I look forward to working with him in this new post.

Ambassador Negroponte leaves big shoes to fill as the Director of National Intelligence. The DNI has become a core part of our national security team. The DNI determines the national intelligence budget, oversees the collection and analysis of intelligence information, ensures that intelligence agencies share information with

each other, and creates common standards for intelligence community personnel. The vigilance of the DNI helps keep the American people safe from harm.

Admiral Mike McConnell has the experience, the intellect, and the character to succeed in this position. He served as Director of the National Security Agency during the 1990s. He was the intelligence officer for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the liberation of Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm. Admiral McConnell has decades of experience, ensuring that our military forces had the intelligence they need to fight and win wars.

He's worked with the Congress and with the White House to strengthen our defenses against threats to our information systems. He has earned our Nation's highest award for service in the intelligence community. As DNI, Mike will report directly to me, and I am confident he will give me the best information and analysis that America's intelligence community can provide.

I thank John and Mike for taking on these new challenges. I appreciate their service to our country. Each of them will do good work in their new positions. And it is vital they take up their new responsibilities promptly. I'm confident the United States Senate will also see the value of these two serving in crucial positions, and I would hope that they would be confirmed as quickly as possible.

Congratulations to you both. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Negroponte and Director-designate McConnell.

## Statement on United States Military Personnel Recommendations From Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

*January 5, 2007*

I am pleased to accept the recommendations of Secretary Gates for several key positions in our Nation's Armed Forces. These leaders are accomplished military professionals whose experience, skill, and dedication will enable them to successfully lead our troops as they protect our country.

General George Casey has been a strong and effective commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. I have come to depend on his wise counsel and solid judgment in our efforts to protect the American people in the war on terror. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. General Casey will succeed General Peter Schoomaker, who has done an outstanding job in helping transform the U.S. Army to confront the challenges of the 21st century. I wish General Schoomaker all the best as he retires from active duty after a distinguished career.

Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus will succeed General Casey. General Petraeus is a soldier of vision and determination. His service in Iraq has equipped him with expertise in irregular warfare and stability operations and an understanding of the

enemy we face. I am confident that General Petraeus has the right experience, leadership skills, and judgment to be an outstanding commander of MNF-I.

Admiral William J. Fallon, currently the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, has earned a reputation as one of our country's foremost military strategists. His experience and leadership will be critical to helping our country achieve victory over the radicals and extremists who threaten freedom. He will be an excellent commander of U.S. Central Command.

Admiral Fallon will succeed General John Abizaid, who has overseen some of our military's most extraordinary efforts to spread freedom and democracy. He has earned the respect and admiration of a grateful nation, and his service is a model for those who wear our country's uniform. As he retires, I express my deep appreciation for all he has done for America.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth.

## The President's Radio Address

*January 6, 2007*

Good morning. Earlier this week, the newly elected Members of the House and the Senate took their oaths of office and became part of the 110th Congress. I congratulate them all, and I look forward to working with them over the next 2 years.

Since the November elections, I've had a number of productive meetings with the new leaders in Congress, including Speaker

of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. I was encouraged by our discussions, and I'm confident that we can find common ground in our efforts to serve our fellow citizens and to move our country forward.

One area where we are already finding agreement is in our effort to spend the people's money wisely. This week, I announced that I will submit a 5-year budget proposal that will balance the Federal budget by 2012, while making the tax relief we passed permanent. Some Democrats have indicated that balancing the budget is a top priority for them as well. By holding the line on spending and continuing our progrowth policies, we can balance the budget and address the most urgent needs of our Nation, which are winning the war on terror and maintaining a strong national defense, keeping our economy growing and creating jobs.

We also see bipartisan agreement emerging on reforming the earmark process in Congress. Earmarks are spending provisions that are often slipped into bills at the last minute, so they rarely get debated or discussed. Many earmarks divert precious funds away from vital priorities like national defense and education to wasteful porkbarrel projects. I appreciate Democratic leaders who have pledged to maintain our current levels of spending without additional earmarks this year. And I support the temporary moratorium on all new earmarks announced by the Democrats.

This is a good start, but I believe we can do more. This week, I proposed my own earmark reforms, which would make the earmark process more transparent, end the practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language never included in legislation, and cut the number and costs of earmarks by at least half. These commonsense reforms will help prevent billions of taxpayers' dollars from being spent on unnecessary earmarks.

Another area where Democrats and Republicans can work together is in the effort to improve our schools. We have done so before. In my first year as President,

Democrats and Republicans saw that our schools were failing too many students, so we worked together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. This good law gave our schools new resources, and in return, we asked them to show results. By setting high standards and measuring student progress, we're holding schools accountable for teaching every student to read, write, add, and subtract.

Since No Child Left Behind was passed, we have seen major improvements in student achievement all across America. In reading, 9-year-olds have made larger gains in the last 5 years of the test than in the previous 28 years. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test. And in both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and starting to close the achievement gap.

This year, the No Child Left Behind Act is up for reauthorization. I'm confident that both parties can work together to help our Nation's students. By reauthorizing this important legislation, we can help make our schools a gateway to opportunity for every child.

With this new Congress and new year, Democrats and Republicans will have many opportunities to serve the American people. We must rise to meet those opportunities and build a stronger and more compassionate nation for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.



Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso  
of the European Commission  
*January 8, 2007*

*President Bush.* I'm very pleased to welcome back my friend Jose Barroso. Thank you. We just had a great discussion about the importance between—of relations between the United States and the European Union. Jose has got a really important job, and I think he's doing it really well.

Our discussion was frank; it was open. We talked about the importance of the transatlantic relationship and how we can work to improve it. We talked about the importance for Europe and the United States to resolve any differences we have when it comes to the Doha round for trade, so that we can promote international trade. We both recognize that the best way to help impoverished nations is to complete this Doha round and to encourage the spread of wealth and opportunity through open and reasonable and fair trade.

Jose and I talked about the Middle East. There's no question that the Israeli-Palestinian issue is on a lot of people's minds. We are dedicated to a two-state solution, two democracies living side by side in peace. And we talked about ways that we need to work together to see if we can't bring that vision to fruition.

We're going to talk about Darfur here at lunch. I know that Jose is as committed as I am to helping solve what I've called a genocide. It is outrageous that people are being treated the way they are, and I'm confident Europe and the United States can work with other friends and allies around the world to help solve that difficult problem.

We talked about Iran. We talked about Syria. We talked about Iraq. We talked about a lot of issues. We also talked about the importance of energy independence and, at the same time, being wise stewards of the environment. We are very hopeful that the use of technologies and good policy

will help us diversify our energy supplies and be able to assure future generations that the environment of the world will be better off.

And so I thought it was a constructive dialog. Glad to have you back.

*President Durao Barroso.* Thank you very much, George. It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet again, President Bush. We have now these very regular meetings, and it's always a great occasion to exchange views on such important subjects.

In fact, we have considered bilateral and global issues. On bilateral, I underlined the importance we give to further—to make go further, go faster, to go deeper in our economic transatlantic partnership. This is the most important economic relation in the world, the relation between the United States of America and the European Union. And we believe we can achieve more if we look at it in a comprehensive manner. And I hope that now there will be some concrete work so that in our regular institutional summit, between the European Union and the United States, we can achieve some more complete results.

Of course, the most crucial factor is the succession—successful negotiations for Doha. Doha is not just about trade; it's also about development; it's about having a multilateral approach to trade. There is now the defining moment. We are really at defining moment, and we had a very good exchange, and we gave instructions to all negotiators to come with a solution as soon as possible. And of course it is important to engage also others, because this is a real global agreement that we are trying to build. And it will be a very important signal for the world community if we show that it is possible to have a global approach to trade and development.

Another global issue, but where United States and Europe have a very good—and we hope to improve relation and dialog—is precisely energy and climate. When we speak about climate change, it's not just about the environment—of course environment is crucially important—but it is also about global security. It's also about economic development and sustainability.

And so we are hoping to deepen our dialog on climate change, on technologies, on curbing emissions, on progress in terms of energy efficiency and in security. Of course, the key is diversification—diversification in all aspects, and we believe the work going on between our respective experts is a good signal of the commitment of our joint commitment to fight climate change, and also to have a more common approach to the problems of global security regarding energy.

We will, of course, consider other issues in the working lunch we're going to have. President Bush spoke about Darfur. I've been in Darfur recently. I can tell that's really a tragedy, what's going on, and we cannot accept that tragedy going on without a firm, united response of the international community.

So, once again, it was a pleasure meeting President Bush in the White House. I'm very much looking forward to other occasions where we can show to the world that this relation—the relation between Europe and the United States of America is, indeed, more important than ever.

*President Bush.* Thanks, Jose. Thank you. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Congress on the Fifth Anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act *January 8, 2007*

Laura and I want to thank Senator Kennedy and Congressman George Miller and Congressman McKeon and Senator Enzi for joining us as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of No Child Left Behind and discuss our strategy to reauthorize this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank the Members for joining us. I am proud of this piece of legislation. I think it's made an enormous difference, particularly in the lives of some of our poorer students. This country needs to get it right when it comes to public education, and the bill that I was honored to sign is an important first step toward making sure every child gets a good education in America.

And in our discussions today, we've all agreed to work together to address some of the major concerns that some people have on this piece of legislation, without weakening the essence of the bill, and get a piece of legislation done. And we showed in the past that we can work together to get positive results, and I'm confident we can do so again.

Again, I appreciate the wisdom and the vision of the Members who are here. I thank you for your steadfast and strong support for our public schools and the children in our public schools, and I'm looking forward to working with you to reauthorize No Child Left Behind.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:56 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Of-

fice of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Appointment of Fred F. Fielding as Counsel to the President

*January 9, 2007*

I have selected Fred Fielding to serve as Counsel to the President. Fred's exemplary legal career has equipped him with the judgment and expertise necessary to serve in this important position. Fred's distinguished record of public service, including 5 years as President Reagan's Counsel, makes him uniquely qualified for this position. He served with distinction on the 9/11 Commission, is a senior partner at a leading law firm, and he has earned a strong reputation for integrity. Fred is one of the most well-respected and accomplished lawyers in our Nation, and I look forward to benefiting from his wise counsel. I am pleased that he will once again take up public service in the White House.

Fred is replacing my long-time advisor and good friend, Harriet Miers. Harriet has served as a key member of my team for the last 6 years as Counsel, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Staff Secretary. I have greatly valued her sound judgment. Throughout her career, she has devoted herself to the rule of law and the cause of justice, earning a reputation as a talented lawyer dedicated to excellence. Harriet possesses a tireless work ethic and a strong commitment to serving others. Laura and I are deeply grateful for Harriet's dedication and for her friendship. We wish her the very best in the next chapter of her life.

## Memorandum on Modification of the June 12, 1998, Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf From Leasing Disposition

*January 9, 2007*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior*

*Subject:* Modification of the June 12, 1998, Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition

Under the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby modify the first sentence of the withdrawal of June 12, 1998, of certain areas

of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from leasing disposition to read as follows:

Under the authority granted in section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing through June 30, 2012, (1) those areas under moratoria pursuant to sections 104 and 106 of Public Law 109-54, and (2) those areas under moratoria pursuant to section 105 of Public Law 109-54, excluding that portion of the

Central Gulf of Mexico planning area defined as the “181 South Area” in section 102(2) of title I (“Gulf of Mexico Energy Security”) in Division C of Public Law

109–432, the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006.

GEORGE W. BUSH

## Address to the Nation on Military Operations in Iraq *January 10, 2007*

Good evening. Tonight in Iraq, the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in a struggle that will determine the direction of the global war on terror and our safety here at home. The new strategy I outline tonight will change America’s course in Iraq and help us succeed in the fight against terror.

When I addressed you just over a year ago, nearly 12 million Iraqis had cast their ballots for a unified and democratic nation. The elections of 2005 were a stunning achievement. We thought that these elections would bring the Iraqis together and that as we trained Iraqi security forces, we could accomplish our mission with fewer American troops.

But in 2006, the opposite happened. The violence in Iraq, particularly in Baghdad, overwhelmed the political gains the Iraqis had made. Al Qaida terrorists and Sunni insurgents recognized the mortal danger that Iraq’s elections posed for their cause, and they responded with outrageous acts of murder aimed at innocent Iraqis. They blew up one of the holiest shrines in Shi’a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra, in a calculated effort to provoke Iraq’s Shi’a population to retaliate. Their strategy worked. Radical Shi’a elements, some supported by Iran, formed death squads. And the result was a vicious cycle of sectarian violence that continues today.

The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people, and it is unacceptable to me. Our troops in Iraq have fought bravely. They have done everything we have asked them to do. Where mistakes

have been made, the responsibility rests with me.

It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq. So my national security team, military commanders, and diplomats conducted a comprehensive review. We consulted Members of Congress from both parties, our allies abroad, and distinguished outside experts. We benefited from the thoughtful recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan panel led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. In our discussions, we all agreed that there is no magic formula for success in Iraq. And one message came through loud and clear: Failure in Iraq would be a disaster for the United States.

The consequences of failure are clear. Radical Islamic extremists would grow in strength and gain new recruits. They would be in a better position to topple moderate governments, create chaos in the region, and use oil revenues to fund their ambitions. Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our enemies would have a safe haven from which to plan and launch attacks on the American people. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw what a refuge for extremists on the other side of the world could bring to the streets of our own cities. For the safety of our people, America must succeed in Iraq.

The most urgent priority for success in Iraq is security, especially in Baghdad. Eighty percent of Iraq’s sectarian violence occurs within 30 miles of the capital. This

violence is splitting Baghdad into sectarian enclaves and shaking the confidence of all Iraqis. Only Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people, and their Government has put forward an aggressive plan to do it.

Our past efforts to secure Baghdad failed for two principal reasons: There were not enough Iraqi and American troops to secure neighborhoods that had been cleared of terrorists and insurgents, and there were too many restrictions on the troops we did have. Our military commanders reviewed the new Iraqi plan to ensure that it addressed these mistakes. They report that it does. They also report that this plan can work.

Now, let me explain the main elements of this effort. The Iraqi Government will appoint a military commander and two deputy commanders for their capital. The Iraqi Government will deploy Iraqi Army and National Police brigades across Baghdad's nine districts. When these forces are fully deployed, there will be 18 Iraqi Army and National Police brigades committed to this effort, along with local police. These Iraqi forces will operate from local police stations, conducting patrols and setting up checkpoints and going door to door to gain the trust of Baghdad residents.

This is a strong commitment, but for it to succeed, our commanders say the Iraqis will need our help. So America will change our strategy to help the Iraqis carry out their campaign to put down sectarian violence and bring security to the people of Baghdad. This will require increasing American force levels. So I've committed more than 20,000 additional American troops to Iraq. The vast majority of them, five brigades, will be deployed to Baghdad. These troops will work alongside Iraqi units and be embedded in their formations. Our troops will have a well-defined mission: to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces

left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs.

Many listening tonight will ask why this effort will succeed when previous operations to secure Baghdad did not. Well, here are the differences. In earlier operations, Iraqi and American forces cleared many neighborhoods of terrorists and insurgents, but when our forces moved on to other targets, the killers returned. This time we'll have the force levels we need to hold the areas that have been cleared. In earlier operations, political and sectarian interference prevented Iraqi and American forces from going into neighborhoods that are home to those fueling the sectarian violence. This time Iraqi and American forces will have a green light to enter those neighborhoods, and Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated.

I have made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi Government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people, and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people. Now is the time to act. The Prime Minister understands this. Here is what he told his people just last week: "The Baghdad security plan will not provide a safe haven for any outlaws, regardless of their sectarian or political affiliation."

This new strategy will not yield an immediate end to suicide bombings, assassinations, or IED attacks. Our enemies in Iraq will make every effort to ensure that our television screens are filled with images of death and suffering. Yet over time, we can expect to see Iraqi troops chasing down murderers, fewer brazen acts of terror, and growing trust and cooperation from Baghdad's residents. When this happens, daily life will improve, Iraqis will gain confidence in their leaders, and the Government will have the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas. Most of Iraq's Sunni and Shi'a want to live together



in peace, and reducing the violence in Baghdad will help make reconciliation possible.

A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi Government to the benchmarks it has announced.

To establish its authority, the Iraqi Government plans to take responsibility for security in all of Iraq's Provinces by November. To give every Iraqi citizen a stake in the country's economy, Iraq will pass legislation to share oil revenues among all Iraqis. To show that it is committed to delivering a better life, the Iraqi Government will spend \$10 billion of its own money on reconstruction and infrastructure projects that will create new jobs. To empower local leaders, Iraqis plan to hold provincial elections later this year. And to allow more Iraqis to reenter their nation's political life, the Government will reform de-Ba'athification laws and establish a fair process for considering amendments to Iraq's Constitution.

America will change our approach to help the Iraqi Government as it works to meet these benchmarks. In keeping with the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, we will increase the embedding of American advisers in Iraqi Army units and partner a coalition brigade with every Iraqi Army division. We will help the Iraqis build a larger and better equipped army, and we will accelerate the training of Iraqi forces, which remains the essential U.S. security mission in Iraq. We will give our commanders and civilians greater flexibility to spend funds for economic assistance. We will double the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These teams bring together military and civilian experts to help local Iraqi communities pursue reconciliation, strengthen the moderates, and speed the transition to Iraqi self-reliance. And Secretary Rice will soon appoint a recon-

struction coordinator in Baghdad to ensure better results for economic assistance being spent in Iraq.

As we make these changes, we will continue to pursue Al Qaida and foreign fighters. Al Qaida is still active in Iraq. Its home base is Anbar Province. Al Qaida has helped make Anbar the most violent area of Iraq outside the capital. A captured Al Qaida document describes the terrorists' plan to infiltrate and seize control of the Province. This would bring Al Qaida closer to its goals of taking down Iraq's democracy, building a radical Islamic empire, and launching new attacks on the United States, at home and abroad.

Our military forces in Anbar are killing and capturing Al Qaida leaders, and they are protecting the local population. Recently, local tribal leaders have begun to show their willingness to take on Al Qaida. And as a result, our commanders believe we have an opportunity to deal a serious blow to the terrorists. So I have given orders to increase American forces in Anbar Province by 4,000 troops. These troops will work with Iraqi and tribal forces to keep up the pressure on the terrorists. America's men and women in uniform took away Al Qaida's safe haven in Afghanistan, and we will not allow them to reestablish it in Iraq.

Succeeding in Iraq also requires defending its territorial integrity and stabilizing the region in the face of extremist challenges. This begins with addressing Iran and Syria. These two regimes are allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq. Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We'll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria, and we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.

We're also taking other steps to bolster the security of Iraq and protect American

interests in the Middle East. I recently ordered the deployment of an additional carrier strike group to the region. We will expand intelligence sharing and deploy Patriot air defense systems to reassure our friends and allies. We will work with the Governments of Turkey and Iraq to help them resolve problems along their border. And we will work with others to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating the region.

We will use America's full diplomatic resources to rally support for Iraq from nations throughout the Middle East. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf States need to understand that an American defeat in Iraq would create a new sanctuary for extremists and a strategic threat to their survival. These nations have a stake in a successful Iraq that is at peace with its neighbors, and they must step up their support for Iraq's unity Government. We endorse the Iraqi Government's call to finalize an international compact that will bring new economic assistance in exchange for greater economic reform. And on Friday, Secretary Rice will leave for the region to build support for Iraq and continue the urgent diplomacy required to help bring peace to the Middle East.

The challenge playing out across the broader Middle East is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of our time. On one side are those who believe in freedom and moderation; on the other side are extremists who kill the innocent and have declared their intention to destroy our way of life. In the long run, the most realistic way to protect the American people is to provide a hopeful alternative to the hateful ideology of the enemy by advancing liberty across a troubled region. It is in the interests of the United States to stand with the brave men and women who are risking their lives to claim their freedom and to help them as they work to raise up just and hopeful societies across the Middle East.

From Afghanistan to Lebanon to the Palestinian Territories, millions of ordinary people are sick of the violence and want a future of peace and opportunity for their children. And they are looking at Iraq. They want to know: Will America withdraw and yield the future of that country to the extremists, or will we stand with the Iraqis who have made the choice for freedom?

The changes I have outlined tonight are aimed at ensuring the survival of a young democracy that is fighting for its life in a part of the world of enormous importance to American security. Let me be clear: The terrorists and insurgents in Iraq are without conscience, and they will make the year ahead bloody and violent. Even if our new strategy works exactly as planned, deadly acts of violence will continue, and we must expect more Iraqi and American casualties. The question is whether our new strategy will bring us closer to success. I believe that it will.

Victory will not look like the ones our fathers and grandfathers achieved. There will be no surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship. But victory in Iraq will bring something new in the Arab world: a functioning democracy that polices its territory, upholds the rule of law, respects fundamental human liberties, and answers to its people. A democratic Iraq will not be perfect, but it will be a country that fights terrorists instead of harboring them, and it will help bring a future of peace and security for our children and our grandchildren.

This new approach comes after consultations with Congress about the different courses we could take in Iraq. Many are concerned that the Iraqis are becoming too dependent on the United States, and therefore, our policy should focus on protecting Iraq's borders and hunting down Al Qaida. Their solution is to scale back America's efforts in Baghdad or announce the phased withdrawal of our combat forces. We carefully considered these proposals, and we concluded that to step back now would

force a collapse of the Iraqi Government, tear the country apart, and result in mass killings on an unimaginable scale. Such a scenario would result in our troops being forced to stay in Iraq even longer and confront an enemy that is even more lethal. If we increase our support at this crucial moment and help the Iraqis break the current cycle of violence, we can hasten the day our troops begin coming home.

In the days ahead, my national security team will fully brief Congress on our new strategy. If Members have improvements that can be made, we will make them. If circumstances change, we will adjust. Honorable people have different views, and they will voice their criticisms. It is fair to hold our views up to scrutiny. And all involved have a responsibility to explain how the path they propose would be more likely to succeed.

Acting on the good advice of Senator Joe Lieberman and other key Members of Congress, we will form a new, bipartisan working group that will help us come together across party lines to win the war on terror. This group will meet regularly with me and my administration; it will help strengthen our relationship with Congress. We can begin by working together to increase the size of the active Army and Marine Corps, so that America has the Armed Forces we need for the 21st century. We also need to examine ways to mobilize talented American civilians to deploy overseas, where they can help build democratic institutions in communities and nations recovering from war and tyranny.

In these dangerous times, the United States is blessed to have extraordinary and selfless men and women willing to step forward and defend us. These young Americans understand that our cause in Iraq is noble and necessary and that the advance of freedom is the calling of our time. They serve far from their families, who make the quiet sacrifices of lonely holidays and empty chairs at the dinner table. They have watched their comrades give their lives to ensure our liberty. We mourn the loss of every fallen American, and we owe it to them to build a future worthy of their sacrifice.

Fellow citizens, the year ahead will demand more patience, sacrifice, and resolve. It can be tempting to think that America can put aside the burdens of freedom. Yet times of testing reveal the character of a nation, and throughout our history, Americans have always defied the pessimists and seen our faith in freedom redeemed. Now America is engaged in a new struggle that will set the course for a new century. We can and we will prevail.

We go forward with trust that the Author of Liberty will guide us through these trying hours. Thank you and good night.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 p.m. in the Library at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Funding for the Department of Homeland Security *January 10, 2007*

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed request for the Department of

Homeland Security. The request is needed



to liquidate prior-year obligations for contracts and grants made by the Transportation Security Administration. The request is fully offset by transferring unobligated balances and would not increase spending or the deficit.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director

of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 11.

## Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Corporal Jason Dunham *January 11, 2007*

Welcome to the White House. The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor a President can bestow. The medal is given for gallantry in the face of an enemy attack that is above and beyond the call of duty. The medal is part of a cherished American tradition that began in this house with the signature of President Abraham Lincoln.

Since World War II, more than half of those who have been awarded the Medal of Honor have lost their lives in the action that earned it. Corporal Jason Dunham belongs to this select group. On a dusty road in western Iraq, Corporal Dunham gave his own life so that the men under his command might live. This morning it's my privilege to recognize Corporal Dunham's devotion to the Corps and country and to present his family with the Medal of Honor.

I welcome the Vice President's presence; Secretary of Defense Bob Gates; Senator Ted Stevens; Senator John McCain; Senator Craig Thomas—I don't know if you say former marine or marine—marine; Congressman Bill Young and his wife Beverly; Congressman Duncan Hunter; Congressman John Kline, marine; Congressman Randy Kuhl, Corporal Dunham's family's United States Congressman, is with us; Secretary Don Winter; General Pete Pace; General Jim Conway and Annette; Sergeant

Major John Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

I appreciate the Medal of Honor recipients who have joined us: Barney Barnum, Bob Foley, Bob Howard, Gary Littrell, Al Rascon, Brian Thacker. Thanks for joining us.

I appreciate the Dunham family who have joined us and will soon join me on this platform to receive the honor on behalf of their son: Dan and Deb Dunham; Justin Dunham and Kyle Dunham, brothers; Katie Dunham, sister; and a lot of other family members who have joined us today.

I appreciate the Chaplain for the Navy—excuse me, for the Marine Corps. I didn't mean to insult you. [*Laughter*]

I thank Major Trent Gibson—he was Jason Dunham's commander—company commander; First Lieutenant Brian Robinson, who was his platoon commander. I welcome all the marines from "Kilo-3-7." Thanks for coming, and thanks for serving.

Long before he earned our Nation's highest medal, Jason Dunham made himself—made a name for himself among his friends and neighbors. He was born in a small town in upstate New York. He was a normal kind of fellow. He loved sports. He went to Scio Central School, and he starred on the Tiger basketball, soccer, and baseball teams. And by the way, he still

holds the record for the highest batting average in a single season at .414. He was popular with his teammates, and that could be a problem for his mom. You see, she never quite knew how many people would be showing up for dinner, whether it be her family or the entire basketball team.

He grew up with the riches far more important than money. He had a dad who loved to take his boys on a ride with him when he made his rounds on the dairy farm where he worked. His mom was a school teacher. She figured out the best way to improve her son's spelling was to combine his love for sports with her ability to educate. And so she taught him the words from his reading list when they played the basketball game of "horse." He had two brothers and a sister who adored him.

He had a natural gift for leadership and a compassion that led him to take others under his wing. The Marine Corps took the best of this young man and made it better. As a marine, he was taught that honor, courage, and commitment are not just words; they're core values for a way of life that elevates service above self. As a marine, Jason was taught that leaders put the needs of their men before their own. He was taught that while America's founding truths are self-evident, they also need to be defended by good men and women willing to stand up to determined enemies.

As a leader of a rifle squad in Iraq, Corporal Dunham lived by the values he had been taught. He was a guy everybody looked up to. He was a marine's marine who led by example. He was the kind of person who would stop patrols to play street soccer with the Iraqi schoolchildren. He was the guy who signed on for an extra 2 months in Iraq so he could stay with his squad. As he explained it, he wanted to "make sure that everyone makes it home alive." Corporal Dunham took that promise seriously and would give his own life to make it good.

In April 2004, during an attack near Iraq's Syrian border, Corporal Dunham was

assaulted by an insurgent who jumped out of a vehicle that was about to be searched. As Corporal Dunham wrestled the man to the ground, the insurgent rolled out a grenade he had been hiding. Corporal Dunham did not hesitate. He jumped on the grenade, using his helmet and body to absorb the blast. Although he survived the initial explosion, he did not survive his wounds. But by his selflessness, Corporal Dunham saved the lives of two of his men and showed the world what it means to be a marine.

Deb Dunham calls the Marine Corps her son's second family, and she means that literally. Deb describes her son's relationship to his men this way: "Jay was part guardian angel, part big brother, and all marine." She remembers her son calling from the barracks and then passing the phone to one of his marines, saying, "I've got a guy here who just needs to talk to a mom." Now it's the marines who comfort her. On special days like Christmas or Mother's Day or her birthday, Deb has learned the day will not pass without one of Jason's fellow marines calling to check on her.

With this medal, we pay tribute to the courage and leadership of a man who represents the best of young Americans. With this medal, we ask the God who commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves to wrap His arms around the family of Corporal Jason Dunham, a marine who is not here today because he lived that commandment to the fullest.

I now invite the Dunhams to join me on the stage. And, Colonel, please read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Annette Conway, wife of Gen. James T. Conway, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps; and Rear Adm. Alan T. Baker, USN, Chaplain of the Marine Corps. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Col. Thomas McCarthy, Air Force

Aide to the President, read the citation. The Office of the Press Secretary also released

a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to Military Personnel and Their Families at Fort Benning,  
Georgia  
*January 11, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. You call him “General,” I call him “Wojo.” [*Laughter*] Thank you for the introduction. I’m proud to be with you. I’m proud to be at Fort Benning, Georgia, home of the Infantry. I’m proud to be with those who have volunteered to serve our country, brave men and women who understand that the awesome responsibility of Government is to provide security to the American people. I applaud you for your efforts. I’m proud to be your Commander in Chief. And I’m honored to have lunch with you.

I’m only sorry that my wife hasn’t joined me. She’s the better half of our deal. [*Laughter*] But she sends her love and her respect.

Speaking about families, I have the greatest of respect for not only those of you who wear the uniform but your families as well. I fully understand, in times of danger the military families make a significant sacrifice. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I say thanks to the families of the soldiers here at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Wojo, I’m glad your wife Candy joined us. We both married well. I appreciate traveling here today with the United States Congressman who represents this area, Congressman Sanford Bishop. Thank you for coming, Congressman. And I’m pleased that Congressman Lynn Westmoreland—he is from the district right north of here—has joined us today. Lynn, thank you for being here.

I appreciate the mayor of Columbus, Georgia, Mayor Wetherington. Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here. Thanks for coming. Mayor Hardin, of Phenix City, Ala-

bama, has joined us. Mr. Mayor, appreciate you coming. I know you didn’t ask—neither of the mayors asked—but sometimes I like to remind them, just go ahead and fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I’m not suggesting there are any; it’s just my advice.

I appreciate all the officials, local officials who are here. I can’t thank the commanders of the base who have arranged this visit—I do want to thank Keith Lovejoy, Colonel Keith Lovejoy, garrison commander of Fort Benning, and his wife Carol; Sergeant Major Doug Greenway, his wife JoAnn. You’ve got a little bit of a following here. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate all the civilian personnel that have joined us to help make this base run. You know, our bases cannot run without the important contributions of civilians, and I appreciate your effort in helping this fine base survive. This is a really important place. This is a place that has a long tradition of turning civilians into highly skilled soldiers. And I can’t thank you enough for the contribution you’re making to the security of this country.

There’s a lot of history here at Fort Benning, Georgia. A lot of folks have left this base to defend freedom and pass the peace. And I appreciate the fact—and I know you do as well—that you’re part of a long tradition of people who have made incredibly important sacrifices so that hundreds of millions of people would enjoy the blessings of liberty and freedom and the world will be more peaceful. And that’s what we’re here to celebrate today.

On September the 11th, our Nation saw firsthand the destructive vision of a new

kind of enemy, and once again the men and women of Fort Benning answered the call to protect our country from that enemy. You know, I knew that right after the attacks, the American psyche being what it is, people would tend to forget the grave threat posed by these people. I knew that. As a matter of fact, I was hoping that would happen so that life would go on. But the fortunate thing for this country is that those who wear the uniform have never forgotten the threat. You understand the stakes.

You know, the Rangers from the 3d Battalion of the 75th Regiment led the way when it came to upholding doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists," and helped liberate Afghanistan. The first fight of this new war was in that faraway place. Soldiers from Fort Benning led the way.

The 3d Brigade Combat Team of the 3d Infantry Division took up the sledgehammer to help liberate Baghdad. One soldier from Fort Benning, Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith of the 3d Infantry Division, went into Iraq. He was there when they surprised about 100 of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard. They were attacked, and Sergeant Smith manned a 50-caliber machine gun atop a damaged armored vehicle to protect his men. He continued to fire from an exposed position. He took a fatal round. He saved more than 100 lives of American soldiers. He received the Medal of Honor.

This is the kind of remarkable courage found throughout the men and women on this base. Troops from Fort Benning are now serving in Iraq right now, helping to protect the troops and the Iraqi citizens, training Iraqi security forces.

You're doing something else remarkable. You're rebuilding schools and helping improve lives. Everywhere that warriors from this base serve, you leave your mark, and I believe it will be a legacy of hope and freedom and peace.

Last night I talked about a new strategy for Iraq, and I want to share some thoughts with you about that. You know, in 2005, I was able to report to the country that nearly 12 million Iraqis had cast their ballots in a remarkable election. I hope you still remember the moments when people were proudly able to wave their fingers saying, "We have shed ourselves from a tyrant," and, "We're able to express our individual wills about the future of our country." I believe that 2005 would have been a—we would have completed a lot of the mission and that would have been training the Iraqis so they would be in the lead, that they would be in a position to uphold the wishes of the 12 million people that voted.

In spite of the remarkable progress, 2006 turned out differently than I had anticipated. And it did because there's an enemy there that recognizes that the advance of freedom is in contrast to their hopes and their dreams. They can't stand the thought of a free society. Al Qaida and foreigners and radicals took action trying to spur sectarian violence. They bombed holy—important holy site. They killed innocent people, and they were effective at spawning sectarian violence.

The situation in Iraq is difficult, no question about it. It's a difficult time in Iraq because the sectarian violence needs to be challenged and stopped in order for this young society to advance. Yet, it's important for our fellow citizens to understand that failure in Iraq would be a disaster for our future, and here's why: One of the wisest comments I've heard about this battle in Iraq was made by General John Abizaid, smart guy, a great soldier. He told me, he said, "Mr. President, if we were to fail in Iraq, the enemy would follow us here to America."

It's a different kind of war in which failure in one part of the world could lead to disaster here at home. It's important for our citizens to understand that as tempting

as it might be—to understand the consequences of leaving before the job is done. Radical Islamic extremists would grow in strength. They would be emboldened. It would make it easier to recruit for their cause. They would be in a position to do that which they have said they want to do, which is to topple moderate governments, to spread their radical vision across an important region of the world.

Imagine what would happen if these extremists who hate America and our way of life gained control of energy reserves. You can bet they would use those reserves to blackmail economies in order to achieve their objective. If we were to leave before the job is done, if we were to fail in Iraq, Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our enemies would have safe havens from which to launch attacks. People would look back at this moment in history and say, “What happened to them in America? How come they couldn’t see the threats to a future generation?” That is why we must and we will succeed in Iraq.

The most urgent priority for success in Iraq is security, especially in Baghdad. Only the Iraqis can end sectarian violence. That’s their job. The Iraqis must secure their people. The Government recognizes they’ve got to do so, and they’ve put forth a plan. I received their plan, their version of the plan when I was in Jordan. The Prime Minister came and said, “Look, I understand we’ve got to do something about this violence, and here is what I suggest we do.” Our commanders looked at it, helped fine-tune it so it would work.

The plan basically calls for the Government to appoint a military commander for Baghdad, which they have done. And they’ve got the city divided into 9 divisions in which there will be 18 Iraqi Army and National Police brigades operating out of local police stations to set up checkpoints, to knock on doors and take a census, to let them know that there is an Army presence in the neighborhood to protect them.

The commanders on the ground there in Iraq, people who I listen to—by the way, that’s what you want your Commander in Chief to do. You don’t want decisions being made based upon politics or focus groups or political polls. You want your military decisions being made by military experts. And they analyzed the plan, and they said to me and to the Iraqi Government, “This won’t work unless we help them. There needs to be a bigger presence.”

And there needs to be a bigger presence because, in the past, we would go in with Iraqis and clear a neighborhood of extremists and terrorists, and then there wouldn’t be enough troops to hold the neighborhood. So our kids would do a lot of hard work, and insurgents and terrorists and killers would generally not want to engage our troops, probably a pretty smart decision on their part. But when they did, they would find justice, and then we’d go on to another assignment, and they’d come back in the neighborhood. And it’s frustrating to our troops; it’s equally frustrating to the Iraqi citizens who want to live in peace. That’s what they want; they want to be able to have a peaceful life.

And so our commanders looked at the plan and said, “Mr. President, it’s not going to work until—unless—we support, provide more troops.” And so last night I told the country that I’ve committed an additional—a little over 20,000 more troops, 5 brigades of which will be in Baghdad. They’re going to work alongside the Iraqi units. They will be embedded in Iraqi units. They will help the Iraqis take the lead in securing the neighborhoods.

They’re going to have a well-defined mission. You hear people say, “There must be a clear military mission.” That’s what the military people have said to me. The mission is to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help Iraqis protect the local population, and to ensure that the Iraqi forces that are left behind will be capable of providing the security necessary

in the capital city of Iraq. That's the mission.

I asked General Casey, "Can we accomplish that mission?" He said, "You bet we can accomplish that mission." It's got enough troops to accomplish the mission. But one other thing must happen, that our troops and Iraqi troops must have proper rules of engagement. In other words, there can't be politics interfering with the action of our troops. The American people say, "You tried it before," and we did. And they say, "What went wrong? What's different?"

Well, what's new about this plan is there will be enough troops to clear, build, and hold and that our troops will be able to move alongside the Iraqis without political interference, and that's very important. It's important for our troops to hear, and it's important for the American people to know: this is new. This is something different that enables the military folks to predict that we will succeed in helping quell sectarian violence in Baghdad.

The other thing that's going to have to happen is that the Government of Iraq must exhibit the will necessary to succeed. It's one thing to develop a plan, it's another thing to see it through. The Prime Minister and I have had some plain talking. I have made it clear that the patience of the American people is not unlimited, and now is the time to act. It's time to act not only for our sake, it's time to act for the sake of people in Iraq. Shi'a and Sunni mothers want their children to grow up in peace.

The Prime Minister has pledged that political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated. He has said this publicly. The new strategy is not going to yield immediate results. It's going to take awhile. The American people have got to understand that suicide bombings won't stop immediately. The IED attacks won't stop immediately.

Yet, over time, we can expect to see positive results, and that would be the Iraqis chasing down the murderers, that there will be fewer brazen acts of terror inside of

Baghdad, that there will be growing trust between the different neighborhoods. In other words, you'll begin to see a society that is somewhat more peaceful. Daily life will improve. The Iraqis will gain confidence in their leaders, and the Government will have the breathing space necessary to be able to do other things: to do the politics necessary, to reconcile, to pass an oil law, to allow there to be provincial elections, to make sure that de-Ba'athification rules are altered, to say to people, "This society is a unified society"—in other words, to listen to the will of the 12 million people that voted.

We—it's interesting, you know, I mentioned that the Prime Minister and the Government have got to step up and lead. I was heartened by the resolve that I've seen in the last couple of days, the resolve of the Government and the resolve of the Iraqi troops. They fought bravely beside U.S. forces in Baghdad to rout out insurgents and terrorists along Haifa Street. I don't know if you followed that battle, but it was a tough battle, with the Iraqis in the lead and our folks helping them.

Yesterday the resolve was seen when Prime Minister Maliki made it clear that illegal militias, including the Mahdi army, have a choice to make: Either lay down your arms, or face justice. That's the kind of leadership that the Iraqi people expect, and that's the kind of leadership I expect and the American people expect. Our support is not open-ended. If the Iraqis demonstrate a willingness to fight for a better future, we'll help them. It's in our interests that we do so. Not only do we expect to see action militarily, as I mentioned; we expect to see them fulfill the benchmarks that they laid out for their people.

We're going to help them. I was telling the general, we'll double the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams; our commanders and civilians will have greater flexibility to spend money on the ground. For those of you who have been there, it's called CERP money. You know, it's an



effective tool to help part of the “build” part of clear, build, and hold. But their Government has got to come in behind us.

I was pleased to see that the Iraqi Government pledged \$10 billion of their own money to help this Government show the people that beyond just security there needs to be an improvement in life, that people have got to have—see a better life in order for this Government to work.

Last night I also talked about Anbar Province. It’s important for the American people to understand, Al Qaida still is in Iraq. As a matter of fact, they made it clear, their ambitions in Iraq. These are the same folks that came and killed about 3,000 of our citizens. Their goal in Iraq is to topple the Government, topple democracy.

See, their vision of life, their ideology can’t stand the thought of free societies in their midst. They’re totalitarians. You do it this way or else, is their attitude about government. They don’t believe in freedoms, like freedom to worship. I frankly—well, speaking about religion, these are murderers. They use murder as a tool to achieve their objective. Religious people don’t murder. They may claim they’re religious, but when you kill an innocent woman or a child to create a political end, that’s not my view of religion. And yet there are a lot of peaceful, religious people in the Middle East.

These people need to be stopped. They can’t stand the thought of the Iraqis being able to worship freely. They want safe haven, and they’ve chosen Anbar as their place to achieve safe haven.

We’ve got a lot of really fine troops fighting Al Qaida, and we’re making progress. There’s a lot of pressure on them in Anbar. Interestingly enough, a lot of sheiks have decided to join in the fight against Al Qaida. They’re tired of foreigners and killers in their midst; that’s what the commanders have told me. And they believe we have a good opportunity to really crush this group of folks. And that’s why I’ve

committed 4,000 additional troops into Anbar, as well as the troops into Baghdad.

The purpose really is to crush these insurrections now, so that the—democracy in Iraq can develop, has a chance to make it. That’s why I made the decision I made. I understand the consequences of failure; they’re not acceptable. And so I thought long and hard how best to succeed. That’s what I’m interested in, is success. The American people are interested in success. And I laid out a plan that is our best chance for success.

It’s also important for our citizens to understand that Iraq must be viewed in the larger context of the Middle East. It’s important for Iran and Syria to understand that we will disrupt their attacks on our forces, that we will interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. We’ll seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.

Iran’s desire to have a nuclear weapon has caught the attention of the world. It is a very dangerous—that would be a dangerous situation if the Iranians were able to achieve a nuclear weapon. We will continue to pressure Iran, and call upon the world to do so, to end its nuclear weapons ambitions.

I made a statement last night that I had ordered the deployment of an additional carrier strike group to the region. I also talked about Patriot missile systems in the region, to help others deal with the external threats. We will use our full diplomatic resources throughout the Middle East.

It’s very important for people to understand—put this situation in Iraq in a larger context, and that is the ideological war that we’re seeing. I talked to you about the consequences of failure. The best way to defeat the totalitarian of hate is with an ideology of hope—an ideology of hate; excuse me—with an ideology of hope. It matters whether or not people are resentful in the Middle East. It matters if people are hateful and look to strike out at a convenient target

in the Middle East. Our security depends on there to be a alternative to the ideology of hate. Because if there's resentment and hate, it's easier to recruit 19 kids to get on an airplane and kill 3,000 people.

And therefore, in the long run, your children and grandchildren are more likely to live in peace with the advent of liberty. And I'm confident that there are millions of people who are desirous to live in a free society, regardless of their religion, because I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a gift of the Almighty to every soul is the desire to be free. That's what I believe, and so it did not surprise me when people defied car bombers and killers to vote, to send a signal: "I want to be free."

And the task, immediate task of America, and the long-range goal of this country must be to help those who desire to live in free societies to do so, for the sake of peace for our own children. And that's the call. And it's going to require sacrifice, and I appreciate the sacrifices our troops are willing to make. Some units are going to have to deploy earlier than scheduled as a result of the decision I made. Some will remain deployed longer than originally anticipated. I will work with you and the Congress to provide all the resources you need in this war on terror, and that means good equipment and training, good housing. I understand full well, if your family is happy, you're happy. The same thing in my house, by the way. [*Laughter*]

I believe it's important to increase the end strength of the United States Army so it can remain engaged—[*applause*]. If this is a long struggle, now is the time to prepare this country and our military for this long struggle. It's important for our

citizens to understand that the terrorists and extremists are as brutal an enemy as this country has ever faced. There are no rules of warfare. They don't—they will kill you in a minute in order to achieve an objective. And I know we're going to face difficulties as we take on this important duty and task, and so do you.

You know firsthand that—what it means to lose a comrade. My view is that it is important for us to succeed so that comrade would not have died in vain. It's important to leave behind a better world, as the sacrifices that all have made.

There is no doubt in my mind; we will prevail. It will require patience and determination. It will require our military to do what you have done every time this Government has asked of you. It will require the full resolve of not only this Government but future Governments that will be following this one. Every time this country has been tested, we've responded. As I said last night, we have defied the pessimists, and we will do so again in this first battle of the 21st century.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in Freedom Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Walter Wojdakowski, USA, commanding general, Fort Benning, GA, who introduced the President; Mayor William J. Wetherington of Columbus, GA; Mayor Jeff Hardin of Phenix City, AL; Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Greenway, USA, U.S. Army Infantry Center; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.



## Statement on Signing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006

*January 12, 2007*

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 5946, the “Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006.” The Act sets a firm deadline to end overfishing in America; contributes to replenishing America’s fish stocks; strengthens enforcement of America’s fishing laws; and implements international agreements on fishery management and the protection of polar bears.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that purport to direct or burden the conduct of negotiations by the executive branch with foreign governments or international organizations in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority to conduct the Nation’s foreign affairs, including the authority to determine which officers shall negotiate for the United States with a foreign country, when, in consultation with whom, and toward what objectives, and to supervise the unitary executive branch. Such provisions include subsections 609(c) and 610(b) of the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act, as enacted by section 403 of the Act; section 408 of the Act; and section 505 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as enacted by section 902 of the Act.

Subsection 505(a) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as enacted by section 902 of the Act, purports to condition the authority granted to the President to make appointments upon prior consider-

ation of recommendations from particular sources and purports to limit the qualifications of the pool of persons from whom the President may select appointees in a manner that rules out a large portion of those persons best qualified by experience and knowledge to fill the positions. Also, provisions of the Act, such as section 303A(c)(6)(D)(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as enacted by section 106 of the Act, purport to give significant governmental authority of the United States to individuals who are not appointed in accordance with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. The executive branch shall construe these provisions in a manner consistent with the Appointments Clause.

The executive branch shall construe section 510 of the Act, relating to notifications regarding certain entry and transit of specified portions of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone, in a manner consistent, to the maximum extent permissible, with treaties to which the United States is a party and other international obligations of the United States.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
January 12, 2007.

NOTE: H.R. 5946, approved January 12, was assigned Public Law No. 109–479.

## The President’s Radio Address

*January 13, 2007*

Good morning. On Wednesday night, I addressed the Nation from the White

House to lay out a new strategy that will

help Iraq's democratic Government succeed.

America's new strategy comes after a difficult year in Iraq. In 2006, the terrorists and insurgents fought to reverse the extraordinary democratic gains the Iraqis have made. In February, the extremists bombed a holy Shi'a mosque in a deliberate effort to provoke reprisals that would set off a sectarian conflict. They succeeded, and the ongoing sectarian violence, especially in Baghdad, is making all other progress difficult.

Only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people. Their leaders understand this, and they are stepping forward to do it. But they need our help, and it is in our interests to provide that help. The changes in our strategy will help the Iraqis in four main areas.

First, we will help the Iraqis execute their aggressive plan to secure their capital. Eighty percent of Iraq's sectarian violence occurs within 30 miles of Baghdad. The new plan to secure Baghdad fixes the problems that prevented previous operations from succeeding. This time, there will be adequate Iraqi and U.S. forces to hold the areas that have been cleared, including more Iraqi forces and five additional brigades of American troops committed to Baghdad. This time, Iraqi and American forces will have a green light to enter neighborhoods that are home to those fueling sectarian violence. Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference with security operations will not be tolerated.

Second, America will step up the fight against Al Qaida in its home base in Iraq: Anbar Province. Our military forces in Anbar are killing and capturing Al Qaida leaders and protecting the local population. Recently, local tribal leaders have begun to show their willingness to take on Al Qaida, and, as a result, our commanders believe we have an opportunity to deal a serious blow to the terrorists. So I've given orders to increase American forces in

Anbar Province by 4,000 troops. These troops will work with Iraqi and tribal forces to increase the pressure on the terrorists. America's men and women in uniform took away Al Qaida's safe haven in Afghanistan, and we will not allow them to reestablish it in Iraq.

Third, America will hold the Iraqi Government to benchmarks it has announced. These include taking responsibility for security in all of Iraq Provinces by November, passing legislation to share oil revenues among all Iraqis, and spending \$10 billion of its own money on reconstruction projects that will create new jobs. These are strong commitments, and the Iraqi Government knows that it must meet them or lose the support of the Iraqi and the American people.

Fourth, America will expand our military and diplomatic efforts to bolster the security of Iraq and protect American interests in the Middle East. We will address the problem of Iran and Syria allowing terrorists and insurgents to use their territory to move in and out of Iraq. We will encourage countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf States to increase their economic assistance to Iraq. Secretary Rice has gone to the region to continue the urgent diplomacy required to help bring peace to the Middle East.

My national security team is now making our case on Capitol Hill. We recognize that many Members of Congress are skeptical. Some say our approach is really just more troops for the same strategy. In fact, we have a new strategy with a new mission: helping secure the population, especially in Baghdad. Our plan puts Iraqis in the lead.

Others worry that we are pursuing a purely military solution that makes a political solution less likely. In fact, the sectarian violence is the main obstacle to a political solution, and the best way to help the Iraqis reach this solution is to help them put down this violence.

Members of Congress have a right to express their views and express them forcefully. But those who refuse to give this plan a chance to work have an obligation to offer an alternative that has a better chance for success. To oppose everything while proposing nothing is irresponsible.

Whatever our differences on strategy and tactics, we all have a duty to ensure that our troops have what they need to succeed. Thousands of young men and women are preparing to join an important mission that will in large part determine the outcome in Iraq. Our brave troops should not have to wonder if their leaders in Washington will give them what they need. I urge Members of Congress to fulfill their re-

sponsibilities, make their views known, and to always support our men and women in harm's way.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:40 a.m. on January 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at a Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Volunteer Event *January 15, 2007*

This has been my honor to be here. One of the things that Mrs. King wanted was for MLK Day to be a day of service. It is not a day off, but it's a day on. And so I'm here at Cardozo High School to thank the hundreds of people who have showed up to serve the country by volunteering.

And right here in the library, we're with a group of folks who are sending postcards to folks who have been affected by Katrina, cards of hope, an opportunity for a citizen here to say to somebody in the New Orleans area, "We care about you, people are thinking about you," and all in the hopes of lifting somebody's spirit.

And so I not only want to thank the folks involved in this project and thank the Attorney General for volunteering, but I encourage people all around the country to seize any opportunity they can to help

somebody in need. And by helping somebody in need, you're honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King. And by helping somebody in need, you're really helping yourself because you're lifting your soul.

And so I want to thank the principal of this fine high school; I want to thank the organizers of the event; and I want to thank the volunteers, young and old, for setting aside time to make somebody else's life better.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. at Cardozo High School. In his remarks, he referred to Reginald Ballard, principal, Cardozo High School. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday proclamation of January 11 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

January 16, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. Secretary-General, welcome. The last time I visited with you in this Oval Office, you were the Foreign Minister of an important country. Now you come representing the United Nations, and I welcome you. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you for this very important discussion we just had. I appreciated so very much how you opened up the discussion with a strong commitment to democracy and freedom. And the United States is willing—wants to work with the United Nations to achieve a peace through the spread of freedom.

And I want to thank you very much for the wise advice that you have given on a variety of issues. We talked about the Middle East, of course, and the importance of the Quartet. We talked about Darfur. Mr. Secretary-General, I want to thank you for your commitment to help the suffering people in Darfur, and I wish you all the best as you work hard to convince the President of the Sudan that it's in his interest, and in the world's interest, that he allow enhanced African Union peacekeepers in to provide peace and security for people who are suffering.

I want to thank you very much, as well, for our discussions about Iran and North Korea. I wish you all the best in this important job. I admired the way you handled your previous job, and I'm confident you'll do a fine job now.

*Secretary-General Ban.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's a great honor and privilege for me to visit the White House and meet with you, Mr. President, in my

new capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I feel it a great honor for me to serve this organization, our global body, United Nations. At the same time, I'm very much humbled by all the challenges which I have to deal with and we are facing in the 21st century.

I would need strong participation and support of the United States in all activities of the United Nations. In fact, I believe that the United Nations and United States have shared objectives: peace and security, freedom, democracy. All these important goals and ideas are what the United States is also trying to achieve.

I hope to work very closely with the U.S. Government, including Mr. President, in realizing and achieving this shared goal. As I start my new administration as Secretary-General, I'd like to have strong commitment and support from U.S. Government, and I'm committed to devote all my time and energy to the address—to address all these important issues—Middle East and Darfur, Lebanon and Somalia, North Korea, Millennium Development Goals, and the climate changes. All are global issues which require global, collective wisdom and effort.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

*President Bush.* You're welcome, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan.

## Remarks Honoring the 2006 World Series Champion St. Louis Cardinals January 16, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. It's great to welcome the 2006 World Series champs, the mighty St. Louis Cardinals, to the White House.

I appreciate the fact that Members of the United States Congress have joined us. I see Members from Missouri—[*laughter*]*—*Senators, Members of the Congress and House. I see a Senator from Kentucky, Hall of Famer—Big Jim Bunning; glad you're here. Appreciate you all coming; thanks and welcome. I'm glad to see the former Attorney General, John Ashcroft. Thanks for joining us, John; appreciate you coming. Mr. Secretary, I thought you were a Texan.

*Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso R. Jackson.* I am a Texan, but I lived in St. Louis.

*The President.* Oh, you lived in St. Louis. [*Laughter*] Alphonso Jackson, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, is with us. Thanks for coming, A.J. I appreciate very much that the Lieutenant Governor, Peter Kinder, has joined us today. Thanks for coming, Governor; appreciate you coming. Rob Portman, I thought he was a Cincinnati Reds fan. It's amazing what victory does to the—[*laughter*]. Everybody likes a winner. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you coming.

Last time that the Tigers and Cardinals—the first time they met in a World Series was in 1934. Franklin Roosevelt was the President; Dizzy Dean was the star. [*Laughter*] And now the Cardinals are back after an unbelievable season. You know, I featured myself as a baseball guy at one time. The Cardinals now have won 10 World Series. That's 10 more than the Texas Rangers have ever won. [*Laughter*] Fortunately, it doesn't depend on ownership; well, I take that back. [*Laughter*]

They say in baseball, in order to become the World Series champ, you can't have losing streaks of over two or three games. [*Laughter*] This club had losing streaks of one eight-game losing streak, another eight-game losing streak, and a seven-game losing streak, which really speaks to the character of the baseball team, doesn't it? I mean, it's a team that—[*applause*]. And I think it speaks to the character of the manager, Tony La Russa, and his staff.

When you're on one of those losing streaks, it's easy to get down and to forget the goal. So, like, I'm sure the sports pages were a little rough on you for a while there, you know? How can they possibly endure yet another eight-game losing streak? Well, you endure it as the result of character and leadership.

I had the honor of welcoming Tony and Dave Duncan and DeWitt and some of the other ones to the White House in August. And I was kind of looking at them, and they were looking at me, and I was trying to figure out whether I was looking at the winning team. And after they left—I haven't had a chance to share this with Tony La Russa; I was convinced the Cardinals were going to go all the way. You know why? Because he was, because he believed it. And I appreciate good leadership. And I appreciate the fact that not only is La Russa a fine manager and a fine man; I appreciate what he does for the community in St. Louis as well.

Character in the dugout is one thing; character in a community is another. I don't know if you still do this program, but somebody told me the other day that there is a program where they match a—you know, dogs that need an owner with somebody that needs help, from having a pet around. It turns out, a pet can help somebody deal with a mental illness. And Tony La Russa has combined his love of

animals with his deep concern about people who suffer, for the embetterment of the community.

And so this is a team of character, and it's got a team of really good owners too. How do I know? Some of them were my business partners at the Texas Rangers. If you ever need a good, honest business partner, pick Bill DeWitt. He knows something about baseball. He is raised in baseball. But he is one of the sharpest baseball minds in the United States of America, and I'm really proud for him and his family to be here today to receive the accolades.

I want to thank his other owners that have joined us today: Fred Hanser and the Ambassador. Thank you, Ambassador, for being here—Brauer. I appreciate my friend Mercer Reynolds joining us too, as well. I congratulate you all.

DeWitt would be the first to say that the owners support a good front office. And you can win, and that's why Mark Lamping and Walt Jocketty are important to recognize as well. And I appreciate the leadership they've done.

I appreciate the players. Let me say something about the MVP. They said, "He can't hit." [Laughter] They said, "He can't throw." Listen, David; I've made a career out of people underestimating me—[laughter]—or as I like to sometimes say to keep them on their toes, misunderestimating me. [Laughter] But I do congratulate David and the team.

When you overcome the odds this team overcame, you've got to play as a team, and they did. And I appreciate not only what you did on the field; I appreciate the character you also show off the field. I appreciate the charity events that you attend. I thank you very much for supporting the Cardinals organization's efforts to be good community partners in St. Louis and greater St. Louis.

You've got a huge fan following, as you know. Matter of fact, when I was growing up in Texas, the only games we used to get were St. Louis Cardinals games. That

was in the fifties—see that was before your time. [Laughter] It made me a baseball fan. [Laughter] It made me a Stan Musial fan, but it also made me appreciate the value of the St. Louis Cardinals. And the Cardinals have got a fantastic fan base. And you maintain a fan base by being good citizens and winning games, and this club knows how to do both.

Before I bring somebody else up here to the microphone, I had the honor of going to Walter Reed the other day to thank our soldiers. I ran into Lance Corporal Chad Watson of the United States Marine Corps. He was wearing a Cardinals hat—I think you were wearing a Cardinals hat. And I said, first: "Thanks for serving, and thanks for giving of yourself to secure this country." I then said, "Are you a Cardinals fan?" Kind of one of those no-duh questions. The guy had a—[laughter]—kind of running out of something to say. And he said, "Yeah, I am." I said: "Well, I'm going to have the Cardinals to the White House, and if you're a Cardinals fan, why don't you come and join us." And he kind of looked at me like: Check is in the mail, isn't it? [Laughter] But I was serious, and so was he, and I'm proud to welcome Chad Watson and his mother Gina. You never know where you're going to find a St. Louis Cardinal fan. [Laughter]

And now it's my honor to bring to the podium, DeWitt—Bill DeWitt. He doesn't like to give speeches. Do you?

*William O. DeWitt, Jr.* Thank you for having us here, Mr. President.

*The President.* You do like to give speeches. [Laughter]

*Mr. DeWitt.* You said be quick, so we'll be quick. We have a little memento of the occasion here, a jersey from the world championship team, the World Series logo on it—

*The President.* Yes, right here.

*Mr. DeWitt.* —06, so you'll remember the year we were here, and Bush—

*The President.* Yes, so I remember who I am. [Laughter]



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

this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2007. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 20, 2006 (71 *FR* 3407).

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process and that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, as expanded on August 20, 1998, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United

States interests in the region. Such actions constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
January 18, 2007.

NOTE: The related notice of January 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on Republican National Committee Leadership *January 19, 2007*

The Republican Party has a long and rich history of empowering Americans to determine the future of our country. Today members of the Republican National Committee selected a new team of leaders who will build upon our strong legacy and will encourage more Americans to join our party.

We are fortunate that the Republican National Committee will be under the leadership of Senator Mel Martinez as general chairman, Mike Duncan as chairman, and Jo Ann Davidson as cochairman. Senator Martinez will help our party effectively

communicate the Republican message of hope and opportunity for all Americans. Mike Duncan is a proven leader who will organize thousands of dedicated staff and volunteers to educate Americans about the great promise of our agenda. Jo Ann Davidson will continue to draw upon her extensive political experience to help expand our support in communities throughout our country.

I am pleased that this team has been put into place and look forward to working with them on our continued efforts to keep our country safe and prosperous.

## The President's Radio Address *January 20, 2007*

Good morning. For many Americans, the new year began with a resolution to live

a better and healthier life. Whatever goals you have set for yourself this year, one

goal we can all share is reforming our Nation's health care system.

Americans are fortunate to have the best health care system in the world. The Government has an important role to play in our system. We have an obligation to provide care for the most vulnerable members of our society: the elderly, the disabled, and poor children and their parents. We are meeting this responsibility through Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We must strengthen these vital programs, so that they are around when future generations need them.

For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs. But rising health care costs are making insurance too expensive for millions of our citizens. Health care costs are growing more than two times faster than wages, and this is making it harder for working families to buy insurance on their own. Rising costs are also making it harder for small businesses to offer health coverage to their employees. Our challenge is clear: We must address these rising costs, so that more Americans can afford basic health insurance, and we need to do it without creating a new Federal entitlement program or raising taxes.

Our Nation is making progress toward this goal. We created health savings accounts, which empower patients and can reduce the cost of coverage. We are working to pass association health plans, so that small businesses can insure their workers at the favorable discounts that big businesses get. We must pass medical liability reform, so we can stop the junk lawsuits that drive costs through the roof and good doctors out of practice. We've taken important steps to increase transparency in health care pricing and give patients more information about the quality of their doctors and hospitals.

One of the most promising ways to make private health insurance more affordable is by reforming the Federal Tax Code. Today,

the Tax Code unfairly penalizes people who do not get health insurance through their job. It unwisely encourages workers to choose overly expensive, gold-plated plans. The result is that insurance premiums rise, and many Americans cannot afford the coverage they need.

We need to fix these problems, and one way to do so is to treat health insurance more like homeownership. The current Tax Code encourages homeownership by allowing you to deduct the interest on your mortgage from your taxes. We can reform the Tax Code so that it provides a similar incentive for you to buy health insurance. So in my State of the Union Address next Tuesday, I will propose a tax reform designed to help make basic private health insurance more affordable, whether you get it through your job or on your own.

As we reform the Federal Tax Code, we will also support the innovative measures that States are taking to address the problem of the uninsured. Governors across the Nation have put forward plans to make basic private health insurance more accessible for their citizens. When I go before Congress next week, I will announce a new effort, led by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, to help Governors reduce the number of people in their States without private health insurance.

All of these changes are based on a clear principle: Health insurance should be available, it should be affordable, and it should put you and your doctor in charge of your medical decisions. I look forward to working with Congress to pass the initiatives that I lay out next week, so we can help millions more Americans enjoy better care, new choices, and healthier lives.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on January 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on

January 19, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press

Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Telephone Remarks to the March for Life *January 22, 2007*

Yes, Nellie, thank you. Thank you very much, Nellie. And I want to thank everybody there for taking part in today's March for Life. I appreciate so very much the devotion to such an honorable cause, and the good work everyone is doing to defend life.

And, Nellie, it's good to hear your voice again, and I thank you very much for giving me a chance to visit with you and the crowd that is assembled there on The Mall.

It is important for all Americans to remember that our Declaration of Independence states that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also states that these rights come from our Creator and that governments are formed to secure these rights for all their citizens. And we believe every human life has value. And we pray for the day when every child is welcome in life and protected into law.

Nellie, I want to thank you very much and the Members of Congress there who have worked hard to make progress toward this goal over the last 6 years. I want the folks assembled there to know that we're making progress. We promoted adoption, support parental notification laws, ended Federal funding for abortions overseas, and are funding crisis pregnancy programs.

I had the privilege of signing legislation that extends legal protection to children who are born despite abortion attempts, allows prosecutors to charge those who harm or kill a pregnant woman with harming or killing her unborn child as well. I signed into law a ban on the cruel practice of partial-birth abortions, and we will vigorously defend that law in the courts.

Nellie, what I'm saying is, is that we're building a culture of life here. And I want to thank you and everybody assembled for helping.

We are a caring nation, and our values should also guide us on how we harness the gifts of science. New medical breakthroughs bring the hope of cures for terrible diseases and treatments that can improve the lives of millions. Our challenge is to make sure that science serves the cause of humanity instead of the other way around.

Last summer I vetoed a bill that would support the taking of innocent life in the hope of finding medical benefits for others, and I have made it clear to the Congress, we must pursue medical advances in the name of life, not at the expense of it.

As we move forward, we've all got to remember that a true culture of life cannot be built by changing laws alone. We've all got to work hard to change hearts. We will find areas where we can agree and, at the same time, work to persuade more of our fellow citizens to join this great cause. The sanctity of life is written in the hearts of all men and women. And so I say: Go forth with confidence that a cause rooted in human dignity and appealing to the best instincts of our citizens cannot fail.

Again, Nellie, thank you very much. I appreciate your dedication to this important cause. I send my thanks to all there on The Mall. I ask for God's blessings on your work and that God continue to bless our country.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. from Camp David, MD, to march participants on The National Mall in Washington,

DC. In his remarks, he referred to Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

## Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union *January 23, 2007*

Thank you very much. And tonight I have the high privilege and distinct honor of my own as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker.

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Congratulations, Madam Speaker.

Two Members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight, and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: The rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour when decisions are hard and courage is needed. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors underway and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies and the wisdom to face them together.

Some in this Chamber are new to the House and the Senate, and I congratulate the Democrat majority. Congress has changed, but not our responsibilities. Each of us is guided by our own convictions, and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we're all held to the same standards and called to serve the same good purposes: to extend this Nation's prosperity, to spend the people's money wisely, to solve prob-

lems, not leave them to future generations, to guard America against all evil, and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us.

We're not the first to come here with a government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences, and we can achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on, as long as we're willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans and to help them build a future of hope and opportunity, and this is the business before us tonight.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy, and that is what we have. We're now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth, a recovery that has created 7.2 million new jobs so far. Unemployment is low; inflation is low; wages are rising. This economy is on the move, and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government but with more enterprise.

Next week, I'll deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight I want to discuss three economic reforms that deserve to be priorities for this Congress.

First, we must balance the Federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes. What we need is spending discipline in Washington, DC. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009 and met that goal 3 years ahead of schedule. Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the



Federal deficit within the next 5 years. I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the Federal Government, and we can balance the Federal budget.

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour, when not even C-SPAN is watching. *[Laughter]* In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of the earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate. They are dropped into committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You didn't vote them into law, I didn't sign them into law, yet they're treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process, expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session.

And finally, to keep this economy strong, we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience, and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet we're failing in that duty. And this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this Chamber knows this to be true, yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and good will, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid and save Social Security.

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, preserving local control, raising standards, and holding schools accountable for results. And be-

cause we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.

Now the task is to build on the success without watering down standards, without taking control from local communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform. We can lift student achievement even higher by giving local leaders flexibility to turn around failing schools and by giving families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose someplace better. We must increase funds for students who struggle and make sure these children get the special help they need. And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future and our country is more competitive by strengthening math and science skills. The No Child Left Behind Act has worked for America's children, and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law.

A future of hope and opportunity requires that all our citizens have affordable and available health care. When it comes to health care, Government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children, and we will meet those responsibilities. For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs.

But many Americans cannot afford a health insurance policy, and so tonight I propose two new initiatives to help more Americans afford their own insurance. First, I propose a standard tax deduction for health insurance that will be like the standard tax deduction for dependents. Families with health insurance will pay no income on payroll tax—or payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income. Single Americans with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$7,500 of their income. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills. At the same time, this reform will level the playing field for those who do not get health insurance through their job. For Americans who



now purchase health insurance on their own, this proposal would mean a substantial tax savings, \$4,500 for a family of four making \$60,000 a year. And for the millions of other Americans who have no health insurance at all, this deduction would help put a basic, private health insurance plan within their reach. Changing the Tax Code is a vital and necessary step to making health care affordable for more Americans.

My second proposal is to help the States that are coming up with innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. I have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work with Congress to take existing Federal funds and use them to create Affordable Choices grants. These grants would give our Nation's Governors more money and more flexibility to get private health insurance to those most in need.

There are many other ways that Congress can help. We need to expand health savings accounts. We need to help small businesses through association health plans. We need to reduce costs and medical errors with better information technology. We will encourage price transparency. And to protect good doctors from junk lawsuits, we need to pass medical liability reform. In all we do, we must remember that the best health care decisions are not made by government and insurance companies but by patients and their doctors.

Extending hope and opportunity in our country requires an immigration system worthy of America, with laws that are fair and borders that are secure. When laws and borders are routinely violated, this harms the interests of our country. To secure our border, we're doubling the size of the Border Patrol and funding new infrastructure and technology.

Yet even with all these steps, we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border, and that requires a

temporary-worker program. We should establish a legal and orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country to work on a temporary basis. As a result, they won't have to try to sneak in, and that will leave border agents free to chase down drug smugglers and criminals and terrorists. We'll enforce our immigration laws at the worksite and give employers the tools to verify the legal status of their workers, so there's no excuse left for violating the law.

We need to uphold the great tradition of the melting pot that welcomes and assimilates new arrivals. We need to resolve the status of the illegal immigrants who are already in our country without animosity and without amnesty. Convictions run deep in this Capitol when it comes to immigration. Let us have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate, so that you can pass and I can sign comprehensive immigration reform into law.

Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and America's environment clean. For too long, our Nation has been dependent on foreign oil. And this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes and to terrorists who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments and raise the price of oil and do great harm to our economy.

It's in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply. The way forward is through technology. We must continue changing the way America generates electric power by even greater use of clean coal technology, solar and wind energy, and clean, safe nuclear power. We need to press on with battery research for plug-in and hybrid vehicles and expand the use of clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel. We must continue investing in new methods of producing ethanol, using everything from wood chips to grasses to agricultural wastes.

We made a lot of progress, thanks to good policies here in Washington and the strong response of the market. And now

even more dramatic advances are within reach. Tonight I ask Congress to join me in pursuing a great goal. Let us build on the work we've done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years. When we do that, we will have cut our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.

To reach this goal, we must increase the supply of alternative fuels by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017, and that is nearly five times the current target. At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks, and conserve up to 8½ billion more gallons of gasoline by 2017.

Achieving these ambitious goals will dramatically reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but it's not going to eliminate it. And so as we continue to diversify our fuel supply, we must step up domestic oil production in environmentally sensitive ways. And to further protect America against severe disruptions to our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

America is on the verge of technological breakthroughs that will enable us to live our lives less dependent on oil. And these technologies will help us be better stewards of the environment, and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change.

A future of hope and opportunity requires a fair, impartial system of justice. The lives of our citizens across our Nation are affected by the outcome of cases pending in our Federal courts. We have a shared obligation to ensure that the Federal courts have enough judges to hear those cases and deliver timely rulings. As President, I have a duty to nominate qualified men and women to vacancies on the Federal bench, and the United States Senate has a duty as well, to give those nominees

a fair hearing and a prompt up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

For all of us in this room, there is no higher responsibility than to protect the people of this country from danger. Five years have come and gone since we saw the scenes and felt the sorrow that the terrorists can cause. We've had time to take stock of our situation. We've added many critical protections to guard the homeland. We know with certainty that the horrors of that September morning were just a glimpse of what the terrorists intend for us, unless we stop them.

With the distance of time, we find ourselves debating the causes of conflict and the course we have followed. Such debates are essential when a great democracy faces great questions. Yet one question has surely been settled: that to win the war on terror, we must take the fight to the enemy.

From the start, America and our allies have protected our people by staying on the offense. The enemy knows that the days of comfortable sanctuary, easy movement, steady financing, and free flowing communications are long over. For the terrorists, life since 9/11 has never been the same.

Our success in this war is often measured by the things that did not happen. We cannot know the full extent of the attacks that we and our allies have prevented, but here is some of what we do know. We stopped an Al Qaida plot to fly a hijacked airplane into the tallest building on the west coast. We broke up a Southeast Asian terror cell grooming operatives for attacks inside the United States. We uncovered an Al Qaida cell developing anthrax to be used in attacks against America. And just last August, British authorities uncovered a plot to blow up passenger planes bound for America over the Atlantic Ocean. For each life saved, we owe a debt of gratitude to the brave public servants who devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping them.

Every success against the terrorists is a reminder of the shoreless ambitions of this

enemy. The evil that inspired and rejoiced in 9/11 is still at work in the world. And so long as that's the case, America is still a nation at war.

In the mind of the terrorists, this war began well before September the 11th and will not end until their radical vision is fulfilled. And these past 5 years have given us a much clearer view of the nature of this enemy. Al Qaida and its followers are Sunni extremists possessed by hatred and commanded by a harsh and narrow ideology. Take almost any principle of civilization, and their goal is the opposite. They preach with threats, instruct with bullets and bombs, and promise paradise for the murder of the innocent.

Our enemies are quite explicit about their intentions. They want to overthrow moderate governments and establish safe havens from which to plan and carry out new attacks on our country. By killing and terrorizing Americans, they want to force our country to retreat from the world and abandon the cause of liberty. They would then be free to impose their will and spread their totalitarian ideology. Listen to this warning from the late terrorist Zarqawi: "We will sacrifice our blood and bodies to put an end to your dreams, and what is coming is even worse." Usama bin Laden declared: "Death is better than living on this Earth with the unbelievers among us."

These men are not given to idle words, and they are just one camp in the Islamist radical movement. In recent times, it has also become clear that we face an escalating danger from Shi'a extremists who are just as hostile to America and are also determined to dominate the Middle East. Many are known to take direction from the regime in Iran, which is funding and arming terrorists like Hizballah, a group second only to Al Qaida in the American lives it has taken.

The Shi'a and Sunni extremists are different faces of the same totalitarian threat. Whatever slogans they chant when they slaughter the innocent, they have the same

wicked purposes. They want to kill Americans, kill democracy in the Middle East, and gain the weapons to kill on an even more horrific scale.

In the sixth year since our Nation was attacked, I wish I could report to you that the dangers have ended. They have not. And so it remains the policy of this Government to use every lawful and proper tool of intelligence, diplomacy, law enforcement, and military action to do our duty, to find these enemies, and to protect the American people.

This war is more than a clash of arms; it is a decisive ideological struggle. And the security of our Nation is in the balance. To prevail, we must remove the conditions that inspire blind hatred and drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and to come and kill us. What every terrorist fears most is human freedom: societies where men and women make their own choices, answer to their own conscience, and live by their hopes instead of their resentments. Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies, and most will choose a better way when they're given a chance. So we advance our own security interests by helping moderates and reformers and brave voices for democracy. The great question of our day is whether America will help men and women in the Middle East to build free societies and share in the rights of all humanity. And I say, for the sake of our own security, we must.

In the last 2 years, we've seen the desire for liberty in the broader Middle East, and we have been sobered by the enemy's fierce reaction. In 2005, the world watched as the citizens of Lebanon raised the banner of the Cedar Revolution. They drove out the Syrian occupiers and chose new leaders in free elections. In 2005, the people of Afghanistan defied the terrorists and elected a democratic legislature. And in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections, choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world, and

then electing a Government under that Constitution. Despite endless threats from the killers in their midst, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity that we should never forget.

A thinking enemy watched all of these scenes, adjusted their tactics, and, in 2006, they struck back. In Lebanon, assassins took the life of Pierre Gemayel, a prominent participant in the Cedar Revolution. Hizballah terrorists, with support from Syria and Iran, sowed conflict in the region and are seeking to undermine Lebanon's legitimately elected Government. In Afghanistan, Taliban and Al Qaida fighters tried to regain power by regrouping and engaging Afghan and NATO forces. In Iraq, Al Qaida and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra. This atrocity, directed at a Muslim house of prayer, was designed to provoke retaliation from Iraqi Shi'a, and it succeeded. Radical Shi'a elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads. The result was a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal that continues to this day.

This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we're in. Every one of us wishes this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned, and our own security at risk. Ladies and gentlemen, on this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. Let us find our resolve and turn events toward victory.

We're carrying out a new strategy in Iraq, a plan that demands more from Iraq's elected Government and gives our forces in Iraq the reinforcements they need to complete their mission. Our goal is a democratic Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

In order to make progress toward this goal, the Iraqi Government must stop the sectarian violence in its capital. But the Iraqis are not yet ready to do this on their own. So we're deploying reinforcements of more than 20,000 additional soldiers and marines to Iraq. The vast majority will go to Baghdad, where they will help Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighborhoods and serve as advisers embedded in Iraqi Army units. With Iraqis in the lead, our forces will help secure the city by chasing down the terrorists, insurgents, and the roaming death squads. And in Anbar Province, where Al Qaida terrorists have gathered and local forces have begun showing a willingness to fight them, we're sending an additional 4,000 United States marines, with orders to find the terrorists and clear them out. We didn't drive Al Qaida out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq.

The people of Iraq want to live in peace, and now it's time for their Government to act. Iraq's leaders know that our commitment is not open ended. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad, and they must do so. They pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction or political party, and they need to follow through and lift needless restrictions on Iraqi and coalition forces, so these troops can achieve their mission of bringing security to all of the people of Baghdad. Iraq's leaders have committed themselves to a series of benchmarks: to achieve reconciliation, to share oil revenues among all of Iraq's citizens, to put the wealth of Iraq into the rebuilding of Iraq, to allow more Iraqis to reenter their nation's civic life, to hold local elections, and to take responsibility for security in every Iraqi Province. But for all of this to happen, Baghdad must be secure, and our plan will help the Iraqi Government take back its capital and make good on its commitments.

My fellow citizens, our military commanders and I have carefully weighed the options. We discussed every possible approach. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success. Many in this Chamber understand that America must not fail in Iraq, because you understand that the consequences of failure would be grievous and far-reaching.

If American forces step back before Baghdad is secure, the Iraqi Government would be overrun by extremists on all sides. We could expect an epic battle between Shi'a extremists backed by Iran and Sunni extremists aided by Al Qaida and supporters of the old regime. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country, and, in time, the entire region could be drawn into the conflict.

For America, this is a nightmare scenario; for the enemy, this is the objective. Chaos is the greatest ally, their greatest ally in this struggle. And out of chaos in Iraq would emerge an emboldened enemy with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. To allow this to happen would be to ignore the lessons of September the 11th and invite tragedy. Ladies and gentlemen, nothing is more important at this moment in our history than for America to succeed in the Middle East, to succeed in Iraq, and to spare the American people from this danger.

This is where matters stand tonight, in the here and now. I have spoken with many of you in person. I respect you and the arguments you've made. We went into this largely united, in our assumptions and in our convictions. And whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure. Our country is pursuing a new strategy in Iraq, and I ask you to give it a chance to work. And I ask you to support our troops in the field and those on their way.

The war on terror we fight today is a generational struggle that will continue long after you and I have turned our duties over

to others. And that's why it's important to work together so our Nation can see this great effort through. Both parties and both branches should work in close consultation. It's why I've proposed to establish a special advisory council on the war on terror, made up of leaders in Congress from both political parties. We will share ideas for how to position America to meet every challenge that confronts us. We'll show our enemies abroad that we are united in the goal of victory.

And one of the first steps we can take together is to add to the ranks of our military so that the American Armed Forces are ready for all the challenges ahead. Tonight I ask the Congress to authorize an increase in the size of our active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 in the next 5 years. A second task we can take on together is to design and establish a volunteer civilian reserve corps. Such a corps would function much like our military reserve. It would ease the burden on the Armed Forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them. It would give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time.

Americans can have confidence in the outcome of this struggle because we're not in this struggle alone. We have a diplomatic strategy that is rallying the world to join in the fight against extremism. In Iraq, multinational forces are operating under a mandate from the United Nations. We're working with Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the Gulf States to increase support for Iraq's Government.

The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iran and made it clear that the world will not allow the regime in Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons. With the other members of the Quartet—the U.N., the EU, and Russia—we're pursuing diplomacy to help bring peace to the Holy Land and pursuing the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state living side by side with



Israel in peace and security. In Afghanistan, NATO has taken the lead in turning back the Taliban and Al Qaida offensive, the first time the Alliance has deployed forces outside the North Atlantic area. Together with our partners in China and Japan, Russia and South Korea, we're pursuing intensive diplomacy to achieve a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons.

We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma, and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur.

American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. Our work in the world is also based on a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger and poverty and disease, and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV/AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa. Because you funded the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the number of people receiving lifesaving drugs has grown from 50,000 to more than 800,000 in 3 short years. I ask you to continue funding our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, and I ask you to provide \$1.2 billion over 5 years so we can combat malaria in 15 African countries.

I ask that you fund the Millennium Challenge Account, so that American aid reaches the people who need it, in nations where democracy is on the rise and corruption is in retreat. And let us continue to support the expanded trade and debt relief that are the best hope for lifting lives and eliminating poverty.

When America serves others in this way, we show the strength and generosity of our country. These deeds reflect the character of our people. The greatest strength we have is the heroic kindness and courage and self-sacrifice of the American people. You see this spirit often if you know where to look, and tonight we need only look above to the gallery.

Dikembe Mutombo grew up in Africa amid great poverty and disease. He came to Georgetown University on a scholarship to study medicine, but Coach John Thompson took a look at Dikembe and had a different idea. [Laughter] Dikembe became a star in the NBA and a citizen of the United States, but he never forgot the land of his birth or the duty to share his blessings with others. He built a brand new hospital in his old hometown. A friend has said of this good-hearted man: "Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things." And we are proud to call this son of the Congo a citizen of the United States of America.

After her daughter was born, Julie Aigner-Clark searched for ways to share her love of music and art with her child. So she borrowed some equipment and began filming children's videos in her basement. The Baby Einstein Company was born, and in just 5 years, her business grew to more than \$20 million in sales. In November 2001, Julie sold Baby Einstein to Walt Disney Company, and with her help, Baby Einstein has grown into a \$200 million business. Julie represents the great enterprising spirit of America. And she is using her success to help others, producing child safety videos with John Walsh of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Julie says of her new project: "I believe it is the most important thing I have ever done. I believe that children have the right to live in a world that is safe." And so tonight we are pleased to welcome this talented business entrepreneur and generous social entrepreneur, Julie Aigner-Clark.

Three weeks ago, Wesley Autrey was waiting at a Harlem subway station with his two little girls when he saw a man fall into the path of a train. With seconds to act, Wesley jumped onto the tracks, pulled the man into the space between the rails, and held him as the train passed right above their heads. He insists he's not a

hero. He says: "We got guys and girls overseas dying for us to have our freedoms. We have got to show each other some love." There is something wonderful about a country that produces a brave and humble man like Wesley Autrey.

Tommy Rieman was a teenager pumping gas in Independence, Kentucky, when he enlisted in the United States Army. In December 2003, he was on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq when his team came under heavy enemy fire. From his Humvee, Sergeant Rieman returned fire. He used his body as a shield to protect his gunner. He was shot in the chest and arm and received shrapnel wounds to his legs, yet he refused medical attention and stayed in the fight. He helped to repel a second attack, firing grenades at the enemy's position. For his exceptional courage, Sergeant Rieman was awarded the Silver Star. And like so many other Americans who have volunteered to defend us, he has earned the respect and the gratitude of our entire country.

In such courage and compassion, ladies and gentlemen, we see the spirit and character of America. And these qualities are not in short supply. This is a decent and honorable country and resilient too. We've been through a lot together. We've met challenges and faced dangers, and we know that more lie ahead. Yet we can go forward with confidence, because the State of our Union is strong; our cause in the world is right; and tonight that cause goes on. God bless.

See you next year. Thank you for your prayers.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to John Thompson, Jr., former Georgetown University head men's basketball coach. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on Energy in Wilmington, Delaware January 24, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Thanks for such a warm welcome here in Delaware. I thank you—for those of you who stayed up for the speech last night, thanks. [*Laughter*] If you're 60 and over, it's a little late to stay up; I understand. But it's exciting always to go in front of the Congress. And I appreciate the good Senator, Tom Carper, for joining us, and thanks for bringing along Martha, a DuPont alumna, by the way.

And I want to thank Congressman Mike Castle as well, for joining me here in Delaware. And thanks for paying attention last night. [*Laughter*] I asked Castle if he stayed awake for the whole thing, and he said, "Well, just the first 55 minutes." And I said, "Well"—[*laughter*].

I'm excited to be here to talk about what I talked—part of what I talked about last night. And I can't think of a better place to talk about innovation, technology change, and a better tomorrow than DuPont. The history of this company—[*applause*]. I thank Chad Holliday for inviting me here and introducing me to some of your fellow workers who are really putting this country on the leading edge of technological change. And I want to spend a little time talking about this energy initiative.

But first I want to thank all the good folks at DuPont for really leading with your brains. And as the Secretary of Energy, Sam Bodman, told me coming in—he said, when he was a—see, he's, like, a graduate from MIT, which—so he's a smart guy, and



I'm the President. But anyway—[laughter]—it's the way it works sometimes, you know. He said, when he went to MIT, they looked at DuPont as a case study on how to make sure science and practical applications came together. And that's what I saw today—I'm going to spend—as I said, I'm going to spend a little time talking about. And so I want to thank—Chad, thank you and the team for inviting me and all the good employees for taking time to come and visit.

I want to thank the Governor. Madam Governor, thank you for coming. I appreciate Governor Minner for joining us. Being a Governor is a great job, and I kind of know what I'm talking about. [Laughter] And I know you agree with me. I know Carper agrees with me, and I know Castle agrees with me as well. [Laughter] And I know Pete du Pont agrees with me, and I'm proud that former Governor Pete du Pont has joined us here today as well. So thank you current Governor and former Governor for joining us.

Speaker, thanks for being here. I'm proud to see you again. Charlie Copeland, thank you for coming as well. For the state-house folks, I appreciate you serving; for local government, thanks as well.

I'm here to talk about an interesting opportunity for our country. I made the case last night to the American people that we have got to do something about our dependence on oil for two reasons: One, dependence on oil provides an economic and national security risk, a problem that this country better start dealing with in a serious fashion now, before it becomes acute. And second, we've got to be wise stewards of the environment, and dependency on oil makes it harder to be wise stewards of the environment.

And what's interesting about the debate is, it's the confluence of national security and economic security concerns and environmental concerns that come together and can be solved at the same time by technologies. It's really what's begun to evolve

here in America. In other words, we can get beyond the post-Kyoto—the pre-Kyoto era with a post-Kyoto strategy, the center of which is new technologies.

Now I said last night—and I want to spend a little time talking about it—that the American people have got to understand that when you're dependent on oil, particularly from overseas, if demand goes up for the product in other countries relative to supply, the price of product is going to go up here. We're in a global economy. And so when the Chinese economy grows or the Indian economy grows—which we want it to do, by the way—when their economy grows, it provides markets for your products. So it's in our interests that we trade. But we've got to understand that when the globe becomes interconnected economically, the demand increases in other countries can cause the price of oil to go up here, and it has an economic effect on our own economy. The more dependent we are on oil from overseas, the more likely it is somebody else's demand is going to affect what you pay at the pump for gasoline.

Secondly, if you're dependent on oil overseas, it means that—and a hostile regime, a regime hostile to the United States produces that oil—you become vulnerable to the activity of a hostile regime. In other words, somebody doesn't like us; they produce the oil; they decide to do something about it; they can affect us. That's—when I talk about the national security risks, that's what I mean. In other words, you don't want your President sitting in the Oval Office worried about the activities of a hostile regime that could have all kinds of impacts on our security, starting with economic security.

Dependence on oil, as well, means that if a terrorist were able to destroy infrastructure somewhere else in the world, it's going to affect what you pay for at the gasoline pump. In other words, as we learned, the terrorists attacked us in brutal ways; they attacked us by flying airplanes into our

buildings. But we're also vulnerable to attacks through infrastructure around the world that could cause your price, the price you pay, to go up.

And so we've got to do something about it. In other words, Government has got to be more than just talkers; we got to be problem-solvers. That's what the American people expect us to do. That's why I said last night: It doesn't matter what side of the aisle we sit on; what the American people expect is for people on both sides of the aisle to come together and solve problems. And this is a problem, and I'm going to work with Congress to get it solved.

Now, the good news is, is that we're on the verge of some unbelievable technological breakthroughs. At this company, you've got 2,500 scientists. Some of the smartest people in our country work here, all trying to develop new technologies. This isn't anything new for DuPont, by the way. This is like what you've been doing for a long time, but trying to develop new technologies to help us solve this problem. And that's why I've come here. You're employing the best minds possible to address the problem of economic and national security and environmental issues, because we're dependent on oil. And the American people have got to know that you're making progress.

As an aside, when I talked about the immigration bill last night, I also want you to know, I understand that we need to make sure that when a smart person from overseas wants to come and work in DuPont, it's in our interests to allow him or her to do so. We've got to expand what's called H1B visas. I know the Senator and the Congressman understand that. I'm looking forward to working with Congress to do just that. It makes no sense, by the way—I know, I'm getting off topic here—[laughter]—but I feel strongly about what I'm telling you. It makes no sense to say to a young scientist from India, "You can't come to America to help this company develop technologies that help us deal with

our problems." So we've got to change that as well, change that mindset in Washington, DC. I know we can work together on that.

So we're spending a lot of money, by the way—your money—on developing—on helping to develop new technologies. I think it's an appropriate use of taxpayers' money, to spend on developing new technologies to help us deal with problems that affect today and the future for your children. We spent about 10 billion so far on the technologies that are—I think are going to help change America and our habits, and we're going to spend more.

Part of my request to Congress is going to be—we want to put \$2.7 billion of your money to help concerns and smart people develop new ways of powering our homes and powering our automobiles. And we're making some progress. Let me just share a couple of things that we're doing. One, we're spending a lot of your money on clean coal technology. The reason why is, we've got a lot of coal. If you want to be less dependent on oil from overseas—and by the way, we import about 60 percent of our oil today. In 1985, that was 27 percent of our oil. So we're becoming exponentially more dependent.

And we've got a lot of coal. And the fundamental question is, can we burn that coal to heat your homes in a way that doesn't endanger the environment? And so we're spending a lot of money to do that. It's called clean coal technology. We're spending billions. The dream one day is for us to be able to say, here's a coal-fired plant that has zero emissions. And it's possible; it's likely, as a matter of fact. And so we're spending time—money doing that.

We're also spending money on wind and solar. As a matter of fact, I saw your solar panel expert. And we spent a little time on—here's the dream: The dream is, someday, the technology will be such that you'll be—your house will become a little power generator. And if you use—if you got excess electricity generated by solar, you'll be

able to feed it back into your grid. Is that possible? Yes, it's possible. As a matter of fact, the advance in solar technology has been quite dramatic. There's more advance still to be done, which requires your money being spent to help concerns—develop new solar energy.

We got a lot of wind, particularly in Washington. *[Laughter]* That's what Castle was saying last night after 55 minutes. *[Laughter]* Wind energy is an interesting alternative.

I strongly believe that if we're that interested in greenhouse gases and renewable fuels, this country has got to be aggressive about establishing a safe nuclear power. If that is—one of our objectives is to be serious about dealing with the environment, there's no cleaner source of energy than nuclear power. And so we're spending money and research to make sure that the next generation powerplant is safe. But also, we're spending money, interestingly enough, on how to process spent fuels better. And believe it or not, actually, we're beginning to permit nuclear powerplants here in America. And that's going to be good for your children. It's going to make us less dependent on natural gas from overseas, and it's going to make us better stewards of the environment.

But the big gains to be made is—for oil, if we're trying to become less dependent on oil for economic and national security reasons, is going to be made in our automobiles and the power we use in our automobiles. That's really where we're going to make significant strides.

Just a couple of things that are happening that are interesting: One, we began a hydrogen initiative that—where a lot of smart folks are beginning to research whether or not we can power automobiles by hydrogen. We think it's possible, but it's not going to be possible until I'm 75, which is probably 15 years from now. Your children may very well likely be driving in automobiles powered by hydrogen, the waste product which is water, by the way.

But something has got to happen in the interim. I mean, we can't wait, for economic reasons or national security reasons, for hydrogen to kick in; in other words, it's still a dream.

And so we're pushing two interesting types of technologies: One, battery technologies—lithium ionic batteries. For all you history majors out there, let me put it to you this way—*[laughter]*—one of these days, you're going to plug your car into your garage, and you're going to be able to drive the first 20 miles on electricity, and your car is not going to have to look like a golf cart. *[Laughter]* And that technology is coming. And we're spending money to encourage that kind of technology.

American automobile companies, as well as foreign automobile companies competing for market share here in the United States, understand that's where the consumer mentality is evolving. And they're beginning to spend their own money, as well as help from the Federal Government, to develop new batteries. It's going to be an exciting time, really, when you think about it, when you're able to drive the first 20 miles in a plug-in hybrid vehicle without one drop of gasoline, which makes the country less dependent on oil.

Secondly, we're spending a lot of money on different kinds of fuels—ethanol. I don't know if you know, but we're now up to about a little over 5 billion gallons a year of ethanol usage. That's a threefold increase in 5 years' time. But what's interesting about technological advances, as you know better than me, is that as technology becomes more widely used and the markets begin to evolve, that kind of usage is going to accelerate quite dramatically. So the first 5 years may be relatively slow, but the next 5 years is going to be quite dramatic in the amount of ethanol produced.

However, there is a constraint, and that is, the ethanol use today comes from corn, and we've got hog growers and chicken

growers that need corn to feed their animals. And therefore, it's going to be kind of a strain, at some point in time, on the capacity for us to have enough ethanol to be able to make us less dependent on oil. So what you're doing at DuPont becomes vital, and that is cellulosic research.

And we spent time with some of your scientists that are very bright people—and not only bright people but optimistic people—about the arrival of the day where we're going to be able to make ethanol, which will power your automobiles, not just from corn but from wood chips or switchgrass or waste from corn itself—from the stalks. There's all kinds of opportunities to make energy to power your automobiles from that which had been discarded as waste in the past. And right here at DuPont, you're on the leading edge of change.

I came wondering whether or not cellulosic ethanol was one of these things down the road that may be happening; may not; could end up being science or science fiction. It's going to be science. It's working. As a matter of fact, when I looked at those scientists that you employ here and heard them say: "This is a reality. Mr. President, this is going to be something that we can live by." Really, I got to tell you; I'm incredibly encouraged by what I saw, and you need to be too. And we need to be thankful as a nation for companies like DuPont who are spending shareholders' money to make sure this country becomes less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment.

As I said, I do believe, strongly believe, there's a role for Government: One, spending money directly. I mentioned 2.7 billion for our '08 request from Congress—monies which, by the way, get joint-ventured with initiatives, for example, that take place here in DuPont.

Secondly, I strongly believe that—and by the way, in the farm bill, request in the farm bill, we're going to put 1.6 billion over 10 years to continue this kind of research as well. But I also strongly believe

in the research and development tax credit. I believe Tax Code should provide incentives. And one incentive that makes a lot of sense for this country is to incent you to continue to invest your money on research and development. And Congress really needs to make the research and development tax credit permanent. See, it lays out for a year, so it's good for next year and—[applause]. The reason I say that, there's got to be certainty in planning. I mean, your financial people are sitting around saying: "Well, I wonder if they're going to renew it next year?"—which actually does affect investment around the country. And so to the extent that we can make this a permanent part of the Tax Code, it will add certainty to planners, and when you have certainty in planners, it means it's more likely we're going to get better research and more money into the experiments that these good scientists are doing here at DuPont.

And so last night, based upon what I just told you—based upon optimism, new science, progress that we have made—I announced a goal for the country, which is to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years. If we are—when we do that, it will mean that we have reduced the amount of imported oil from the Middle East—or the equivalent of the imported oil from the Middle East by about three-quarters. And that's important. It's really going to be important for your children that this country has become able to—be able to say to the hostile regime: "Leave us alone. You can't affect us. We'll protect ourselves in all kinds of ways from you."

And so I put out a mandatory fuel standard. This is a Government mandate that says we'll be using 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels by 2017. This is a firm statement. You know, I signed an energy bill that had renewable fuel standards of 7 billion gallons. And so this is five times larger than that. I base it on—and this is a practical declaration—and I base it on

the fact of how much we've increased ethanol, but I've also based it on the fact that we're going to have breakthroughs in cellulosic ethanol as well.

And to couple that, in order to make sure that we're 20 percent less dependent in 10 years, I also proposed to Congress that we change the fuel efficiency standards in our automobiles. Something that the American people don't know about is that during my administration, we changed the CAFE standard for trucks. And basically, we said, we're going to take the weight of each type of truck and set a fuel standard specific to weight. It's a little hard to explain, except for it has achieved a lot of conservation efficiencies. We need to do the same thing for cars.

If you have an overall fleet CAFE standard, what ends up happening is, is that the bigger cars have lower gas mileages than they could otherwise, and the little cars have high gas mileages, which reduces the safety in the automobiles. And so we believe that if you make—set CAFE standards based upon weight, it will help meet consumer demand and makes better science. As a matter of fact, this is an idea we got from the National Academy of Science.

And so Congress, I'm hopeful, recognizes the great potential in new technologies, that we're able to have a new mandatory fuel standard and new CAFE standards for our automobiles, all aiming to make us less dependent on oil and, thereby, making us more secure nationally and be able to say we're better stewards of the environment.

I said two things last night I want to follow up on: One, I don't know if you know this, but technology for the exploration for hydrocarbons is unbelievably advanced these days. And I'm confident that—I know we're going to need, if we want to be less dependent on foreign oil, we need to be exploring here at home. I mean, there's some unbelievably great deepwater gas potential in the Gulf of Mexico, for example, and we can explore for

those hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. And we need to continue to do so. In other words, it's going to take awhile to get to a world where we're much less dependent on foreign oil, and we need to be exploring in environmentally friendly ways, and we can.

And if a terrorist threat—if terrorism is a threat to the supply of our energy supply, then I believe it makes sense to address that terrorist threat by doubling the size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, so that rather than 750 million gallons of crude oil in storage, in case there's a disruption based upon a terrorist threat, there's a billion-five. In other words, if we're saying dependence on oil creates a terrorist threat, let's do something about it now. Let's say that if the threat does come, there's enough crude oil in storage to be able to deal with the short-term economic consequences of an attack.

And so that's why I said what I said the other night. It's really a comprehensive plan. I hope I can leave you with the impression that—a couple of things: One, an approach to energy security that's aggressive also is a good approach to environmental quality. And secondly, that such an approach requires a multiplicity of research projects. In other words, it's not going to be one cure to dependence on oil, it's going to be a variety of new technologies that are coming forth to do so.

Today I signed an Executive order that says we're going to commit the Government to the following things, that we're going to purchase more hybrid and flexible-fuel vehicles that run on ethanol, because we own a lot of cars. And therefore, it's one thing to say, this is the goal, it's another thing to actually participate in achieving that goal. And that's what we're going to do.

Secondly, we're going to purchase plug-in hybrid vehicles as soon as they hit the market. I think that will give some surety



to those who have invested in new technologies, to know that the Federal Government is going to be a purchaser, when commercially available. In other words, we're not going to waste your taxpayers' money, but we're going to participate in a new market. I don't think you want us buying above market; I think you want us to be wise about how we spend it. [*Laughter*]

We're going to purchase—increase our purchases of renewable power from new sources. We're going to reduce the gas consumption of the Federal fleet by 20 percent over 10 years. We're going to be joining with America. We set the goal. It doesn't make much sense for the Federal Government to set the goal and then not participate, and we will. And so the Executive order commits this Government to doing what I know is going to happen.

I love being around entrepreneurs and people that dream big dreams. And today I understand some are out there scratching their heads, saying: "You expect me to believe, President, that I'm going to be driving a car, the fuel from which has been derived from switchgrass?" And my answer is, "Yes, I do." That's what I believe. You know why I feel that way? Because the people here at DuPont feel that way. The people here at DuPont have always dreamed big dreams. And if you look at

the history, they have followed through. There have been unbelievable new technologies that have come from the minds of the folks who work here.

And the same thing is happening in energy. It's coming; it's coming. And the role of the Federal Government is to set high goals—and in this case, mandatory fuel standards—to say, we're dedicated, committed, and we're going to achieve the goal. And that way, when it's all said and done, when we've done our duty to serving the American people, we can look back and say to this next generation: We tried to leave you a little better world.

And so I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about that better world. It's on the way. And I'm excited to be a part of it, and I know you are as well.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in the DuPont Theater at the Hotel du Pont. In his remarks, he referred to Charles O. "Chad" Holliday, Jr., chairman of the board and chief executive officer, DuPont; Terry R. Spence, speaker, Delaware State House of Representatives; and Charles L. Copeland, minority leader, Delaware State Senate. The related Executive order of January 24 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combatant Commanders

*January 24, 2007*

It's my pleasure to welcome Secretary Gates, the Joint Chiefs, and the combatant commanders to the White House. First of all, it's an honor to be in the presence of such fine citizens, men who are doing their duty to protect this country. And we have no more solemn duty than to protect

America in this war against extremists and radicals.

I'm looking forward to our discussion about the theaters in which you are representing America. I'm looking forward to discussion about the new way forward in Iraq. I thank you for your service.

I also call upon the Senate to move quickly to confirm Lieutenant General Petraeus as the commander of the Multi-National Forces—Iraq, Admiral Fallon as the commander of Central Command, and General Casey as the Army Chief of Staff. It is important to get these three fine individuals in their posts as soon as possible so that we have continuity as we do our duty to protect the American people.

We'll have a good, wide-ranging discussion here, and then Laura and I have the high privilege of welcoming you and your

spouses to dinner tonight. Welcome, and thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:06 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth; and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Lee's Summit, Missouri *January 25, 2007*

*The President.* Rich, thank you very much for inviting us here to Saint Luke's. We had a fascinating tour of your facility. It is safe to say that Saint Luke's hospital—the Saint Luke's Health System understands the power of technology to help compassionate doctors and nurses better do their job. And technology is a—we saw, like, unbelievably interesting medical programs, programs that enable doctors to better analyze disease and deal with disease before it becomes acute, which is important.

The reason why I emphasize the information technology aspects of this hospital is that part of the role of Government is to encourage people to make decisions to help hold the cost of health care down. And when a hospital modernizes, when you go from files to electronics, it helps hold the cost of health care down.

One of the interesting things about medicine is that medicine tends to have lagged behind the rest of our economy when it comes to information technology. And yet under Rich's leadership, this facility and its sister facilities are doing some really interesting reforms we'll talk about a little bit.

I want to thank George Pagels, who is the CEO of this facility. George, thank you. He's a doctor and gave us the tour—met a lot of really fine nurses and docs, by the way. I appreciate Senator Bond joining us; thanks for coming. And of course, our Secretary of Health and Human Services, who will say something here in a minute.

I want to talk a little bit about a comprehensive strategy to make health care available and affordable. There is no question in my mind that a proper role for the Federal Government is to help the poor and the elderly and the diseased get health care. We'll do that. And to the extent that these important programs need to be reformed and strengthened, we will do that as well. Witness what we did with Medicare. Medicare was old and stagnant; it needed to be reformed. We reformed it through a generous prescription drug benefit that has actually worked; it's helped our seniors. And so we will do our duty at the Federal level, and when we find deficiencies in Federal programs, we will work to correct them, for the good of the citizens and the taxpayers.

The second aspect of our responsibility is to work to make health care available



and affordable for all our citizens, and the best way to do that is through private health insurance. Therein lies part of the debate we have in Washington. We believe the private sector is the best delivery of health care. We know there's a role for the Federal Government, but it's not to dictate; it's not to be the decisionmaker. And so Mike and I and others in my administration have been strategizing on how best to make health care available and affordable.

Here are some ways. One, helping spread information technology—we're the biggest user of health care in the United States, and therefore, we can help people understand the benefits of using information technology. Secondly, price transparency, one reason we came to this hospital is that under Rich's leadership, this hospital system has been willing to place its prices and its quality ratings out for consumers to see.

I mean, health care is an interesting industry, isn't it, where a lot of times you have no idea about the price of the service you're paying for. You just assume it's okay. Somebody says, "Here's your price," and you say, "Okay, I'll pay it." We believe that with price transparency and quality assessments, consumers will have a better decisionmaking process. And we want consumers making the decision in health care.

Think about a system where there's a third-party payer. So you've got your insurance, somebody pays your bills for you, and you're not involved. You just kind of assume that the third-party payer is making a rational decision on your behalf. And our view is, is that in order to have—to worry about health care costs, the more a consumer is involved, the more likely we'll be able to deal with the increasing cost of health care.

Another reform is medical liability reform. I'm walking around the hospital here; a professional comes up to me and says, "We practice too much medicine for fear of lawsuits," which raises the cost of your

bill. See, if the medical provider is worried about getting sued, they will make decisions on how to stay out of the court of law more than—as important as decisions on how to keep you healthy. Medical liability is a real problem in a lot of States.

And we are trying to get the United States Congress to hear that same call. And I'll keep working on medical liability reform. Why—to help make health care more affordable. But also, when you get a lot of lawsuits, it causes good docs to quit the practice of medicine. There are a lot of counties in the country that do not have ob-gyn because these lawsuits have run them out of practice. And it's not right, and it's not fair. And so we need to have the political will in Washington to take on a very powerful lobby, which is the trial lawyers, and prevent these frivolous lawsuits from running up the cost of your medicine and running good docs out of practice.

A couple of other points I want to make before we talk to the—talk about this new initiative I laid out to the country. I think it's very important to help develop plans that make the consumer in charge of as much of the health care decision as possible. These are called—one idea is health savings accounts. This basically says that there is a product available for you to use where you're the decisionmaker and you're able to contribute tax free, earn money in your account tax free, take money out tax free on medicine. If you don't spend the money in your account one year, you can roll it over; it becomes a savings account. It's an incentive for you to make good decisions about your life, and it also provides catastrophic care in case something bad happens to you. We'll talk about health savings accounts here in a minute, and their effect on enabling people who do not have insurance to have health care available and affordable for them.

Finally, small businesses need help. I mean, it's hard to be able to buy insurance when you're a stand-alone company. And

insurance is basically a spreading of risk through pooling of risk, and we just need to allow small businesses to be able to buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can by pooling risk.

In other words, a restaurant in Missouri ought to be able to have their employees insured with a restaurant in Texas. In other words, put them all in the same pool so they can get the benefits of spreading risk. Now, these are practical things to get done. And they're hard to get done in Washington because people in Washington have a different view. They want the Government basically making the decisions for health care. The view of the people here is that you ought to be making those decisions.

One way to encourage you to make the right decisions when it comes to health care is to take the inequities out of the Tax Code. If you work for a company, you pay—you get your health care free, in essence. It's part of the benefit package. If you're a stand-alone person, you pay your health care on an after-tax basis. In other words, there's discrimination in the Tax Code based upon who you work for. It makes it harder for people to be able to—individuals or small-company employees to be able to buy health care.

And so what we've said—and Michael spent a little time describing this—we've said that all Americans who have health care ought to be allowed to have a \$15,000 deduction on your income taxes if you're a married couple—if you're married, and if you're not, \$7,500. In other words, the benefits you receive from your company become part of your taxable income, offset by a \$15,000 deduction. And so if the benefits you get from your company are \$11,000, you'll have \$4,000 deducted from your income. And that's important.

It also will help people who are uninsured or on the verge of being uninsured. In other words, it encourages the development of an individual market. It makes it more likely an individual will be able to

afford health care. If you've got a family of four with \$60,000 income, you get a substantial tax savings, which will then enable your health insurance to be more affordable. And we'll talk about that.

The point I'm trying to make to you is, the system is geared toward enabling the individual to have more control over his or her decisionmaking and make the Tax Code fair for the individual. And finally, I've instructed Michael to work with States. We believe that there's been some very innovative policy that takes place at the State level to cover the uninsured, to help the sick, to help those who are poor be able to get insurance. And so we're going to have flexibility with Federal money that goes to States, and all we request is the States develop a basic health insurance plan that becomes more affordable. Oftentimes the plan that is only available for the individual is priced out of their control because of mandates and add-ons. And Michael is going to say to Governors: Look, we're going to help you. You got some interesting ideas. We think it makes sense to use Federal money to help you with those ideas, but you need to develop a basic plan so that health care is affordable for more of our citizens.

And here's a comprehensive strategy. A lot of times in Washington, they say: "Well, let's just design it there in the Federal Government; it will all work." It won't, in my judgment. It will become bureaucratic; it will become costly; it won't empower individuals; it will make it harder to get affordable health care.

And so here's a strategy, a multiple-pronged strategy, a strategy that says there's a lot of things we need to do to help our American citizens be able to buy private health insurance.

Leavitt is in charge. Michael is the Secretary of Health and Human Services. He's spent a lot of time on the subject. You might want to add a few comments, and then we can hear from some of our citizens here.

[At this point, Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Yes, Leavitt, one thing before you get—I see we’ve got some cameramen here. Why don’t you give them the cameraman story.

*Secretary Leavitt.* I had a terrific conversation yesterday.

*The President.* For all you cameramen out there.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Someone asked me—actually, it was a news organization here in Missouri, anticipating our trip, asked me, “What are you going to talk about?” And I said, essentially, we’ve got this problem that we’re trying to solve, with people who work in restaurants or in daycare centers or are self-employed, and it’s unfair that they should be treated in a way. And I could see the cameraman—

*The President.* He’s an independent contractor; he’s on his own, basically.

*Secretary Leavitt.* But he was behind the camera doing this, which is unusual. [Laughter]

*The President.* Because he wants to be treated just like the person who works for big corporate America, and he wants to be able to have that deduction.

*Secretary Leavitt.* So before we were even off the satellite, he’s saying—“And you should have said independent cameramen.” [Laughter] He said, “Do you know how much I pay for insurance?” He says, “It’s \$1,350 a month, and I have to pay it after I pay my taxes, and it’s just not fair.”

It isn’t fair. This is the right thing to be doing.

*The President.* Thank you.

Rich, thanks for having us. Appreciate you inviting—letting us tour your hospital here.

[G. Richard Hastings, president and chief executive officer, Saint Luke’s Health System, made brief remarks.]

*The President.* The other thing that’s interesting about what Rich is doing—availability of health care—they’ve got, like, a specialist sitting in Kansas City capable of analyzing somebody’s graphs in a remote region, which, again, remember it’s affordability and availability for health care. And information technology is able to make medicine available throughout rural Missouri or rural Kansas, for example. And it’s very exciting, and I appreciate what you’re doing.

*Mr. Hastings.* Thank you, sir.

*Secretary Leavitt.* I want to make certain you all understand here three things that are happening that need to happen all over the country—here that are happening. The first is, you’re a connected system. If a patient wants to get their medical records, they can do it in a convenient way. People need to have access to their own records in a way that will be convenient to them. And this idea that a patient then can have an independent assessment of the quality of the care that their provider is giving them is revolutionary and very important.

But then you combine that with the ability for people to know what it costs. Once you have the cost and the quality, you’re now making decisions based on value. And that’s what we hope in the future. The whole system will become a connected system that has competition based on value, where consumers are making decisions, as opposed to someone other than the consumer.

*The President.* Dr. Jim Kelly. Why don’t you tell people what you do, Doctor?

*James B. Kelly.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Let me guess. [Laughter]

[Dr. Kelly, anesthesiologist, Saint Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City, made brief remarks.]

*The President.* I don’t think people know what you mean by defensive medicine. Why don’t you describe that?

*Dr. Kelly.* Well, you're always concerned. One, we're here to take care of patients, and that's our primary objective. But if you are told that you do a poor job or go—everybody lives in fear of being sued, and they will go to extreme lengths to document that everything they're doing is the right thing. If any of us were so unfortunate to fall down right now and bump our head, it would be hard to get out of this hospital—if you tell the emergency room physician that you hit your head—without a CT scan, maybe even an overnight stay in the ICU. They want to make sure that they're okay and not just trust their clinical skills that it's a little bump on the head.

*The President.* In other words, practicing maybe too much medicine—

*Dr. Kelly.* Too much medicine and extra tests.

*The President.* It actually costs the Federal Government something like 23 billion a year.

[*Dr. Kelly made further remarks.*]

*The President.* Well, I appreciate you. I happen to believe this is a Federal issue. When I first came to Washington, I said, we ought to allow these—each State to determine their own medical liability reform. I believe it's—and I chose to make it a Washington issue because it's costing our taxpayers so much money. When I say “costing,” we're a big consumer of health care through Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits. And when doctors' premiums go up, they charge more. And with doctors in fear of being sued, they practice more medicine than is necessary.

And I don't know if 20 billion is the right number, but it is a lot. I think it is something like that. And that's extra money for the taxpayers. And I'd like to get it done in Washington, DC, frankly. And I believe medical liability is a huge—I know it's a huge issue in a lot of States, and we'd like to help you. Thanks for working on it. Appreciate you being involved.  
Jim Henderson.

*Jim Henderson.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* President—

*Mr. Henderson.* Not like you, but thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* —of Dynamic Sales, Inc. Where are you based, and what do you do?

*Mr. Henderson.* St. Louis, Missouri. We're a construction and industrial supply company—

*The President.* Great. How are you doing?

*Mr. Henderson.* —and I'm a second-generation owner. It's been very good. The economy has been very good to us, and the business has been booming. We're on our 11th record year.

*The President.* Good.

*Mr. Henderson.* So we're very pleased.

*The President.* All because of good management.

*Mr. Henderson.* From the top down. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* That's right. How many employees?

*Mr. Henderson.* We have seven employees; five full-time, two part-time.

*The President.* Right, and your issue with health care?

[*Mr. Henderson made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Mr. Henderson.* So when they say, “Well, we can keep your premiums the same,” they're not really saving us anything, because we're having to pass that along to the employees, of which I am an employee of the corporation. So now my health insurance costs just went up too. And it's just a vicious cycle that we've been dealing with for over 17 years.

*The President.* This is probably the biggest problem we hear from small businesses around the country. And in that small businesses create most new jobs in America, it makes sense to come up with plans to help small businesses thrive.

Michael, I don't know if you want to comment on this——

*Secretary Leavitt.* I'd be interested——

*The President.*——deductibility plan because I think it's going to save your employees a lot of money and make it easier for you to be in a position to do what you want to do, which is be——consider yourself a good employer.

*Mr. Henderson.* Well, that's the hard thing, is when you're trying to hire more people, health insurance is really important. And if you're telling people: "Well, we've got a \$2,000 deductible and a 70/30 split, but, hey, we're a good company to work for"—well, you might be a nice family company to work for, but I can't afford to work here.

*The President.* Have you looked at this deal that I proposed?

*Mr. Henderson.* Yes, sir; I have. And from what I've looked at, off of the information you've sent to me, I think that it's going to be very attractive.

*The President.* And how does it help you?

*Secretary Leavitt.* Jim could describe it, or I—well, I mean, Jim is like a lot of other small businesses. If he and his employees had this ability to have this standard exemption—in Jim's case personally, he'd have the exemption; he'd get the tax savings. It would be—he'd have about a \$2,183 increase in his take-home pay. The value of the actual deduction to him would be 7,200, which would go a long ways to helping defer some of those costs.

When you look at that example—and take Martha, for example—Martha had a similar problem as Jim did and chose to go to a health savings account. When you combine these two, it becomes well within the grasp of almost any employee to have an affordable, basic health insurance. Martha, maybe you could——

*The President.* Yes. Just one point before you go. I think it's very important for our citizens to know that as we level the playing field between employees of little companies

and big companies, it makes it easier for small companies to stay in business. The Tax Code, it treats a certain group of people in the United States unfairly when it comes to health care. People who work for big businesses get their health care on a—without—with no—they pay no taxable income on it. Small companies who are having trouble staying in business because of the nature of their size of the company pass on the increased cost to their employees. And we've got to level the playing field from a taxes perspective. It is by far the most hopeful and fair option of any medical health care option out there today, unless, of course, you want the Federal Government running it all, saying, "Okay, we'll provide you insurance, we'll provide everybody insurance," which would be a mistake.

Anyway, listen to health savings accounts, but I don't want to be Mr. Lecturer. But she is—it's an interesting option for you.

*Mr. Henderson.* I did look at those, but for our employees, they weren't as attractive, because our employees said: "If I can set aside \$2,000 a year or whatever to put into a health savings account, I'd be doing it anyway."

*Secretary Leavitt.* So they'll be able to—with this tax change, they'll now have the money that can go to do just that.

*Mr. Henderson.* That's been what's so frustrating about this, is each year those costs go up—we want to make it affordable for our employees—the company's paying more for the insurance that they're receiving. We don't get to turn around and say to our customers, "Hey, we're raising your prices"——

*The President.* No, that's right.

*Mr. Henderson.*——"25 percent because our insurance went up." And when we ask the insurance: "Why is it going up? We haven't had these major losses." Their reply is, "Because we can." That's what I was told: "Because we can." I'd like to tell all my customers that, hey, I'm raising your prices 25 percent because I can.



*The President.* Right. It's a problem, and the reason I've come here to discuss this with a frustrated small-business owner like you is because we believe that we've designed a solution that will help a lot.

*Mr. Henderson.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Martha.

*Martha Gelencher.* Yes, Mr. President.

*The President.* Why don't you tell everybody what you do? Are you as passionate about your employees as my man Jim?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Yes, I am.

*The President.* That's good.

*Ms. Gelencher.* I've been in the business for 30-plus years, and having health insurance has always been a big issue. I think we as employee—individuals now are facing what Jim said is—the individual and the employer are facing the same problem right now.

*The President.* Let me ask you something. How many employees do you have?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Thirty, of which six are full-time.

*The President.* Right. And so you started getting squeezed.

*Ms. Gelencher.* Yes, from the very beginning. In fact, no one wanted—for many years, no one wanted to insure someone that had only 30 employees.

*The President.* Yes, or six full-timers.

*Ms. Gelencher.* Yes. It's like, well, you're just not—

*The President.* It's one reason why you don't have a lot of leverage.

*Ms. Gelencher.* Right.

*The President.* People don't want to insure you.

*Mr. Henderson.* If we drop below five, we've been told—

*The President.* Yes. So you're at 6 full-time, 24 part-time. And you started looking at options, and what happens?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Well, we went with the HSAs; we've been with them for 2½ years. We were able to give more full-time people insurance. We save 40 percent of what we had been paying.

*The President.* Yes, see, that's why I think—get somebody to—HSAs really do hold the cost down for small businesses.

*Ms. Gelencher.* They really do. They really do.

*The President.* It's a little difficult to get the employee to sign on at first, right? It's a novel concept, as opposed to somebody paying your bills. An HSA basically says, you're in charge of your own health care.

*Ms. Gelencher.* Right, and it gives the small-business person a little advantage over the larger-business person, because they have their own savings account—

*The President.* That's right.

*Ms. Gelencher.* —and they can—it grows, and it's theirs, and they become more responsible for how they spend their health care.

*The President.* A high deductible catastrophic care plan with the company and/or the individual contributing tax free the amount of the deductible into a savings account. The person owns their savings account. In other words, it's beneficial to small business because it's cheaper to buy the HSA than it is normal insurance that you're battling for. Have you found that to be true?

*Ms. Gelencher.* I agree with you 100 percent. Yes. And our employees are very pleased. And I mean, really, it was a lifesaver for us because it just became such a big problem, as we see all across the board now, with individuals—low income, middle income—most of our people are middle income, so that's to their advantage.

*The President.* See, the problem with small businesses and individuals is that there's no market relative to—like big companies; there just isn't. And we need to help establish a market. Demand will yield the supply of insurance policies, so long as States enable there to be the development of a basic plan without mandates and things added on to it. And that's really one of the benefits of HSAs, by the way. It's like a basic health care plan.

Let me ask you something. Do your employees like the idea of being able to—of course they like the idea—your employees are able to take their health care with them from job to job—take the savings account aspect?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Exactly.

*The President.* It's theirs, not yours.

*Ms. Gelencher.* Right.

*Secretary Leavitt.* May I ask Martha a question?

*The President.* Yes, sure.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Martha, I have an HSA, so I have some experience with this, but I'm curious as to your experience with them. Did it cause you to be more interested in what things were costing than when you just had an insurance card?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Exactly. Exactly.

*Secretary Leavitt.* I remember the first time I walked into a drug store with my HSA and presented them with my new card. And I knew I was—that my savings—my health savings account would be paying part of it. And they—this prescription I had was going to be \$379. And I'd been getting this prescription for quite awhile, and I had no idea what it was going to cost. And I said to the druggist, "Is there a generic version of this?" It was—it changed my way of thinking about this completely. Did you have that experience?

*Ms. Gelencher.* Exactly the same.

*Secretary Leavitt.* Have you seen any kind of change in the way your employees have thought about this as a result?

[*Ms. Gelencher, owner, Corporate Building Services, made further remarks.*]

*Secretary Leavitt.* Something that Rich said and that Martha has said that is important: One of the things they are doing here at Saint Luke's is that they are allowing people to know what the prices are in advance. A lot of people go to hospitals and they say, "I'd like to know how much this costs." And the hospital just isn't equipped to answer that question or the doctor just doesn't think about what the cost is because

usually it's just about processing the insurance.

This very—this gets at the heart of how we keep costs down. Suddenly people begin to ask themselves: Is there a generic version of this? How much should this cost? Those are the kinds of questions that begin to create small businesses with a competitive product. And hospitals like the one we're in today have led in that transparency, knowing the quality, knowing the cost, being involved in the decision. It's a very important way to keep costs down.

*The President.* Yes, that's why the best health care system is one that recognizes that decisions made by doctors and patients are the best decisions. It's best to hold down costs. It's best to enhance quality. It is really what happens in most other aspects of our market. It doesn't happen—happening in health care. And the policies that we're detailing are trying to encourage more consumer involvement in order to hold down costs. And it's a foreign concept for a lot of people because it hasn't been happening for years. And it's a concept that frankly some in Washington don't like because it runs contrary to a philosophy that basically says, the Federal Government is a better decisionmaker.

Anyway, thanks for joining us. Thanks for being an innovator. The tax deduction is going to help your folks—

*Ms. Gelencher.* Yes, very much so.

*The President.* —\$15,000, 7,500 for a single person.

*Ms. Gelencher.* And I can't imagine why someone would not—

*The President.* Be for it?

*Ms. Gelencher.* —think it would.  
[Laughter]

*The President.* Well, it's an interesting question, particularly since it's a revenue-neutral proposal, which is important. Cost money or lose money, it's—according to the experts, it's revenue neutral.

Jones—Dan Jones, where do you live?

*Dan Jones.* I live in St. Louis, Missouri.



*The President.* You do—home of the mighty Cardinals.

*Mr. Jones.* Yes, sir. Yes, Mr. President.

*The President.* They came to the White House recently.

[*Mr. Jones, service engineer, Software To Go, made further remarks.*]

*The President.* Here's the classic guy— young guy in the marketplace, basically priced out of the individual market.

*Mr. Jones.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* And the plan helps him. Matter of fact, what they were telling me coming in that you could buy a good health care plan for about \$1,350.

*Mr. Jones.* Yes, we were looking at that. And within the State of Missouri, I can get about \$1,300 for a really nice health care for the year.

*The President.* Save 2,270 in taxes.

*Mr. Jones.* Over the year.

*The President.* So you put \$929 in your pocket.

*Mr. Jones.* Absolutely.

*The President.* Does it make sense to do that? I think it does.

*Mr. Jones.* What could you do with just a little over—under a thousand dollars? That's Christmas, you know. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Well, why don't you think about saving it? [*Laughter*]

*Mr. Jones.* Yes, well, I got a gigantic family, and I got a godchild who: "Buy me this, buy me that."

*The President.* Anyway, there are plenty of people who feel like they're doing just fine when it comes to health insurance, particularly those who work for big corporate America, which is fine. It's just that the system discriminates against the Dan Joneses because the Tax Code that has evolved over time has made it harder for him, relative to other people in our society, to purchase insurance.

And this is exactly what this plan is designed to do. We're trying to move somebody like Dan from being a statistic, an uninsured person, into insurance. And here

is a logical way for the Government to do so. And if people in Washington are serious about dealing with the uninsured, here is a serious idea for them to consider. Instead of just dismissing things because of pure politics, we have put forth ideas that are worthy of debate and we believe will work. And I know that our citizens, fellow citizens, regardless of their political party, expect there to be a serious dialog on constructive ideas that are put forward to make sure people like Dan Jones have got private insurance. And I thank you for coming and sharing. How many people work in your firm?

*Mr. Jones.* Three full-time employees right now, but hopefully, more.

*The President.* But you're growing.

*Mr. Jones.* Absolutely.

*The President.* There you are.

*Mr. Jones.* Small businesses, they grow. And the more money you save along the way, the more you can grow.

*The President.* There you go. Well, thank you for coming.

*Mr. Jones.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Tom. Appreciate you coming, Tom.

*Thomas R. Beauregard.* Sure.

*The President.* Tom Beauregard. What do you do?

*Mr. Beauregard.* I lead a business within United Health Care that's focused on extending access to the uninsured.

*The President.* Oh, really?

[*Mr. Beauregard, lead strategist, Hewitt Associates LLC, made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Mr. Beauregard.* And then the other thing we see is just changes in the labor market, where you've got people moving from job to job. So the average individual will have about 10 jobs across their career now.

*The President.* That's right.

*Mr. Beauregard.* So there really is a need for—

*The President.* That's an interesting point, excuse me. A lot of people in America probably know this, but just in case they don't, most people change jobs, like, seven or eight times before they're 35 years old, in America these days.

*Mr. Beauregard.* And it's accelerating.

*The President.* That means you better have a portable health care plan.

[*Mr. Beauregard made further remarks.*]

*The President.* I appreciate your studying it. You may need to come up to Washington to testify. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much.

Why don't we end with Esmerelda. Esmerelda, welcome.

*Esmerelda Wergin.* Thank you.

*The President.* You are a—where do you work?

*Mrs. Wergin.* I work at my grandmother's restaurant, Ninfa's Tortillas. I'm a waitress there.

*The President.* Ninfa's? You recommend it?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Oh, yes. [*Laughter*] My grandma—

*The President.* How are your cheese enchiladas?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Perfect. [*Laughter*] And she makes them herself.

*The President.* Does she really?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Yes, she's back there.

*The President.* What's her name? Ninfa?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Ninfa. Ninfa.

*The President.* That's what I thought. [*Laughter*] Good. Married?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Yes, married with two children.

*The President.* And how old?

*Mrs. Wergin.* I have a 2-year-old and a 7-year-old; both boys.

*The President.* Fabulous, fabulous. And so give us your health insurance story.

[*Mrs. Wergin made further remarks.*]

*The President.* This plan we've outlined would save Esmerelda and her family 3,500 a year. Does it make sense to level the

playing field and have a rational Tax Code and enable her to be able to purchase health insurance? I think it does. Rather than having your family sit outside the system, grinding away on trying to find a health care system that they can afford, why not help them afford health care system through making the Tax Code fair? That's all we're asking.

Isn't that right?

*Mrs. Wergin.* Oh, whatever you say, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Esmerelda, thanks for coming.

*Mrs. Wergin.* You're welcome.

*The President.* I hope people got a flavor of what we're trying to get done, that this plan helps people be able to afford private health insurance, and that is really the crux of good health care. Good health care is a health care system where government helps people who need help, like the poor—those who are hard to insure. Part of what we recognize is that Mike needs to give States flexibilities to help set up risk pools, to be able to add selection when it comes to individualized markets. But ultimately, the best health care plan is one that trusts people like Esmerelda and her family or Jones—Dan Jones—to make decisions, and is one that enables our small-business sector to remain economically viable.

We thought long and hard about what to propose. We proposed a bold initiative, an initiative that takes equities—out of the system, so people are treated fairly. And I know Americans expect that the United States Congress will take a good look at all ideas to determine how best to make this health care system run well.

And I thank you all for coming and giving us a chance to talk with you. I appreciate your candor; appreciate what you do for the country. Thank you. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. at Saint Luke's East—Lee's Summit Hospital. In his remarks, he referred to George A.

Pagels, chief medical officer, Saint Luke's Health System, and chief executive officer, Saint Luke's East—Lee's Summit Hospital.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters *January 26, 2007*

*The President.* I just had a full briefing with General David Petraeus about the way forward in Iraq. I want to thank the Secretary and General Pace, National Security Adviser for joining this discussion. Congratulations.

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

*The President.* The Senate confirmed this good man without a dissenting vote. I appreciate the quick action of the United States Senate. I appreciate them giving General David Petraeus a fair hearing, and I appreciate the vote. My instructions to the general is, get over to the zone as quickly as possible and implement a plan that we believe will yield our goals.

I thank the general and his family. I particularly want to thank your family for supporting you and supporting our Nation. One of the amazing things about our country is that we've got military folks who volunteer to go into a tough zone to protect the American people from future harm, and they've got families who stand by them. And whether you be a general or a private in the military, there is a U.S.—there's a family member saying, "I love you, and I support you."

And so, General, I congratulate you, and I congratulate the volunteers and their families for making the hard decisions necessary to protect its people from a grave danger. And you're going into an important battle in this war on terror, and I give you my full support and wish you God-speed.

*Gen. Petraeus.* Thank you, Mr. President. If I could thank the Senate as well; thank

my family; and, above all, thank those great soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians who are out there on the frontlines of the global war on terror.

*The President.* All right. I'll answer a couple of questions. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

### *War on Terror Strategy*

*Q.* Thank you, sir. The other night in your State of the Union Address, you asked Congress to give your plan a chance. But lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans, didn't really miss a step in starting to turn out resolutions against that plan. Why do you think it's okay to go ahead without their support?

*The President.* One of the things I've found in Congress is that most people recognize that failure would be a disaster for the United States. And in that, I'm the decisionmaker. I had to come up with a way forward that precluded disaster; in other words, I had to think about what's likely to work.

And so I worked with our military and I worked with Secretary Gates to come up with a plan that is likely to succeed. And the implementor of that plan is going to be General Petraeus. And my call to the Congress is, is that I know there is skepticism and pessimism, and that they are—some are condemning a plan before it's even had a chance to work. And they have an obligation and a serious responsibility, therefore, to put up their own plan as to what would work.

I've listened a lot to Members of Congress. I've listened carefully to their suggestions. And I have picked the plan that I think is most likely to succeed, because I understand, like many in Congress understand, success is very important for the security of the country.

Let's see, Steven [Steve Holland, Reuters]. Yes, sir.

#### *Iraq/Iran*

Q. Yes, sir. This policy of going after the Iranians inside Iraq: Are you concerned that that could be a provocative act in the region?

*The President.* I made it very clear, as did the Secretary, that our policy is going to be to protect our troops in Iraq. It just makes sense that if somebody is trying to harm our troops or stop us from achieving our goal or killing innocent citizens in Iraq, that we will stop them. That's an obligation we all have, is to protect our folks and achieve our goal.

Now, some are trying to say that because we're enforcing—helping ourselves in Iraq by stopping outside influence from killing our soldiers or hurting Iraqi people, that we want to expand this beyond the borders. That's a presumption that simply is not accurate. We believe that we can solve our problems with Iran diplomatically and are working to do that. As a matter of fact, we're making pretty good progress on that front. As you know, the Iranians, for example, think they want to have a nuclear

weapon. And we've convinced other nations to join us to send a clear message, through the United Nations, that that's unacceptable behavior.

And so yes, we're going to continue to protect ourselves in Iraq and, at the same time, work to solve our problems with Iran diplomatically. And I believe we can succeed. The choice is the Iranian Government's choice, see. And one of the things that the Iranian Government has done is, they've begun to isolate their nation to the harm of the Iranian people. And the Iranian people are proud people, and they've got a great history and a great tradition.

Our struggle is not with the Iranian people. As a matter of fact, we want them to flourish, and we want their economy to be strong. And we want their mothers to be able to raise their children in a hopeful society. My problem is with a government that takes actions that end up isolating their people and ends up denying the Iranian people their true place in the world. And so we'll work diplomatically, and I believe we can solve our problems peacefully.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. David H. Petraeus, incoming commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley.

## Remarks to the House Republican Conference in Cambridge, Maryland *January 26, 2007*

Thank you. I appreciate the warm applause. Thank you very much. It's good to be with you again; twice in 1 week, and I'm better off for it. [Laughter] Laura sends her very best to those of you who've run and won and to your families. I want to

say something about the families. I know how hard it is to be in a political family, and I know the sacrifices that the spouse and children make. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for standing by your loved one as he or she serves a

noble cause, and that is the cause of democracy here in the greatest country on the face of the Earth: the United States.

I am glad to be among friends. I count a lot of you as personal friends. I particularly count the leadership as friends. I've gotten to know John Boehner and Roy Blunt over the past 6 years. I value their friendship; I look forward to working with them. And I know that the Republican Party is in good hands in the House of Representatives with these fine leaders.

I, of course, have known Kay a long time. She and I were blessed, like old Judge Carter, to be raised in Texas. For those of you from Texas, you know what I'm talking about, being blessed to be raised there; for the rest of you, come on down and visit us sometime. *[Laughter]*

I've come to admire Adam Putnam. You call him Adam; I call him "Red." *[Laughter]* But, nevertheless, he is a strong leader and a good friend. I appreciate Tom Cole and Thaddeus McCotter as well. These two gentlemen are new to the leadership, but I'm confident they'll be able to provide a lot of good direction to the caucus. And so I'm looking forward to working with you all, and I appreciate you taking on big responsibilities.

I want to spend a little time talking about the state of the Union. I want to remind you that as a result of our philosophy, this economy of ours is strong. I said to the country the other night, we're a country with low inflation, low unemployment, and increasing wages. We've got people working, and they're putting more money in their pocket. And one of the reasons this economy is strong is because we had the wisdom to cut the taxes on the working people. And we need to keep them low.

I'm looking forward to working with you on balancing the budget. Your old colleague Rob Portman, who is now the head of the OMB, will be submitting a budget that shows we can balance this budget within the next 5 years without raising taxes on the American people.

I want to work with you on earmarks. I know many of you are concerned about these spending items that just show up in bills that you didn't vote on and you didn't discuss. I want to work with you on entitlement reform. There's a lot of discussion about the budget, and there ought to be. There's focus on whether or not we can balance the budget in the short term, but the truth of the matter is, the bigger problem we've got is unfunded liabilities inherent in programs like Medicare and Social Security. And in my judgment, now is the time to fix this problem and not pass them on to future Congresses and future Presidents.

I know it sounds counterintuitive for a Texan to say that we're too dependent on oil, but we are. And we need to do something about it. And the amazing thing is, we're on the verge of technological breakthrough that will enable us to power our cars in different ways, starting with ethanol derived from corn and, eventually, ethanol derived from wood chips, cornstalks, all kinds of stuff. It's called cellulosic ethanol. And I ask you to join me in continuing to spend taxpayers' money on research that will be necessary to develop new technology so we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I want to work with you on health. I'm a big believer in No Child Left Behind. I think it needs to be reauthorized. I want to work with you on immigration reform, and I want to work with you on health care reform. These are big ideas, and it's going to require us working together to get the job done on behalf of the American people.

And I also appreciate your understanding that we're still a nation at war. You know, when I talked to the country the other night, I wish I could have reported differently. But it's not the truth, and it's not the reality. There's an enemy out there that would still like to strike us. And as I said—and I know most of you believe—the best way to defend this country is to stay on



the offense and bring the enemy to justice before they hurt us again.

I talked about the progress and the advance that democracy was making around the Middle East, and then the fact that the enemy struck back. And they struck back against these young democracies, because they cannot stand the thought of freedom. You see, the best way to defeat totalitarianism in the long run is to offer a more hopeful ideology. And that's what we offer through the ideology based on human rights and human dignity, the central theme of which is all people desire to be free. And it's in the interests of the United States to not only defend ourselves against the enemy in the short term, but it's in the interests of our children and grandchildren to spread freedom so that we can live in peace in the long term.

I've spent time talking about Iraq, and I'll talk with you a little bit later on. But my message to the American people was, I thought about all kinds of ideas about Iraq. And I told the American people, I fully understand there are differences of opinion. But one of the things I have discovered is, in Washington, DC, most people understand the consequences of failure. And if failure is not an option, then it's up to the President to come up with a plan that is more likely to succeed. And I spent a lot of time on the subject, because I understand how serious the issue is. And the plan I outlined to the American people is one that I believe can succeed.

Today I had the honor of welcoming David Petraeus to the Oval Office. He had just been confirmed by the United States Senate without one dissenting vote. And as I looked at that general, who is willing to go back into the war zone to represent our country, it reminded me, as the President, I must make sure he has everything he needs—that he thinks he needs to succeed in the mission that we have sent him on. And I look forward to working with you to make sure that our generals and our troops that we put into harm's way

have the support of the United States Congress.

I talked about the need to have a foreign policy that's more than just military, a foreign policy that's got active diplomacy, which we do all around the world. I mentioned in my speech that the United States does not stand alone. As a matter of fact, our troops are in Iraq based upon a United Nations mandate. We're working with the countries in the neighborhood to support this young democracy, and making it clear the stakes of the ideological struggle we're in.

I talked about the fact that we've encouraged and worked with NATO to be an active participant in Afghanistan—it's the first time that alliance has deployed outside of Europe in the history of its existence. I talked about the fact that we will never forget the importance of freedom, whether it be in our hemisphere, in Cuba, or in Burma, or in Belarus. And when we call a human tragedy "genocide," like in Darfur, we'll continue to rally the world to solve the problem.

I want to thank Members of the Congress for supporting the HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa. It gave me great pleasure to tell the American citizens that because your actions—because you acted, 50,000 people—what was once 50,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs has increased to 800,000 people in 3 short years. I firmly believe what I said: "To whom much is given, much is required." A lot has been given to the United States, and it's in our interests to help people who suffer from disease and hunger. And I thank you for your support. And the next great initiative is to eliminate malaria in countries on the continent of Africa, and I ask you to join me.

I said, finally, introducing the people that were there, something I believe: I believe the state of this Union is strong, and it's strong because the character and decency of the American people remain strong.



And so I'm looking forward to serving with you this year and next year. I thank you for your sacrifices. I have confidence in the future of this country, because we're a country full of such decent and courageous and loving people.

Thanks for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:26 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, incoming commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Statement on the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

*January 26, 2007*

On the second International Day of Commemoration, we remember and mourn the victims of the Holocaust.

Sixty-two years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a racist ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred and bigotry. It is also our responsibility to honor the survivors and those courageous souls who refused to be bystanders and instead risked their lives to try and save the Nazis' intended victims.

Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust is particularly important today as Holocaust denial continues, urged on by the Iranian regime, which perversely seeks to call into question the historical fact of the Nazis' campaign of mass murder. We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all their forms, in America and abroad.

May God bless the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. And may we never forget.

## The President's Radio Address

*January 27, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I appeared before Congress to report on the state of our Union. I asked Members of the House and Senate from both sides of the aisle to join me in confronting the great challenges before us, so we can build a future of hope and opportunity for all Americans.

Two key challenges we face are reducing our dependence on oil and expanding access to affordable health care. I have asked Congress to take several vital steps to address these issues. And while some Mem-

bers gave a reflexive partisan response, I was encouraged that others welcomed this opportunity to reach across the aisle. One Democratic Senator said the initiatives I put forward were "serious proposals" and encouraged his fellow Democrats to "respond in a constructive way." Another Senate Democrat pledged to work toward these goals "through sincere bipartisan efforts." This is a good start, and I look forward

to working with Republicans and Democrats in Congress to reform our health care system and increase energy security.

Our Nation's dependence on oil leaves us vulnerable to hostile regimes and terrorists who can hurt our economy by disrupting our oil supply. To protect America against supply disruptions, I have asked Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We also must diversify our Nation's energy supply, and the way forward is through technology. On Wednesday, I visited DuPont's Experimental Station in Wilmington, Delaware, where researchers are developing new methods of producing cellulosic ethanol and other advanced biofuels using everything from grasses to cornstalks to agricultural wastes. By expanding our use of renewable and alternative fuels like ethanol, we can become less dependent on oil and confront the serious challenge of climate change.

To increase the supply of alternative fuels, I've asked Congress to join me in setting a mandatory fuel standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017, nearly five times the current target. At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks, and conserve up to 8.5 billion more gallons of gasoline by 2017. By taking these steps, we can help achieve a great goal: reducing the use of gasoline in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years and cutting our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.

We must also work together to ensure that Americans have accessible and affordable health care. The Government has an obligation to provide care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children, and we will meet these responsibilities. For all other Americans, private insurance is the best way to meet their needs. And this week, I proposed two new initiatives to

help more Americans afford their own insurance.

First, we should establish a standard tax deduction for health insurance that will be like the standard tax deduction for dependents. Families with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income. Single Americans with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$7,500 of their income. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills. This reform will also level the playing field for those who do not get health insurance from their employers. On Thursday, I met an uninsured mother of two children from Overland Park, Kansas. The restaurant where she works does not offer health insurance, and she cannot afford to buy it on her own. My plan would help put a basic health insurance plan within reach of this mom and millions of uninsured Americans like her.

Second, we must help States that are developing innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. I have proposed using existing Federal funds to create Affordable Choices grants. These grants would give our Nation's Governors more money and flexibility to get basic private health insurance to those most in need.

Over the next few weeks, I will be talking more about my energy and health care proposals. We've set important goals, and now Republicans and Democrats must work together to make them a reality. Together, we can reduce our dependence on oil, improve health care for more of our citizens, and make life better for all our citizens.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 26 in the Cabinet Room at the

White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 26, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the Presi-

dent referred to Esmerelda Wergin, waitress, Ninfa's Tortilla and Taqueria. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on the Death of Deborah Orin-Eilbeck *January 28, 2007*

Laura and I were saddened to learn of the death of Deborah Orin-Eilbeck. Deb had a distinguished, decades-long career as a journalist, covering every Presidential campaign since 1980 and joining the New York Post's Washington bureau in 1988. Deb fought a valiant battle against cancer with the same tenacity, devotion, and deter-

mination that she brought to her work in the White House briefing room through numerous administrations.

Laura and I send our condolences to Deb's husband, Neville Eilbeck, and to her family, friends, and colleagues. She will be missed by all of us at the White House who cared deeply for her.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of the Securing America's Future Energy Organization *January 29, 2007*

A group of our fellow citizens from around the country, different backgrounds, have given me a report called "Recommendations to the Nation on Reducing U.S. Oil Dependence." These citizens have spent time thinking about the national security implications for a country which is dependent on oil from hostile regimes or sources of oil that could be affected by terrorist attack. And I really want to thank you for this comprehensive approach to reducing our dependency on oil. Some really smart ideas in here.

The reason I have asked to come and talk to them is, I wanted to assure them that this administration is committed, as well, to diversifying away from our reliance upon oil. And I believe, like they believe, that we've got fantastic opportunities to use new technologies to secure the American

people and, at the same time, be better stewards of the environment.

Their plan and my plan are very—have got commonalities, and we're going to work together to get Congress to enact a comprehensive plan. I believe there's an appetite in the Halls of Congress to become less dependent on oil. I believe there's a knowledge in Congress that when we spend money on cellulosic ethanol that will make us less dependent on oil.

And I'm going to continue to call upon citizens' groups and concerned citizens to work with Members of Congress so we can—I can sign a comprehensive plan that will assure the American people that as we look forward into the 21st century that we'll be more energy dependent and good stewards of the environment.

So thank you for your efforts. I appreciate your work. I'm honored to be at the

table with citizens who care enough about their country that they would take time out of their private lives and present me with this comprehensive view.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Statement on the Situation in Lebanon *January 29, 2007*

I am deeply disappointed by the recent violence and bloodshed on the streets of Lebanon. It is all the more troubling that the violence occurred while Lebanon's legitimate leaders and friends were gathered together in Paris to help secure a peaceful and prosperous future for the country. Lebanon's friends have pledged a total of \$7.6 billion at the International Conference on Support for Lebanon. I will ask Congress for \$770 million to contribute to this cause. With this pledge, total U.S. support for Lebanon since last summer's conflict, including the \$230 million pledged at the Stockholm Conference last August, will equal approximately \$1 billion. This is a strong symbol of the American people's support for and commitment to the future of Lebanon.

All those who seek a peaceful, constitutional solution to the crisis in Lebanon de-

serve the support of the international community, but those responsible for creating chaos must be called to account. While Lebanon's friends seek to help the Lebanese Government build a free, sovereign, and prosperous country, Syria, Iran, and Hizballah are working to destabilize Lebanese society. Their goals are clear: They foment violence in order to prevent the establishment of a special tribunal in response to former Prime Minister Hariri's assassination, to prevent full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for Hizballah's disarmament, and to bring down Lebanon's democratically elected Government, in violation of its Constitution. The United States will continue to support Lebanon's Government as it seeks a peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of Lebanon.

## Remarks Following Breakfast With Small-Business Leaders in Peoria, Illinois *January 30, 2007*

I'm here in Peoria for a couple of reasons. One, I'm looking forward to going to a great American company, Caterpillar, and talking about the importance of opening up markets for U.S. products, because when Caterpillar sells its products overseas, it helps people find work here in Peoria. But equally importantly, I'm here with

some business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs.

Here are my impressions: One, the business sector—small-business sector—of the heartland is strong. And it's really strong because of low taxes. But it's also strong because of—the entrepreneurial spirit is

strong. You can't have a good business unless you have somebody willing to lead that business.

Secondly, I am very impressed by the civic spirit of the people here. People understand that when you live in a community, you have an obligation to help that community realize its full potential. I'm real proud of the reverend, who has taken a tough neighborhood here in Peoria and helped revitalize that neighborhood by utilizing his skills, his talent, and a power higher than himself.

The Congressman told me that when I came back to Peoria, I'd find a community that's vibrant and strong and optimistic, and

people around this table are vibrant and strong and optimistic. And I can't thank you enough for sharing your concerns, talking about your hopes. And I can't thank you enough for working hard to really make America the great country that it is.

So God bless, and thanks for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 a.m. at the Sterling Family Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Timothy E. Criss, pastor, City of Refuge Worship Center, Peoria, IL. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on the National Economy in East Peoria, Illinois *January 30, 2007*

Thank you all. Thanks for letting me come by. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be in the heartland of America. Thanks for coming to let me visit with you a little bit about our economy. I really want to thank the good folks at Caterpillar for letting me come by. I like it when they say, "Team Caterpillar." That's a good sign. It means people are working together for the common good.

You know, people from Texas like to say, things are better in Texas. Well, when you tour the Cat plant here, it's—I'm having second thoughts about if things are better in Texas. [*Laughter*] I'm impressed by the machinery I have seen. More importantly, I'm impressed by the workers I have met who are putting the machines together. I thank them for—[*applause*]. And I'm impressed by a culture of excellence and accomplishment that is the spirit of Caterpillar. I also appreciated the chance to drive a D-10. If you've never driven a D-10—[*laughter*—it's a cool experience. [*Laughter*]

I'm going to go to New York City tomorrow to deliver a speech on the state of the economy, but I really want to spend a little time here in Peoria to see how things are going. I was at Sterling Brothers—Sterling Family Restaurant today—Sterling Brothers?—Sterling Family, yes, run by two brothers—and met with some small-business owners, social entrepreneurs, as well as business entrepreneurs. I wasn't surprised by what I heard. It reminded me about the greatness of America. I heard about people willing to work hard to achieve dreams and people realizing that when they achieve dreams, they have an obligation to help others. It seems like to me the community spirit here in Peoria, Illinois, is strong.

And that's the way our economy is as well. It's a strong economy. And the fundamental question is, what are we going to do to keep it strong? It's one thing to say, today's economy is strong. I say it because inflation is down, interest rates are down, wages are on the increase, unemployment rate nationally is low, people are working

and putting more money in their pocket. And the question facing the country is, what are we going to do to make sure it's strong tomorrow? As I said to Congress: "We don't need more Government; we need more enterprise." And so I want to spend a little time talking with you today, talking about the economy.

Before I do, I want to thank Congressman Ray LaHood. He's been bugging me ever since I got elected President. Well, I didn't tell you what he's bugging me about. He's bugging me to come to Peoria. He said, "When are you going to show up?" [Laughter] I kept saying, "As soon as possible." The moment has finally arrived, and I'm glad I came. Thank you for the invitation.

I appreciate Jim Owens, the chairman and CEO of Caterpillar. I thank Bob Williams for helping me with the tour. I thank Gerry Shaheen, who is the group president of Caterpillar. I want to thank the workers I met with today. I spent some time with people on the line, talking about the education programs here at this fine company. I thank the leaders of the UAW who have welcomed me here. I thank the folks up and down the line who put up with me and all the cameras. I just don't travel alone these days, in case you've noticed. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mayor Jim Ardis, mayor of Peoria, Illinois. I met him at the airport. It was about minus 10. [Laughter] I said, "Do you want to get in the limousine?" He said, "As fast as possible." [Laughter] So we drove over to the Sterling Family Restaurant together. I was impressed by your young mayor. I want to thank the local and State officials who've joined us. I appreciate you serving. I appreciate you doing what you think is right for the community that you represent. But most of all, thanks for letting me come.

See, people say, "Why would you want to go to Peoria?" And I just told you, I want to get out of Washington and sit down with folks that are really the backbone of

this country. And I wanted to come to one of America's great companies, and that's Caterpillar.

The good folks here show others that in the manufacturing world, we can compete. And that's really what Americans wonder, Can you compete in a global economy? And my answer is, darn right you can, with good policy. And in this company, you've shown how to compete. And I want to spend some time explaining that to the American people, why competition is important, and why America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, and why it's in our interest to do so.

First of all, it's important for people to know that Caterpillar employs 48,000 workers across America. Secondly, more than half those workers are here in Illinois; 17,000 of them right here in Peoria. Caterpillar has great workers because it has got good training programs. Caterpillar can employ new people because it makes good product that people want.

I appreciate very much the notion that you all are in this deal together. That's what "team" means, that everybody works together for the common good, and if it benefits one, it benefits all. And that's the spirit I have found here. And our job in Government is not to get in your way, our job in Government is to put progrowth economic policies in place that mean companies like Caterpillar, which do the right things, can succeed. And let me talk about—some of what that means.

First, it means keeping taxes low. Oh, there's a debate in Washington that says, we need more taxes. We don't need more taxes. It's important for you to keep your own money. You work hard for your money, and I understand workers are saying, "Am I going to have more money in my pocket?" That's what we want. And one way to make sure you don't have more money in your pocket is for the Government to raise your taxes.

And so we cut taxes. Listen, we've been through a tough economic period in this



country. You remember it—right after the—we headed into a recession in early 2001, then the terrorists attacked us. And the question was, could we recover? And I worked with Congress to cut taxes before the terrorist attack and after the terrorist attack. And I believe one reason why the recession we went through was one of the shallowest in American history is because we cut the taxes. See, when you have more money in your pocket to spend or save and invest, the economy benefits, as far as I'm concerned. And so one of the challenges we face is making sure that we keep the taxes low.

We cut the taxes on everybody who paid taxes. We increased the child tax credit. Look, if you've got a child, we want to help you. We reduced the marriage penalty. I didn't like a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. I thought we ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage in our society. We cut taxes on capital gains and dividends, cut the taxes on small businesses.

And all those tax cuts affected the performance of Caterpillar. You see, the tax cuts helped your workers have more money in their pocket. I happen to believe that if the workers have got more money in their pocket, they're going to be a more satisfied worker. I know it sounds not very sophisticated to say that, but I suspect it's true. If you got a safe workplace, a workplace where people are working together; you're a better satisfied worker if you're keeping more of what you earn. And that's what the tax cuts have helped provide.

We helped small businesses with expensing provisions. That's an accounting term that says, if you buy new equipment, you get a tax benefit for buying new equipment. That helps people in Caterpillar, because it encourages small businesses to use your products. It also helps make sure the small-business sector remain vital. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And if you're interested in coming out of a recession and in-

terested in people working, it makes sense to provide tax incentives to help the small-business owner in America. And that's what we did.

Capital gains and dividend tax cuts benefit people who invest in your company. One of the things—reasons this company is strong is, you're able to attract capital. People say, "Well, I like what the workers are doing; I like the product that's being put together. We want to invest; we want to work alongside of the good people here in Caterpillar." And the tax incentives that we provided by cutting capital gains and dividends encouraged that kind of investment.

We extended the research and development tax credit. I mean, one reason why Caterpillar is a modern, competitive company is because you're always investigating new methodologies; you're investing in research. And therefore, in the Tax Code, we tried to encourage research and development. And so the tax cuts have worked. And I hope you don't fall prey to people in Washington saying, we need more of your money in order to balance the budget. I don't think so.

I think what we need to do is to set priorities like you set priorities with your money and make sure we focus on that which is necessary to do. And the most important priority we have is to defend this homeland from attack. And we better make sure that when we have a man or woman in our uniform in harm's way, they get all the equipment, all the support they need to defend the United States here in the 21st century.

I have an obligation to submit a budget. It's one thing to stand up here and say, "We don't need to increase your taxes, we can set priorities and balance the budget," so next Tuesday, I'm going to do just that. I'm going to submit a budget for Congress to look at that shows how we can balance the budget in 5 years and keep your taxes low.

I want to talk a little bit about trade. Trade is an important subject here at Caterpillar, and the reason why is because a lot of the product you make here, you sell to somebody else; sell overseas to another country. That's trade, and yet it's a topic of hot debate. The temptation is to say: "Well, trade may not be worth it. Let's isolate ourselves. Let's protect ourselves." I think it would be a—I know it would be a mistake for Caterpillar workers to do that. I think it would be a—I know it's a bad mistake for the country to lose our confidence and not compete.

Let me give you some interesting statistics. First of all, we're the largest exporter in the world. Last year, we exported a record \$1.4 trillion worth of goods and services. Now, in order to export something, somebody has to make it. In other words, when I talk about numbers, behind the numbers is people who are providing the service and/or making the product. So the more one exports, the more likely it is people are going to be working.

Exports account for about 11 percent of our economy. One in six manufacturing jobs in the United States depends on manufacturing exports. We also benefit when people invest here. There are people who have good-paying jobs as a result of somebody saying, "I want to invest in the United States." And so when I'm talking about opening markets, I'm making sure that not only is our market open, but somebody else's market is open. And we expect people to treat us just the way we treat them. All we ask for is, be fair with the American people.

We've got free trade agreements. That's how you make sure that we're treated fairly. Our market is open, and we want their market open. We got—these free trade agreements really represent only a small fraction of the GDP. In other words, they're not necessarily with significant economies, and yet they account for 42 percent of American exports.

One way to look at trade is this: We're 5 percent of the people of the world; that means 95 percent live outside of America, and shouldn't we try to put ourselves in a position where we can sell goods and services to those 95 percent? I think it makes sense to do so.

We've pursued trade agreements. The way it works is, you have bilateral trade agreements; in other words, with the United States and, say, Chile. And then we have regional trade agreements and world trade agreements. One world trade agreement is called the Doha round of the WTO. It's basically attempting to make sure that everybody gets treated the same way, in the same fashion, so that the world markets are open.

Again, I repeat to you: I strongly believe that if we can compete with people on a level playing field, nobody can compete with us. And so the key is to make sure the rules are fair. We had bilateral agreements with three countries when I first became President; they're now up to 13, and we've got 3 more in the mill.

Let me talk to you about Caterpillar. Half the products you make in America are exported. It's an interesting statistic, isn't it? You walk by one of these things. It's sold right here in the United States, but the other one right here is sold overseas. Cat sells more than 300 products in foreign markets. It's just not the D-10 I drove that gets sold overseas; there's 299 other products manufactured by this company, by American workers, that are sold overseas.

Free trade agreements are helping. We did a free trade agreement with Chile. Chile has become Caterpillar's fifth largest export market since that free trade agreement. In other words, because we lowered trade barriers and said, "You treat us the way we treat you," it has enabled this company to sell more product than ever before, which means people are working, when you have to make the product.

The free trade agreement completed with Australia took effect in 2005. Caterpillar exports to Australia have grown by 26 percent. In other words, opening markets benefits people who produce goods that people want. And people want Caterpillar product. Why? Because they work. They generally don't break down, the master craftsmanship is great, and there's a demand for them.

Opening China's market—I understand trade with China is considered controversial. I know that. But I want to tell you something, if you're a Caterpillar worker or a Caterpillar shareholder, what that has meant; it meant that Caterpillar exports to China have increased by 40 percent since the market was opened. That's helped to create more than 5,000 new jobs right here in America.

We're going to continue to negotiate free trade agreements. And by that I mean, we just want people to treat us fairly. I'm confident in our ability to sell American product and services overseas if the playing field is level.

A little bit on health care, you've got a good health care plan here, thanks to Caterpillar employees. A lot of small businesses don't. The cost of health care is on the rise; you know it. Some things we can do to make the health care system better is to make sure that customers, the patients, are more in charge of their lives and their plans. I'm worried about frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. Do you know that there's about 1,500 counties in America where the ob-gyn has left because of frivolous lawsuits. And when somebody gets sued all the time, they practice more medicine than is necessary, and it runs up your cost?

Health care needs to have new information technologies. I met some people on the floor that are running some pretty sophisticated computer ware, and we need information technology in health care. The old system of carrying handwritten files is not efficient, runs up the cost of medicine

for you, and leads to errors. Most doctors can't write very well to begin with. [Laughter] It's hard to read their writing. We need to change the Tax Code in a fair way that treats everybody fairly. In other words, I've got a plan I'm going to spend a little more time with in New York tomorrow.

I want to talk about energy tomorrow in New York. I'll give you the summary here. Dependency on oil puts us in a position that—where terrorists can harm our economy. When you're dependent on a product, and you import that product, if somebody were to inflict damage on a energy infrastructure, it could cause the price of your energy to go up. Or if you're dependent upon product from a hostile regime, it means you're in a position of vulnerability.

And so I'm going to work with the Congress to spend some of your money on technologies that will change the way we live. One of the interesting things that's happening is, is that there's some new battery research taking place. And I believe within relatively short order, Americans will be able to drive the first 20 miles, and eventually 40 miles, on a new battery. And you can imagine, particularly in the big cities, if people are using electricity to drive their car—and by the way, the car is not going to look like a golf cart. [Laughter] Not exactly looking like one of these things, but nevertheless—[laughter]—it will be normal size, something you actually want to use. But you can imagine how this battery technology can change our dependence on oil, because if we reduce the use of gasoline, you reduce your use of oil. And if most of your oil's coming from overseas, you're reducing your dependency upon oil from overseas.

I'm a big believer in ethanol. You've got a lot of farmers around here who—[applause]. Fifteen years ago, or 20 years ago, if people stood up here and said a lot of people would be using a corn product to drive their cars, they'd have said, "Man, what—the guy has kind of lost it, hasn't

he?” But it’s happening. We’re up to about 6 or 7—I think it’s 6 or 7 billion gallons of ethanol per year now.

We’re going to run into a constraint pretty soon, though. It turns out, corn is needed for more than just ethanol. You got to feed your cows and feed your hogs. And that’s why we’re spending some of your money on what’s called cellulosic ethanol research, so we can use wood chips or other agricultural wastes to make ethanol, to power our automobiles.

I believe we can reduce our consumption of gasoline by 20 percent over the next 10 years, in order to be able to meet a goal of becoming less dependent on oil. And it’s coming. These are new eras, and it’s exciting times.

This is a global issue, obviously. It’s an issue, for example, when demand for oil goes up in a place like India or China, it affects the price that you pay at the pump. And therefore, it makes sense for us to help these developing countries with new technologies that will not only make them less dependent on hydrocarbons but better stewards of the environment.

And so I appreciate what Caterpillar has done. They’re involved with what—we set up what’s called the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. I don’t know if you know this, but you’ve sold more than \$50 million worth of equipment to a large coal mine in China to help capture methane gas and turn that into energy. In other words, you’re not only making Cats, you’re making interesting product that will enable us to be better stewards of the environment. And I thank you for that.

And my only point to you is, is that in order for us to be competitive, in order for us to remain the economic leader of the world, we’re going to have to promote new technologies that make us less dependent on oil. And it’s coming. These are exciting times. I’m very optimistic about meeting the future because of new technologies.

I do want to say one thing about education. I really appreciate the worker program—the education program for the workers here. I think Cat spends about \$900 a worker to help make sure our workers have the skills necessary to be competitive in the 21st century. But good education starts early. And we need to make sure our public schools, particularly in the early grades, get it right.

There’s a piece of law I signed that I’m very proud of called the No Child Left Behind Act. The spirit says, we’re going to raise standards. If you have low standards, you get lousy results. I used to call it the soft bigotry of low expectations. If you don’t believe a kid can learn, guess what’s going to happen: he’s not going to learn. And so inherent in—the No Child Left Behind Act says there is a role for the Federal Government. After all, we’re spending a fair amount of money, and we ought to expect good results for that money.

So we said, “In return for Federal money, we expect you, the local districts, to set high standards and to measure.” I’ve heard every excuse for not measuring: You’re teaching the test; you’re testing too much. How can you solve a problem unless you measure? And what we need to do is figure out who can read or write early, and have extra money to help those who can’t read or write.

We have an achievement gap in America that we better do something about if we’re going to be competitive. And by that I mean, when you put out the test scores, the minority students test below white students. And that’s not good enough. And we’d better make sure all our children can read early, not just a handful. And therefore, I like the idea of holding people accountable. And we say, we’ll measure as a diagnostic tool to correct problems early. And at some point in time, if schools refuse to change, there needs to be a consequence, there needs to be accountability. This isn’t antiteacher, this is proteacher.

And it's proparent, and equally importantly, it's prochild.

And Congress needs to reauthorize this bill. It's working. The achievement gap is closing. How do I know? Because we're measuring; we can measure success in schools. It's in our interest as a country to make sure every child gets a good education, and it's important to start early.

Oh, I'm sure you've heard about all the reading debates, what works and what doesn't. Well, you're able to determine what works or what doesn't by measuring. And a measurement system says to a school: We appreciate your hard work; thanks for being in the classroom; but you might think about changing your curriculum since you're not meeting standards.

And then what this country needs to do is to recognize that we need to help poor students go to college. That's why we're expanding and increasing Pell grants. And then what this country needs to do is understand the importance of community colleges and support community colleges, to help older workers gain new skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to compete, we got to have an education system that makes sure all

children from all walks of life have skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We got to be confident and open up markets so that our companies that produce products, goods, and services that people want are able to sell them overseas. We got to have a Tax Code that keeps taxes low on the people who are working for a living. We got to have a health care system that is patient centered, not government centered. And we got to make sure that we don't lose our confidence. And if you really knew America like I'm able to see it, which is to see the compassion and the decency and the courage and the strength of the people, you'd share the same confidence I have about the future of this country.

I'm honored to be with you. Thanks for letting me come to the heartland of the United States. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. at Caterpillar, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Robert T. Williams, vice president, Caterpillar, Inc. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on the National Economy in New York City *January 31, 2007*

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for being here. I'm pleased to be back in Federal Hall. You know, I drove in, and there stood George Washington. I like to call him George W. [*Laughter*] It's nice to be back here.

Last week, I delivered my State of the Union. This morning, I've come to deliver a state of the economy speech, and there's no better place to do it than in America's financial capital. More than two centuries ago, Alexander Hamilton led the U.S.

Treasury Department from this building. Today, New York City is headquarters of global corporations; it's a center for capital markets; it's the home of three of the world's greatest stock exchanges. You have a mayor whose name is a fixture on trading floors across the world. [*Laughter*] And until I took him to Washington, you had Hank Paulson, who, by the way, is doing a fabulous job.

As we begin this new year, America's businesses and entrepreneurs are creating new jobs every day. Workers are making



more money; their paychecks are going further. Consumers are confident; investors are optimistic. Just today we learned that America's economy grew at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2006. That means our economy grew at 3.4 percent last year, which is up from 3.1 percent in 2005. Ladies and gentlemen: The state of our economy is strong. And with the hard work of the American people and the right policies in Washington, we're going to make it even stronger.

Mr. Mayor, thanks for being here. I appreciate you coming. You're doing what people want you to do, and that is to lead this city. I appreciate Bill Rudin. Thanks for having me, Bill; good to see you again.

I want to thank Members of the Congress who have joined us: Peter King, Vito Fossella, Carolyn Maloney, and Tom Reynolds. Thanks for flying down with me today. You want a ride back? *[Laughter]*

Mr. Mayor, David Dinkins, thank you for being here. Proud you're here. And it's good to see my buddy, Mayor Ed Koch. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming, appreciate you being here.

I thank the members of the Association of a Better New York who have joined us. I appreciate all the State and local officials who are here.

Bill mentioned that I was here in October 2001. I recognized then that our economy had been hit hard, and there was great uncertainty about the future. It was a tough time for the country. Many people were out of work. By mid-December, nearly a million jobs had been lost. The collapse of the Twin Towers had left dangerous cracks in this building's foundations.

I said that day that I was optimistic that our economy would recover from these attacks. But if I'd have told you we would also make the recession one of the shortest on record, that we'd have confronted corporate scandals, absorb a tripling in the price of oil, fight a global war, and help a whole region of our country recover from

a hurricane, you might have been a little skeptical.

Yet America's economy has overcome all these things. Federal Hall has been fully restored; it's on solid ground. And so is the New York economy—as the mayor mentioned, it's booming—with a bond rating at an alltime high and unemployment near an alltime low. Across our Nation, small businesses and entrepreneurs are creating millions of new jobs. Retail sales are up; consumer spending is strong; exports of goods and services have jumped by nearly 35 percent. The Dow Jones has set new records 26 times in the last 4 months. Productivity is strong, and that's translating into higher wages.

When people across the world look at America's economy, what they see is low inflation, low unemployment, and the fastest growth of any major industrialized nation. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in the United States. There is one undisputed leader in the world in terms of economy, and that's the United States of America.

On Wall Street, you know that America's economic leadership rests on strong and flexible capital markets. Capital markets connect entrepreneurs with the investment they need to turn their ideas into new businesses. America's capital markets are the deepest, the broadest, and the most efficient in the world. Yet excessive litigation and overregulation threaten to make our financial markets less attractive to investors, especially in the face of rising competition from capital markets abroad. To keep America's economic leadership, America must be the best place in the world to invest capital and to do business.

One important step we've taken in Washington is to pass litigation reform like the Class Action Fairness Act. It's important for people in Congress to understand that excessive lawsuits will make it hard for America to remain the economic leader that we want to be. Another important step we've taken is to strengthen our business



institutions by passing the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002. This law helped boost investor confidence by establishing high standards for transparency and corporate governance. The principles of Sarbanes-Oxley are as important today as when they were passed. Yet complying with certain aspects of the law, such as section 404, has been costly for businesses and may be discouraging companies from listing on our stock exchanges.

We don't need to change the law; we need to change the way the law is implemented. America needs a regulatory environment that promotes high standards of integrity in our capital markets and encourages growth and innovation. And I'm pleased of the progress that Hank Paulson and Chairman Chris Cox are making to make sure the regulatory burden is not oppressive, and fair, and helps us meet a great national objective: to keep the United States the economic leader in the world.

Our economic leadership also depends on sensible, pro-growth tax policies. To help bring our economy out of a recession and recover from September the 11th, we cut taxes on the American people. We cut taxes on everybody who pays income taxes. We doubled the child tax credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We cut taxes on small businesses. And we cut taxes on dividends and capital gains.

There's a lot of political debate about these tax cuts, but here are some of the facts. Since we enacted major tax relief into law in 2003, our economy has created nearly 7.2 million new jobs; our economy has expanded by more than 13 percent. That expansion is roughly the size of the entire Canadian economy. This economic growth has led to record tax revenues, which has helped us cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule. One fact should be clear when you look at the statistics: The fastest way to kill a recovery would be to raise taxes on the people who created it. Now is not the time for the Federal Government to be raising taxes on the American people.

We must ensure that the money you send to Washington is spent wisely. Next Monday, I'm going to submit to Congress a budget that will eliminate the deficit by 2012. In order to do so, we need to set priorities in Washington. You can't try to be all things to all people when it comes to spending your money if you want to keep taxes low, keep the economy growing, and balance the budget. And my number-one priority is to protect this country. And we're going to make sure our troops have all the equipment they need to do the job we've sent them to do and make sure our citizens have what it takes to defend this homeland.

That means we've got to be careful about how we spend money in other areas. One thing we can do to show the American people that we're going to be smart about how we spend their money is to do something about earmarks. It's that system of appropriations where things end up being spent even though nobody has voted on them. And I'm going to work with Congress to reduce the amount of earmarks and the number of dollars spent by earmarks in a significant way, to earn the trust of the taxpayers of this country and, at the same time, be wise about how we spend their money.

I believe I need a line-item veto to help Congress spend money wisely. And so I put forth a plan that says the legislative branch and the executive branch will work together to eliminate wasteful and unnecessary spending.

We're about to pass a farm bill that provides a strong safety net, while tightening spending and cutting subsidies. We can manage this short-term deficit, and I look forward to working with Congress to do so. But it's important for Congress to understand, there are unfunded liabilities inherent in Social Security and Medicare that we need to do something about now.

And I understand it's tough work; requires political will from both the President and the Congress to come together and

solve this problem. I'm hopeful that we can set aside needless politics and address the issues with entitlements in a constructive way. That way people will say: "They came to Washington, and they did the job we expect them to do."

Our growing economy is also a changing economy. The rise of new technologies, new competition, and new markets abroad is bringing changes, and these changes are coming faster than ever. There was a time when most people expected they'd keep a job for life. Now the average American has 10 jobs before the age of 40. It used to be that a company's name would stay the same for decades. New companies are now—now companies are merging and splitting and creating new names and new stock symbols. Some of us can still remember when cell phones were the size of bricks and considered a luxury. Now they fit in your pocket, they take photos, they play music, and every teenager in America has one, it seems like.

By and large, our dynamic and innovative economy has helped Americans live better and more comfortable lives. Yet the same dynamism that is driving economic growth is also—can be unsettling for people. For many Americans, change means having to find a new job or to deal with a new boss after a merger or to go back to school to learn new skills for a new career. And the question for America is whether we treat the changes in our economy as opportunity to help improve people's lives or as an excuse to retreat into protectionism.

I believe that the changes present us with historic opportunities. America's growing economy allows us to approach them from a position of strength. And so today I'm going to discuss actions we should take to make America's economy more flexible and dynamic in four areas: trade, health, energy, and education.

First, we can make our economy more flexible and dynamic by expanding trade. America has about 5 percent of the world's population, and that means 95 percent of

our potential customers are abroad. Every time we break down barriers to trade and investment, we open up new markets for our businesses and our farmers. As we improve free trade, consumers get lower prices; there are better American jobs; you see increased productivity. Jobs supported by exports of goods pay wages that are 13 to 18 percent higher than the average. So one of our top priorities has been to remove obstacles to trade everywhere we can.

When I took office, America had free trade agreements with three countries. We have free trade agreements in force now with 13 countries, and we have more on the way. These agreements are leading to direct benefits for America's businesses and, equally importantly, America's workers. Yesterday I went to the Caterpillar plant in Peoria, Illinois. That's where they make big bulldozers. *[Laughter]* The folks there told me that Caterpillar now exports more than one-half of the products they make. They see immediate results when we have broken down barriers to trade. Within 2 years of implementing our free trade agreement with Chile, Caterpillar's exports to that country have nearly doubled. The opening of this and other export markets has led Cat to add thousands of new jobs here in America.

Manufacturers, farmers, and service providers all across our country have similar stories. So we need to continue to level the playing field for our goods and services. I strongly believe this: When people around the world have a choice, they choose goods that say "Made in the USA."

In this global economy, new competition means that American businesses must constantly approve [improve].\* Global competition can also lead to hardships for our workers and their families. Government has a responsibility to help displaced workers find new jobs or even a new career. So my administration has reformed job training programs and expanded trade adjustment

---

\* White House correction.

assistance to help more displaced workers learn the new skills they need to succeed. I'm going to work with Congress to reauthorize and to improve the trade adjustment assistance this year, so we can help Americans take advantage of this growing, dynamic economy.

At this moment, the most promising opportunity to expand free and fair trade is by concluding the Doha round at the World Trade Organization. Global trade talks like Doha have the potential to lower trade barriers all around the world. They come around only once every decade or so. Successful trade talks will have an enormous impact on people around the world. Since World War II, the opening of global trade and investment has resulted in income gains of about \$9,000 a year for the average American household.

The Doha round is a chance to level the playing field for our goods and services—in other words, so we can be treated fairly in foreign markets—but it also has a great opportunity to lift millions of people out of poverty around the world. And so we're going to work hard to complete it. We are dedicated to making sure we have a successful Doha round.

The only way America can complete Doha and make headway on other trade agreements is to extend trade promotion authority. This authority allows the President to negotiate complicated trade deals for our country and then send them to Congress for an up-or-down vote on the whole agreement. Presidents of both parties have considered this authority essential to completing good trade agreements. Our trading partners consider it essential for our success at the negotiating table. The authority is set to expire on July 1st, and I ask Congress to renew it. I know there's going to be a vigorous debate on trade, and bashing trade can make for good sound bites on the evening news. But walling off America from world trade would be a disaster for our economy. Congress needs to reject protectionism and to keep this econ-

omy open to the tremendous opportunities that the world has to offer.

Second, we can make our economy more flexible and dynamic by reforming our health care system. Across the country, business owners tell me that the cost of health care is their biggest problem, and it's becoming harder to provide coverage for their workers. American workers and their families also find that the health care system is rigid and confusing. They end up with medical bills that are impossible to understand, and spend hours filling out complicated insurance forms. They feel locked into jobs because they're worried about losing the health insurance if they leave their job. They have no way to measure the quality of their doctors and hospitals. They see good doctors being driven out of practice because of frivolous lawsuits. All this leads to higher medical costs and higher insurance premiums for businesses and their families.

Listen, Federal Government has an important role to play when it comes to health care, and that is to help the poor and the disabled and the elderly. And we're keeping those obligations. But for all other Americans, I believe that private health insurance is the best way for them to meet their needs. Many Americans cannot afford private health insurance, so we're taking steps to make it more affordable and to give patients more choices and more control over their health care decisions.

We created health savings accounts, which put patients in charge of their medical decisions and helps reduce the cost of their coverage. And I ask Congress to strengthen health savings accounts. We need to pass association health plans, so that small businesses can insure their workers by pooling risk at the same discount that big companies are able to get.

We're using information technology. Listen, we're a giant consumer of health care at the Federal level. And we're insisting upon new technologies to make health care more efficient, and thereby reducing costs

inherent in an inefficient system and reducing medical errors. We believe that the health care industry needs to post price and quality, so as consumers have more choice, they're able to make better decisions about the health care they get. We understand that a nontransparent system where somebody else pays the bills is likely to cause costs to continue to rise.

Congress needs to pass medical liability reform. If you're interested in available and affordable health care, we should not have a legal system that's running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of your medicine.

And one of the most promising ways to make private health insurance more affordable is to reform the Tax Code. Under current law, workers who get health insurance from their companies get a tax benefit. If you buy insurance on your own, you do not get the tax benefit. The Tax Code is not fair. So in my State of the Union Address, I proposed to end this unfair bias in the Tax Code by creating a standard deduction for every American who has health insurance, no matter where you get it from.

This deduction would also apply to payroll taxes, so that those who do not pay income taxes would still get a benefit. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills. Those who now purchase health insurance on their own would save money on their taxes. Millions of others who have now no health insurance at all would find basic private coverage within their reach.

As well, we need to do more to help the States and localities deal with the uninsured. I think the most innovative programs are developed at the State level. And I think it's in our interest to support States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens: to have help from the Federal Government, to help them with the poor, to help them with

the uninsured. So we're asking Congress to join us in setting up Affordable Choices grants to make sure that the poor and the sick have private health insurance available to them as well.

All these steps will bring America closer to a health care system where patients are in charge of their medical decisions. In a reformed system, there will be a vibrant individual market, in which health insurance companies actually compete for your business. When you leave your job for a better opportunity elsewhere, you will be able to take your health care plan with you. If people change jobs 10 times before they're 40, we need a health care system that is flexible and consumer oriented. Health care providers will have an incentive to improve their service. Your medical records would fit on a CD, so you would not have to fill out multiple forms every time you visit your doctor. In the end, you would have a more flexible health care system that responds to your needs and, at the same time, helps us keep our economy flexible and dynamic.

Third, we can make our economy more flexible and dynamic by diversifying our energy supply. Energy is vital to businesses and farmers and families all across our Nation. Yet we have a fundamental problem: We're too dependent on oil. That creates vulnerabilities. When demand for oil goes up in China or India, it affects the price of gasoline here in America. If a terrorist were to attack oil infrastructure, it affects the supply of energy here in America.

Dependency on oil means we're not being as good a steward of the environment as we should be. The way to overcome these challenges is through innovation and technology. I believe it is a good use of your money to spend at the Federal level on new technologies to make us less dependent on oil, and that's exactly what we've done. We're spending money on cellulosic ethanol; that's a fancy word for saying, someday, we're going to be able to convert switchgrass into energy that powers

your cars. We're spending money on biodiesel fuels. We're spending money on advanced batteries, so, someday, you'll be able to plug in your automobile and drive the first 40 miles on electricity, and your car is not going to look like a golf cart. [Laughter] We're spending money on solar and wind energy and clean coal and nuclear power.

Since 2001, my administration, working with Congress, has invested up to more than \$10 billion to develop cleaner energy alternatives. And this Federal funding has helped America's scientists and engineers make tremendous progress toward a goal of becoming less dependent on oil. As well, the private sector is responding. You know it better than I do, but a lot of people are seeing interesting opportunities available in alternative energies, and private money is flowing into these new alternatives.

So we're on the threshold of dramatic technological breakthroughs. And now the challenge is to move the technologies from research lab into the marketplace. In my State of the Union, I set an ambitious goal of reducing gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent over the next 10 years. If you want to become less dependent on oil, the quickest way to do so is to use less gasoline. Meeting this goal will require significant changes in supply and demand. On the demand side, we have got to reform our economy—fuel economy standards; that will reduce the amount of gasoline that cars and SUVs consume. And on the supply side, I have proposed a new mandatory fuel standard that is nearly a fivefold increase over the current target for renewable and alternative fuels.

We'll leave it to the market to decide the mix of fuels that most effectively and efficiently meet this goal. But that goal can be achieved, and that's why I put it out there. It's a necessary goal for our national security and economic security. It's an important goal to deal with the issue of climate change. Imagine what these tech-

nologies will mean for somebody living in New York; the fuel in your car is going to come from a cornfield in Iowa or perhaps switchgrass out of Texas. Hybrid electric taxicabs will be running on new generation lithium ion batteries. The financial pages will be filled with new stock symbols for a—dynamic American companies in the growing field of alternative fuels.

This day is coming, but it's not going to happen overnight. If you want to be less dependent on foreign oil, we ought to be drilling for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways here in the United States. And if you're concerned about a terrorist attack which could disrupt oil supplies, it makes sense for Congress to double the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

So I hope Congress moves forward on these initiatives, and I'm looking forward to working with them. The idea is to diversify our energy supply, keep our air clean, and help create new jobs through new industries that will meet the demand for alternative sources of energy.

Fourth, we can make our economy more flexible and dynamic by strengthening public education. A strong and vibrant education system is vital to maintaining America's competitive edge in the world. A strong and vibrant education system will ensure that every citizen can share in this Nation's prosperity.

I know some of our citizens worry about the fact that our dynamic economy is leaving working people behind. We have an obligation to help ensure that every citizen shares in this country's future. The fact is that income inequality is real; it's been rising for more than 25 years. The reason is clear: We have an economy that increasingly rewards education and skills because of that education. One recent study of male earnings showed that someone with a college degree earns about 72 percent more than someone with a high school diploma. The earnings gap is now twice as wide as it was in 1980, and it continues to grow. And the question is whether we respond



to the income inequality we see with policies that help lift people up or tear others down. The key to rising in this economy is skills, and the Government's job is to make sure we have an education system that delivers them.

And that's why I think one of the most important economic initiatives of my Presidency has been the No Child Left Behind Act. The philosophy behind No Child Left Behind says: We're going to spend Federal money, but we expect you, at the local level, to deliver results. In other words, we've insisted upon accountability. I understand some people don't like accountability, but how can you make sure if our kids are getting the foundation for the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century unless you measure? And when you measure and find failure, correct problems early, before it's too late.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working. There's an achievement gap in America that's not fair, and it's not right, and it's beginning to close. You know how I know? Because we're measuring. This good law is working, and the Congress needs to reauthorize it.

The agenda to strengthen education and make America more competitive extends beyond the primary grades. And that's why I proposed, and I'm working with the Congress to pass, the American Competitiveness Initiative. That means we're going to improve math and science education in the middle schools and high schools. You can't compete in the 21st century unless we're educating young engineers and physicists and chemists, unless we have—our kids have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I also believe it's a vital role for the Federal Government to spend money on basic scientific research. And so I've called upon Congress to double the funding for basic scientific research at the National Institute of Standards and Technology labs or the Department of Energy's Office of Science or the National Science Founda-

tion. In other words, there's things we can do in Washington to put good policies in place to make sure that we stay on the cutting edge of change and, at the same time, educate our kids so they can take advantage of the world we're in.

I believe—and I appreciate Congress's expanding Pell grants. It's a strong initiative I support. Pell grants are a good way to help our poor students go to college. And I'm a big believer in the community college system here in America; community colleges work. They're available, and they're affordable, and they have the capacity to change curriculum to meet the needs of the local workforce. And it makes sense for the Federal Government to support community colleges for this reason: It doesn't take much additional education to gain a new skill set so you can find jobs in this 21st century.

Now let me give you an example. I went to Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland, and I met Jeanetta Smith. She used to work in the textile industry. She left to study nursing. She recognized that in nursing, she could make a better living for her family and herself. And so she went to a community college, and she got some low-interest loans to help her, and she became a registered nurse. With a little bit of extra education and some help, she went to the community college, and she's now making three times what she did in her old job. Education enables one to gain new skills necessary to fill the jobs that are coming in the 21st century. She said about her new career: "It's been very, very good. The opportunities are boundless." And that's what we want people saying in America: "I have got the skill set to be able to say, the opportunities are boundless."

America's businesses have responsibilities here in America; I know you know that. A free and vibrant economy depends on public trust. Shareholders should know what executive compensation packages look like. I appreciate the fact that the SEC has issued new rules to ensure that there



is transparency when it comes to executive pay packages. The print ought to be big and understandable. When people analyze their investment, they ought to see loud and clear—they ought to be able to see with certainty the nature of the compensation packages for the people entrusted to run the companies in which they've got an investment.

Government should not decide the compensation for America's corporate executives, but the salaries and bonuses of CEOs should be based on their success at improving their companies and bringing value to their shareholders. America's corporate boardrooms must step up to their responsibilities. You need to pay attention to the executive compensation packages that you approve. You need to show the world that America's businesses are a model of transparency and good corporate governance.

One New Yorker who understands corporate responsibility is a fellow named John Duffy. John Duffy grew up in the Bronx. He became CEO of a Manhattan investment and research firm called Keefe, Bruyette, and Woods. On September the 11th, KBW had its offices in the South Tower of the World Trade Center. That day, the firm lost 67 people, including John's 23-year-old son. Many thought KBW was finished, but not John Duffy. He moved his company to temporary offices. He paid out \$40 million to the families of the employees the firm lost. He set up a charitable trust to help them with medical bills and college expenses. And he rebuilt

his business. Last year, KBW went public, and now the firm has twice as many employees as it did on September the 11th.

I want the people to listen to what John Duffy said: "If that day was our final day, it would have meant that the bad guys had won. Our way to fight back was to keep going." It says something about John Duffy that the terrorist attacks only made him more determined to succeed. It says something about New York that there are countless stories, like KBW's, of hard-working men and women who picked themselves up and rebuilt bigger and better than before. It says something about America that we continue to produce citizens who come back from adversity and create new opportunity for themselves and for others.

And this is the true strength of our economy. That's what makes us the economic leader of the world. And that's why I'm confident that we can remain that economic leader, because we're a nation of dreamers and doers and believers, God-fearing, decent, honorable people. And I'm proud to be the President of such a nation. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at Federal Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; William C. Rudin, chairman, Association for a Better New York; and former Mayors David N. Dinkins and Edward I. Koch of New York City. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Death of Mary Tyler "Molly" Ivins *January 31, 2007*

Molly Ivins was a Texas original. She was loved by her readers and by her many friends, particularly in central Texas. I respected her convictions, her passionate belief in the power of words, and her ability

to turn a phrase. She fought her illness with that same passion. Her quick wit and commitment to her beliefs will be missed. Laura and I send our condolences to Molly Ivins's family and friends.

## Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast February 1, 2007

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Now will you please join me in singing “The Eyes of Texas.” [*Laughter*]

Good morning. Laura and I are honored to join you here at the 55th National Prayer Breakfast. You know, it’s an amazing country, isn’t it, when people from all walks of life gather to recognize our dependence on an Almighty God, and to ask Him for blessings in our life. I think a breakfast such as this speaks to the true strength of the United States of America.

We come from many different faiths, yet we share this profound conviction: We believe that God listens to the voice of His children and pours His grace upon those who seek Him in prayer. I appreciate, Mr. Congressman, you and Jo Ann Davis for leading this prayer breakfast. And thanks for paying tribute to my wife.

I appreciate the Speaker’s presence, Congressman Hoyer’s presence, Congressman Blunt’s presence. I want to thank all the Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives who have joined us. I appreciate the fact that we’ve got Governors here, local officials, and State officials. I thank the members of my Cabinet for joining us. Don’t linger, you’ve got a job to do. [*Laughter*] I thank the military officials who have joined us, distinguished dignitaries. Mr. Prime Minister, we are glad you’re here. Thank you for joining us.

I appreciate Dr. Collins. I want to thank Reverend Mucci and his wife Kathy. I appreciate Nicole Mullen. But most of all, thank you all.

We are a nation of prayer; America prays. Each day, millions of our citizens bow their heads in silence and solitude, or they offer up prayers in fellowship with others. They pray for themselves; they pray for their families; they pray for their neighbors and their communities. In many congregations and homes across this great land,

people also set a time—set aside time to pray for our Nation and those entrusted with authority, including our elected leaders.

In my travels, I often see hand-printed signs and personal messages from citizens that carry words of prayer. Sometimes it’s a single little girl holding up a placard that reads: “Mr. President, be encouraged; you are prayed for.” Sometimes it’s a banner held by a group of young people that says, “We are praying for you, Mr. President.” I often hear similar words when I meet people on a ropeline. Isn’t that interesting? You’re working a ropeline and people come up and say, “Mr. President, I am praying for you and your family.”

The greatest gift a citizen of this country can give those of us entrusted with political office is to pray for us. And I thank those in our Nation who lift all of us up in prayer.

Our troops must understand that every day—every day—millions of our citizens lift them up in prayer. We pray for their safety; we pray for their families they have left at home; we pray for those who have been wounded, for their comfort and recovery. We remember those who have been lost, and we pray that their loved ones feel the healing touch of the Almighty. During this time of war, we thank God that we are part of a nation that produces courageous men and women who volunteer to defend us.

Many in our country know the power of prayer. Prayer changes hearts, prayer changes lives, and prayer makes us a more compassionate and giving people. When we pray, we surrender our will to the Almighty and open ourselves up to His priorities and His touch. His call to love our neighbors as we would like to be loved ourselves is something that we hear when we pray. And we answer that call by reaching out to feed

the hungry and clothe the poor and aid the widow and the orphan. By helping our brothers and sisters in need, we find our own faith strengthened and we receive the grace to lead lives of dignity and purpose.

We see this grace in the life of a young American named Shannon Hickey. Shannon was one of Laura's guests at the State of the Union. When Shannon was growing up, her favorite priest was Father Mychal Judge, a chaplain with the New York City Fire Department. Father Mychal helped Shannon and her family through Shannon's struggle with liver disease. On September the 11th, 2001, Father Mychal lost his life in the World Trade Center. In memory of her friend, Shannon founded Mychal's Message, a nonprofit organization dedicated to sharing Father Mychal's loving spirit. Over the last 5 years, Mychal's Message has collected and distributed more than 100,000 needed items to the poor and the homeless. With each gift to the needy, Shannon encloses a card with Father Mychal's personal prayer. It reads: "Lord, take me where you want me to go, let

me meet who you want me to meet, tell me what you want me to say, and keep me out of your way." [Laughter]

Father Mychal's humble prayer reminds us of an eternal truth: In the quiet of prayer, we leave behind our own cares, and we take up the cares of the Almighty. And in answering His call to service, we find that, in the words of Isaiah: "We will gain new strength. We will run and not get tired. We will walk and not become weary."

And so I thank you for joining us on this day of prayer. I thank you for the tradition you continue here today. And I ask for God's blessings on the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. at the Hilton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II of Missouri; Prime Minister Said Musa of Belize; Francis S. Collins, director, National Human Genome Research Institute; Rev. Dan Mucci, Jr., senior pastor, Abundant Life Church, Glen Burnie, MD, and his wife Kathy; and entertainer Nicole C. Mullen.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting on Childhood Obesity *February 1, 2007*

*The President.* Laura and I are so pleased to welcome the Ad Council, as well as leaders from our business community, to talk about a serious American problem, and that is childhood obesity.

Childhood obesity is a costly problem for the country. It puts stress on American families. And we believe it is necessary to come up with a coherent strategy to help folks all throughout our society cope with the issue. And I appreciate the Secretary being here. Thanks for coming, Mr. Secretary.

We'll discuss—one of the strategies is to have the Ad Council put on an interesting series of ads encouraging children to exer-

cise. One way for this Nation to cope with the issue of obesity is to get people outside, whether it be through sports or hiking or conservation. So we'll encourage them to do that, encourage parents to encourage their children to participate in the great outdoors. We'll also talk about healthy diet choices here.

And so I want to thank you all for coming. It's a serious issue that we take seriously here at the Government.

Laura is off to New York to kick off the program to help deal with heart disease here. And you might want to say a few words.

[At this point, the First Lady made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In

his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on Senate Passage of Minimum Wage and Tax Relief Legislation February 1, 2007

Today the Senate has passed significant legislation that will benefit America's workers and small businesses. By working in a bipartisan way to match a minimum wage increase with tax relief for small businesses, the Senate has taken a step toward helping maintain a strong and dynamic labor mar-

ket and promoting continued economic growth. I strongly encourage the House to support this combined minimum wage increase and small-business tax relief.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 2.

## Remarks Honoring the 2006 Stanley Cup Champion Carolina Hurricanes February 2, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. Have a seat. It's a pretty big deal for a guy that doesn't know how to ice skate—[laughter]—to welcome the Carolina Hurricanes to the White House. We appreciate you coming. You know, I'm not sure what is prettier, the Stanley Cup or Mike Commodore's hair. [Laughter] A little disappointed you got a haircut—[laughter]—but, welcome.

*Mike Commodore.* Thank you.

*The President.* The other thing, I was a little surprised to see that he's not wearing his robe. [Laughter]

At the start of this season, this team was ranked 28th out of 30 teams. I like to be around people that keep expectations low. [Laughter] Instead of listening to the prognosticators, this team had a 112-point season. They had 52 wins. They win the Stanley Cup. They're here at the White House. Congratulations to you.

I congratulate the owners, Peter Karmanos and his son, Jason. I'm sorry that Peter is not here. I understand he had an operation, and we send very best wishes. I thank Jim Rutherford, the president and general manager of the team. The guy has got a lot of—he's a pretty aggressive guy. I just met him, and he said: "I saw Barney outside. You're feeding him too much." [Laughter] Probably right. [Laughter]

I welcome the captain of this team, Rod Brind'Amour, and the players. I welcome their families. If your families are here, I want to thank you very much for enduring a long season. It's pretty hard to be married to a hockey player that's on the road a lot. But I know that you bring inspiration to the players. I appreciate the coach. Peter, you've done a heck of a good job. It's not easy to be a coach of a successful team, and I appreciate the spirit that you brought to this club. Mr. Commissioner,

thank you for coming. I'm proud that you're here. I really thank you for taking time—you and Bill taking time out of your day to be here—and Bernadette Mansur, who is with us as well.

I want to thank all the people associated with this club. I particularly want to pay tribute to the equipment managers and the locker room people. Players get all the credit and all the glory, but they would tell you firsthand, they wouldn't be able to skate every day if somebody wasn't there making sure that the uniforms were ready and doing all the hard work. The games end late; these folks are toiling long into the night preparing for the next day's practice. And so we welcome not only the players and the management and the coaches and the families, but all those who make a successful franchise run. We're really glad you're here at the White House.

You got a lot of fans here in Washington, DC. I know you got a lot of fans in Carolina, but you've got two United States Senators who've come to greet you: Senator Dole and Senator Burr. Thank you for coming. And Congressman Howard Coble, what's that hat say? That's a championship hat?

*Representative Howard Coble.* Championship hat.

*The President.* Fine looking lid, isn't it? [Laughter] I thought you might be wearing that to cover up your bald head. [Laughter] Yes. [Laughter] Now you know what I'm talking about. [Laughter]

I appreciate very much the rest of the National Hockey League personnel who've joined us. I want to welcome the young hockey teams that are here, the local youth teams—

*Participant.* Virginia State teams—

*The President.* —Virginia State teams. Good. Well, we're glad you're here. Thanks for coming to see what champs look like. [Laughter] And so the idea is to skate hard, work hard, and make the right choices, and someday, you'll be standing up here at the

White House. I'm probably not going to be here. [Laughter]

A lot of Americans don't know this, but the Stanley Cup is the oldest trophy in professional sports. It's also one of the toughest trophies to win. Listen to this: It takes 4 rounds in the playoffs, 16 wins, before an NHL player can skate with the Stanley Cup.

It's unique in another way. It is the only professional sports trophy that every player on the championship team gets to take home for a day, and this cup has had some amazing experiences. [Laughter]

It's been to the top of Mount Elbert in Colorado. It has taken a roller coaster ride at Universal Studios. [Laughter] It's been used as baptismal font, a popcorn holder—[laughter]—a feed trough for a winner of the Kentucky Derby. Players have tested its buoyancy by throwing it into pools and lakes—it does not float. [Laughter] The cup—this may be hard for you to believe—but it has been to a lot of bars. [Laughter] In case you're wondering, it holds 14 cans of beer. [Laughter]

Hurricane players took the cup on many adventures. It went to Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, the Czech Republic, of course Canada and the United States.

Goalie Cam Ward took the cup home to Canada, and he ate some corn pops out of it. [Laughter] And then he took it to visit his grandmother and the other residents at the seniors home where she lives. He used the cup to bring some joy in people's lives.

Other players did the same thing. Several players took the cup to children's hospitals in their hometowns. A captain of the team brought the cup to a charity golf tournament, where he helped raise \$112,000 for the fight against cystic fibrosis. Defenseman Glen Wesley took the cup to the Wounded Warriors Barracks at Camp Lejeune. Here's what he says: "What better way to thank the troops who fight for our country and defend our freedoms." And I appreciate you doing that, Glen.

A lot of people inspired the Carolina Hurricanes on their way to victory, but none more than a young girl named Julia Rowe. Julia lives just down the street from the coach; they're buddies. As the playoffs approached, she learned that she had suffered a relapse of childhood leukemia and would have to undergo intensive chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Inspired by Julia's fight, these tough guys launched a campaign to raise money and awareness for the fight against leukemia.

Julia followed every moment of the Stanley Cup finals from her bed in Duke University. She got to join the team on the victory parade. The coach reports that today she's back home and doing well. She's incredibly proud of her friends who won the Stanley Cup.

What I'm telling you is, this group of men, they're a class act. They're obviously great athletes—all you got to do is look at their noses to know that they're willing to—[laughter]. Appreciate you putting your false teeth in. [Laughter] But more important to me is the fact that they got good

hearts, and they bring class to their profession. They set an example for young folks who watch them perform on the ice.

One of the interesting things about this team is, they have a—they've got a sign in their locker room that says: It's not about me; it's about the guy in front of me. And one reason they're here is because they understand that when you serve something greater than yourself—the team or your community—you become a true champ.

And so on behalf of the White House people, we welcome you. Congratulations to true champs. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Commodore, defenseman, Jason Karmanos, vice president and assistant general manager, and Peter Laviolette, head coach, Carolina Hurricanes; and Gary B. Bettman, commissioner, Bill Daly, deputy commissioner, and Bernadette Mansur, senior vice president of communications, National Hockey League.

## The President's Radio Address *February 3, 2007*

Good morning. This week was filled with more good news about America's economy. We learned that our economy grew at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in the fourth quarter of last year. Overall, our economy grew 3.4 percent in 2006, up from 3.1 percent in 2005. The Dow Jones reached an alltime high this week for the 27th time in the past 4 months. And we learned that America created 111,000 new jobs in January, which means we have added over 7.4 million jobs in the past 3½ years.

This good news is a result of the hard work of the American people and progrowth economic policies like tax relief. By cutting taxes, we put more money into

the hands of American families and small businesses. You have used this money to produce strong and lasting economic growth. And now Congress needs to make this tax relief permanent, so we can keep America's economy growing.

Progrowth economic policies also play a vital role in our plan to balance the Federal budget. Our growing economy has produced record levels of tax revenue. This increase in tax revenue has helped us cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule. And on Monday, we will take the next step when I submit to Congress a budget that will eliminate the deficit by 2012.



To meet this goal, we must set priorities for Government spending. My top priority will continue to be keeping America safe and winning the war against extremists who want to destroy our way of life. The budget I will submit to Congress includes the cost of funding the global war on terror, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our troops deserve our full support, and this budget gives them the resources they need.

Cutting the deficit during a time of war requires us to restrain spending in other areas. One good way to help eliminate wasteful spending is to pass earmark reform. Earmarks are special interest items that are often slipped into bills at the last hour. Even worse, more than 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate for a vote. They are dropped into committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk, yet they are treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So I will work with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to continue reforming the budget process, expose every earmark to the light of day and a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half.

Another important tool for eliminating wasteful spending is the line-item veto. Today, when lawmakers tack porkbarrel spending onto large bills, the President is left with an all-or-nothing choice: either sign the bill with the wasteful spending or veto the whole bill and deny funding for vital programs. With the line-item veto, the President can sign the funding for necessary programs into law and send the unnecessary provisions back to Congress for

a prompt up-or-down vote on whether to uphold the spending. Forty-three Governors have a line-item veto. I urge Congress to pass the line-item veto, so we can work together to control Federal spending.

Controlling spending also requires us to address the unsustainable growth of entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Spending for these programs is growing faster than inflation, faster than our economy, and faster than our ability to pay for it. Unless we act, we will saddle our children and grandchildren with tens of trillions of dollars of unfunded obligations. They will face three bad options: huge tax increases, huge budget deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Republicans and Democrats need to come together to confront the challenge of entitlement spending and ensure that these vital programs are there when our children and grandchildren need them.

I look forward to working with Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to address these challenges. Together, we can pass a budget that keeps our economy strong, keeps America safe, and makes deficit spending a thing of the past.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on February 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 2, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the House Democratic Caucus Issues Conference in  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
February 3, 2007

Thank you all. It's nice to be here. Thank you very much. The last time I looked at some of your faces, I was at the State of the Union, and I saw kind of a strange expression when I referred to something as the "Democrat Party." Now, look, my diction isn't all that good. [*Laughter*] I have been accused of occasionally mangling the English language. [*Laughter*] And so I appreciate you inviting the head of the Republican Party.

Thanks for having me, Madam Speaker. I'm proud to be here. I'm proud to have met your grandchild. I know the mother well. [*Laughter*] If the child has as much spunk as the mother, she's [he's]\* going to have a fantastic life. And so thank you for having me.

I want to thank the members for allowing me to come. I'm looking forward to visiting with you. I particularly want to thank your families. I know how hard it is on a family to support a loved one in public life. It takes a lot of sacrifice to encourage your spouse to serve the country. Politics can be ugly. Sometimes they say not nice things about you in the local newspaper. You're traveling a lot. Campaigns are rough on a family. And so I really want to thank—I thank the members for serving, but I know full well that you couldn't serve without the love and support of your family members. So I really appreciate your contribution to the country.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for your leadership. I was genuinely touched when I thought about how your dad would be reacting to seeing you sitting up there in the House Chamber. It was an historic moment, and I know you're proud of the accomplishments, and I appre-

ciate you all supporting this fine woman into a really important leadership role.

On the way in, we spent a little time talking about Florida, and I talked to the Governor yesterday. The Speaker was concerned, as am I, to make sure that the folks get the help they need down there. And, Madam Speaker, you and I, and every member here, shares concerns for those whose lives were turned upside down by that storm. And as I told you earlier, and told the Governor, whatever Federal response is needed, we will make it quick and sure. And so thank you for your concerns.

I'm glad to be here with Steny Hoyer. Good to see you. Thank you, Steny. He is a down-to-earth, no-nonsense guy. I'm looking forward to working with you. James Clyburn and Rahm Emanuel and John Larson and all the leadership, I'm looking forward to working with you. I know you've probably heard that, and you doubt whether it's true. It's true. We can do some big things together. In order to do big things, we're going to have to do it together.

So I'd like to share some of the thoughts about the big things I'd like to see us try to accomplish. First, balancing the budget—that's a big thing. Rob Portman is going to submit a budget tomorrow. Some of it you'll like; some of it you won't like; but it achieves the goal that we have said, which is to balance the budget. And we will show you how to do so in 5 years. You will have your own ideas, and we can work together, hopefully, to achieve that big goal.

Inherent in the budget issue is whether or not—is unfunded liabilities as a part of entitlement programs. This is a difficult issue for members of both parties. I fully understand it's hard to come to the table to address Social Security or Medicare, the

---

\* White House correction.

unfunded liabilities inherent in those programs. I've asked members of my party to come to the table with ideas. I will bring ideas. I ask members of the Democratic Party to come to the table as well.

I believe we have an obligation to work to solve the problem. Is it going to be hard work? You bet it's hard work. A lot of times people say, "Well, why don't we just wait for the crisis to come upon us?" Well, I think the crisis is here. That's why I've included reforms of entitlement in every State of the Union Address. And I'm going to keep talking—well, I've got one more left. I'll keep talking about it for the next time as well. Hopefully, I won't have to, if we're able to sit and come together. But I'm under no illusions of how hard it's going to be. The only thing I want to share with you is, is my desire to see if we can't work together to get it done.

Secondly, there's a great goal and—to make sure every child has got the foundation necessary to be able to enjoy the great opportunities our country affords. As you know, I am a big believer in the No Child Left Behind Act. I think it has worked. I fully recognize that some have got concerns about it, and I'm willing to work with both Republicans and Democrats to address those concerns. My only admonition is, let us don't water down the accountability inherent in this good law that enables us to detect problems early so we can solve the problems, before it's too late.

Secondly, I know we can work together on passing the American Competitiveness Initiative, aimed at making sure that math and science is more prevalent amongst our youngsters and doubling the amount of basic research at the Federal level, which will enable our country to remain the most innovative country in the world.

Thirdly, we've got to make sure people have got health insurance. I mentioned this in the State of the Union. I believe the role of the Federal Government is to help the poor, the disabled, and the elderly, and we will work with you to make sure that's

happened. But I also think it's very important to figure out why health insurance is less affordable and less available for more of our citizens.

I believe part of the reason is because the Tax Code discourages private individuals from being able to purchase health care. I ask you to carefully consider the idea that we have put out. I've already heard from some members who thought it was a lousy idea; I understand that. But please look at it in depth as a way to address an issue that concerns us all, and that is, not enough people having health insurance.

Secondly, I strongly believe the States are the proper laboratories for change. And I think it makes sense to encourage innovation at the State level, in terms of helping people on Medicaid get health insurance, helping the poor get health insurance, making sure that we develop risk pools to enable those who cannot afford insurance because of health reasons have coverage. Anyway, it's a comprehensive approach that addresses a common goal of ours.

Thirdly, I set a goal to reduce our gasoline use by 20 percent over the next 10 years. And I thank you very much for receiving the idea that the country has advanced enough technologically to be able to have a mandatory fuel standard that encourages the use of renewables and alternatives, up to 37 billion gallons by 2017. We have spent a lot of money on developing new technologies. I look forward to working with you to continue to do so.

There's some concern, I know, amongst some of the farm State Congressmen that when you use a lot of corn for ethanol, it's going to rise—it's going to cause the feed for hogs and cattle to rise. I've heard loud and clear those complaints. And to a certain extent, they're right. As a matter of fact, that is why we need to spend money on cellulosic ethanol, to make sure that we have got substitutes—[applause]—substitute raw material—in other words, we are able to replace corn as the main raw

material for the ethanol in order to achieve a great goal. And I'm looking forward to working with you on it.

It's an area where we can show the American people that the Republican Party and the Democratic Party has got the capability of enabling us to be able to say to the people: "By being less dependent on oil, we've enhanced our national security, we've helped our economic security, and we've done something positive on the environment."

I believe a great goal is a comprehensive energy-immigration bill. This too is a difficult issue. And in order to get it done, it's going to require Members in the House and the Senate—Republican Members, Democratic Members—finding common ground. And the White House wants to help. I believe strongly in this issue. I know that in order to enforce our border, which all of us wants to—all of us here want to do, that we must have a comprehensive plan to be able to do so.

I believe it is in the Nation's interests to have a temporary-worker program. It's in the interests of small-business owners and farmers to be able to have folks that are willing to do work Americans are not doing, on a temporary basis. I know that in order to enforce this border, we better have a plan that doesn't cause people to sneak in. We want our Border Patrol agents guarding the border from criminals and drug dealers and terrorists, not from folks that are coming to do jobs that Americans aren't doing.

And so this is an important issue. And I repeat to you: I want to work with you on it. I went to the Oval Office to address it, because I believe strongly that we can achieve an objective. I'm under no illusions as to how hard it's going to be, but it will be a lot easier when Republicans and Democrats work together to achieve this important objective.

We share a common goal, and that is to keep America safe. You know, I welcome debate in a time of war, and I hope you

know that. Nor do I consider anybody's—nor do I consider a belief that if you don't happen to agree with me, you don't share the same sense of patriotism I do. You can get that thought out of your mind, if that's what some believe.

These are tough times, and yet there's no doubt in my mind that you want to secure this homeland just as much as I do. You remember the lessons of September the 11th just like I do, and you understand a fundamental obligation of Government is to do everything in our power to protect people here. And I'm looking forward to working with you on that, to make sure our intelligence agencies have what they need to be able to detect problems before they come, to continue to secure the homeland. I believe we can work together in Afghanistan to make sure that former safe haven is able to grow as a democracy.

I put out a plan that has caused a lot of debate on Iraq. I took a lot of time thinking about how best to achieve an objective of a country governing and sustaining and defending itself, a country that will be an ally in this war on terror. I listened to many members here. I listened to members of my own party. I listened to the military and came up with a plan that I genuinely believe has the best chance of succeeding.

I do know we agree on some things, and that is that the Maliki government is going to have to show strong leadership. I appreciate the fact that the Speaker and many of—the distinguished chairman came and briefed me on their trip. She said loud and clear: "Mr. President, you've got to make it clear to the Iraqi people that their Government has got to perform." And I understand, and I agree, Madam Speaker.

There's got to be success not only on the military front—in other words, the Iraqis have got to be taking the lead in Baghdad to secure its capital—but there's also got to be success on the political front. They've got to pass an oil law. They've got

to amend their Constitution so that all segments of that society feel that the Government is for them. They've got to spend our money on reconstruction projects that help unite the country. They've got to have local elections so people feel involved in the Provincial governments. In other words, there's benchmarks that they have got to achieve. And I have made it clear to the Iraqi Government, just like I made it clear to the American people: Our commitment is not open-ended.

We've got other equities in foreign policy that I know we can work together on. I cannot thank you enough for supporting the HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa. It's a pleasure to be able to stand up in front of the American people and say, "Your tax dollars have made a significant difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people." And this plan would not have been funded without the able leadership and support of many people here in this building, and I appreciate that.

We've set another great goal, and that's to reduce malaria in countries on the continent of Africa. And I'm convinced we can

work together with a—[applause]—strategy that will work. I promised people in my State of the Union that we will continue to pursue freedom in places like Cuba or Belarus or Burma, and that we'll continue to rally the world to stay focused on Darfur.

And so this is a bold agenda for all of us. And I agree, Madam Speaker; there's a chance to show people that we can get beyond the politics of Washington, DC; that we're able to treat each other with civility and, at the same time, accomplish big goals. And so I've come, at your kind invitation, to assure the members that I look forward to working with you in doing the best we possibly can do for the good of all American citizens.

Thank you for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in Ballroom A at the Kingsmill Resort & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and her grandson, Paul M. Vos, and daughter, Alexandra Pelosi; and Gov. Charles J. Crist, Jr., of Florida.

## Remarks Following a Meeting at the House Democratic Caucus Issues Conference in Williamsburg *February 3, 2007*

*The President.* Speaker, thank you. First of all, thanks for the invitation, Madam Speaker and Rahm; thank you very much. I enjoyed sharing ideas with Members of Congress.

One of the things I wanted to tell the members very clearly was, one, I appreciate their service to the country. Oftentimes, their service and the service that their families provide is taken for granted, and I want them to know how much I appreciate a willingness to be in politics. Politics is hard. It's hard because of the campaign; it's hard, in many cases, because of the travel. These

are hard times because of the big issues we face. And so thank you for giving me a chance to come and share in a recognition that a lot of folks appreciate them, including the President.

Secondly, I enjoyed sharing some priorities. My message really was that these are big goals that Democrats care about and Republicans care about, and we've got to work hard to find ways to achieve big goals. And I also was pleased to take questions, and I thought the questions were very good and gave me a chance to share philosophy

as well as how I think we can advance some very important issues.

I've met with the Speaker and Congressman Hoyer—Steny—quite a few times since I have been the President. We're going to—hopefully, we will—not hopefully—we will continue to meet. In my meetings I—look, we don't always agree, and that's why we're in different parties. [Laughter] But we do agree about our country, and we do agree about the desire to work together.

And so I really appreciate you letting me come by; I really do. I felt welcomed. I felt like people understood that I've got pressures on me, like I understand they have pressures on them. And I really hope that the members out there get a sense that I bear no ill will; I bring no animosity about the fact that we may not agree on every position, and that I am appreciative of the contributions they make.

And so thanks a lot for letting me come. I answered five or six questions. I was able to shake hands with a lot of members. I got to hug a few babies. [Laughter] I kind of remembered—help me remember the good old days. [Laughter]

*Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.* Still has the touch.

*The President.* Well, I don't know. [Laughter] One of the babies I got to hug was the Speaker's grandchild. But it was a—I would define the moment for me as relaxed, informative, and enjoyable.

So thank you very much for having me. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Burwell Ballroom at the Kingsmill Resort & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Rahm I. Emanuel, chairman, House Democratic Caucus.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters February 5, 2007

*The President.* I appreciate my Cabinet joining me today as we discussed our budget. Today we submit a budget to the United States Congress that shows we can balance the budget in 5 years without raising taxes.

Our economy is strong because of good policy and because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. By keeping taxes down, we actually generate strong revenues to the Treasury.

And I appreciate Director Portman helping us devise a plan that sets priorities and, at the same time, emphasizes fiscal restraint. Our priority is to protect the American people, and our priority is to make sure our troops have what it takes to do their jobs. We also have got priorities in national parks and education and health care. But we have proven—and I strongly

believe Congress needs to listen to a budget which has no tax increase and a budget, because of fiscal discipline, that can be balanced in 5 years.

Secondly, I strongly believe that Congress needs to do something on earmarks. In order to make sure that we're fiscally responsible with the people's money, Congress needs to make sure that when they spend the people's money, there's transparency and an up-or-down vote for each item. As well, I believe the President needs to have the line-item veto. It's one thing to get the size of the budget pie right; it's another thing to make sure that the slices in that pie meet national priorities.

And so the budget that Director Portman is going to be talking about is realistic, it's achievable, and it's got good reforms in it. So thank you very much. Looking forward



to working with the Congress to get this budget passed.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Ben [Ben Feller, Associated Press].

#### *Federal Budget*

Q. Mr. President, thank you. You've opposed setting timelines for troop withdrawal in Iraq; yet, your new budget plan assumes that war spending will be down to 50 billion by 2009 and none beyond that. Are you, in effect, sir, setting a timeline for the end of the war?

*The President.* Ben, we've had years of projections in the past. In other words, we've said to the Congress, "Here's what our anticipated expenditure is in the short term." And we've been able to manage our budgets with 5 years of war behind us, and we'll manage the budgets in the out years. There will be no timetable set. And the reason why is, is because we don't want to send mixed signals to an enemy or to a struggling democracy or to our troops.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

#### *Progress in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, how do you respond to some criticism from the Iraqis that the reason for the recent escalation of violence in Iraq is because the United States has been too slow to implement its new strategy?

*The President.* Well, General Petraeus is heading to Iraq this week, early this—tomorrow. And my message is, is that both of us, the Iraqis and the U.S. and coalition forces, have got to get this plan in place as quickly as possible. Of course, we want the plan to work, and we want to make sure that the strategy we've implemented—or the strategy we've outlined is implemented properly.

I appreciate the fact that the Iraqi Government is anxious to get security inside

the capital of the country. That's a good sign. It's a good sign that there's a sense of concern and anxiety. It means that the Government understands they have a responsibility to protect their people. And we want to help them. What we're trying to do with this reinforcement of our troops is to provide enough space so that the Iraqi Government can meet certain benchmarks or certain requirements for a unity government to survive and for the country to be strong.

I had to make a decision as to whether or not we were going to allow the status quo to continue. And the status quo wasn't acceptable. I listened to a lot of people in Congress as to whether or not we ought to slowly withdraw and redeploy troops. My worry about that was that the capital would get worse, and out of that chaos would come grave danger to the United States. And so I listened to a lot of other folks, including our military, and said, "Look, we got to take care and help these Iraqis take care of the violence inside of Baghdad."

And that's why I made the decision I made, and we're in the process of implementing that plan. We'd like to do it as quickly as possible. The success of that plan is going to depend upon the capacity and willingness of the Iraqis to do hard work, and we want to help them do that work. And the fact that Government officials are now saying that it's time to start implementing the plan is a good sign. It shows that they understand that now is the time to do the things necessary to protect their people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:48 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, incoming commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report Relating to the  
Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking  
February 5, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Consistent with the authorities relating to official immunity in the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking (Public Law 107–108, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2291–4), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a

report prepared by my Administration. This report includes matters relating to the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
February 5, 2007.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With  
Respect to Cote d'Ivoire  
February 5, 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire are to continue in effect beyond February 7, 2007.

The situation in or in relation to Cote d'Ivoire, which has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004, and subsequent resolutions, has resulted in the

massacre of large numbers of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, significant political violence and unrest, and attacks against international peacekeeping forces leading to fatalities. This situation poses a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
February 5, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 6. The related notice of February 5 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at Micron Technology, Inc., in Manassas, Virginia  
February 6, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Thank you for your warm welcome. It's good to be here at Micron Technologies. I'm going to spend a little time with you talking about the state of our economy and the budget I submitted to the United States Congress. It should interest you; after all, it's your money. *[Laughter]*

One thing about Micron is that it is clear that the role of government is to encourage investment and enhance educational opportunities. I mean, when you walk through the halls of this innovative company, it's pretty clear to me that you need to know what you're doing in order to make this—*[laughter]*—company survive and thrive like it is.

The other day I was in New York, and I talked about what we need to do to keep the economy growing. In other words, things are fine right now; what do you do to make it even better in the future? And coming to a company like this reminds me about some of the basic things we need to do. One, we need to make sure that we educate kids so that they can become employees in companies like this—basic, fundamental education—and encourage additional education for folks so they gain skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

Secondly, trade—like, if you're confident in what you make, you ought to be for trade, because people are going to want to buy what you make. Ninety-five percent of the customers in the world live outside the United States. I mean, we're 5 percent of the population; 95 percent is elsewhere. This company relies upon trade. So you've got the smart people back there making the products that people want, and you want to be in a position to sell it if you want your company to continue to grow.

I appreciate very much the fact that companies like Micron actually have a budget. It's a concept that the Government

needs to get used to too. *[Laughter]* And I'm going to spend a little time talking about the budget. I submitted a budget yesterday that says, we can balance the budget by 2012 without raising your taxes. I'm going to explain how it works.

It's probably counterintuitive to some, particularly those who tend to trust government. But see, I believe it is not only possible; we have proven it through a document, that by keeping taxes low and being wise about how we spend your money, we actually achieve balance in the budget. That's not to say we won't have other challenges, but this budget can work if Congress resists the temptation to raise your taxes.

Now, I do want to thank Steve and the good folks from Idaho for joining us. Virginia is a good part of the world, or obviously you wouldn't be here. But you understand that there's some really fine folks that live here and work here. I appreciate Pat, the site director who gave me a tour. He tried to explain all the big machines that were there to a history major. *[Laughter]* I played like I understood. *[Laughter]* It's a really interesting place you work in.

I appreciate Mike Simpson. He's the Congressman from Idaho. This innovative company is headquartered in his district, and so he wanted to come by and see this part of Micron's operations. I appreciate the mayor. Mayor, are you here somewhere?

*Mayor Douglas S. Waldron.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Oh, Mayor, good to see you. Thank you for serving, appreciate it. Just fill the potholes, that's all I can tell you. *[Laughter]* And I'm sure you are. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to visit with you. First thing is for sure: this economy is strong. I hope you feel it. I mean, after all, the company

is investing billions of dollars to make sure that your product is competitive in a world economy, and one reason why the company feels confident about investing billions of dollars is because the nature of this economy is strong, and the statistics bear it out.

Last quarter, we grew at 3.5 percent growth. Now, in a big economy, that is a substantial growth. Last year, we grew by 3.4 percent for the year; that's up from 3.1 percent. That's positive news if you're working in America. It's positive news if you're looking for a job. In other words, it's hard to find good work unless this economy is growing, and the economy is strong. The Dow Jones Industrial Average reached an alltime high for the 27th time in the past 4 months. In other words, people are confident; people feel good about the future.

Real wages are up. That's positive if you rely upon a wage. It's up by 1.7 percent. Real wages is that beyond the cost of living—the average family of four making \$1,000 more this year than they were last year—and that helps a lot.

Three months ago, we've added—over the last 3 months, we added a million jobs. It's all due to the entrepreneurial spirit. See, government doesn't create wealth; government creates an environment that encourages capital flows and investment. I really believe the most important aspect of government is to react to problems and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit. I really want it to be said, America is entrepreneurial heaven. It's a great place to take risk and to realize your dreams, and I believe it is. And the question is, how do we keep it that way?

I want you to remember a little bit of the economic history of the recent years. It will help justify why I submitted the budget I submitted. You might remember that we were in a recession in 2001. I don't know if you were working here then, but that recession was being felt all throughout our economy. And then the enemy attacked us, and it hurt a lot. You know, a huge

attack like that not only shakes the psychology of the country, it hurt the economy.

And so I decided to do something about it and cut taxes—worked with Congress to cut taxes. I believe that if you have more money in your pocket to save or spend or invest, that is what was required to create a condition where people would feel more comfortable about making investments. In other words, the entrepreneurial spirit is enhanced when you have more money, when consumers have more money to spend or businesses have more money to invest.

And so we cut taxes; we cut taxes on everybody who pays income taxes. I believe the best, fairest policy in Washington is not to play favorite in the Tax Code, but say, "If you pay income taxes, you ought to get a tax cut." And that's what we did.

We also doubled the child tax credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We cut taxes on dividends and capital gains in 2003. And the reason why is, we want to encourage investment. You cannot spend billions of dollars inside this plant unless somebody is willing to make that investment. And by cutting capital gains taxes and taxes on dividends, it encourages capital flow. It makes it easier for Micron to attract capital to buy new equipment to expand your business and to remain competitive.

Our economy expanded, so there's a big debate. There's always: Do tax cuts work? They work. I understand the politics of cutting taxes. Some like it; some don't. I just asked the American people to look at the facts. Since we cut taxes a second time in 2003, we've added 7.4 million new jobs. Tax cuts equaled new jobs. Our economy expanded by 13 percent since we cut taxes in 2003. In other words, we dealt with the recession, we dealt with the attacks, we laid the conditions for economic vitality, and the American people took hold and made it work.

Government didn't grow the economy; the hard-working people of our country

grew the economy. And so coming into this budget session, I felt like we're in a good opportunity to balance this budget because of the economic vitality. In other words, if you got a weak economy, it's really hard to stand up with credibility and say to Congress, "Join me in balancing the budget without raising taxes." We got a strong economy.

One of the things that happens when you have a strong economy, when you have vitality in the private sector, is it turns out you get more tax revenues than you anticipate. See, cutting taxes created the incentives for people to save, invest, and consume, which caused the economy to grow. And as the economy grows, the pie gets bigger, the tax revenues to the Treasury increase. And that's what happened.

In 2004, I said, "We can cut the deficit in half in 5 years." There was a lot of skepticism. Washington occasionally has skepticism. [*Laughter*] They said: "You can't do that unless you raise taxes." Well, sure enough, we did do it by not raising taxes. As a matter of fact, we did so 3 years ahead of schedule.

See, low taxes means economic vitality, which means more tax revenues. And so the fundamental question is, what do you need to do to keep the economy growing, in order to make sure the tax revenues keep coming in to the Treasury? Step one is to keep the taxes low. A lot of people saying, "You've got to raise it." I don't believe so. I think raising taxes hurts the economy. I think raising taxes makes it harder to sustain economic growth. I think if we raise taxes, it makes it harder for this company to invest billions of dollars in new equipment. And if this company decides not to invest billions of dollars in new equipment, it makes it harder for your wages to go up; it means somebody is not making that equipment, which will have an effect on the economy.

And so step one for a good budget, step one to balancing the budget, is to keep taxes low. As a matter of fact, not only

do I think we ought not to raise them, I think we ought to make every tax cut we passed permanent.

Now, it also means we're going to have to set priorities with your money. See, the temptation in Washington is to spend your money on everything that sounds good. That's not how you run your family budget, that's not how this company runs its company budget, and that's certainly how the Government ought not to run its budget, which means you have to do the hard work and set priorities.

And so the budget I submitted to Congress sets clear priorities. The number-one priority, as far as I'm concerned, for the Federal Government, is to protect the American people. The number-one priority is to spend monies necessary to defeat an enemy that wants to cause us harm. One of the lessons of September the 11th is that chaos and safe haven overseas could cause an enemy to come and harm us, and I'm never going to forget the lesson.

Secondly, a priority is when we ask an American to wear the uniform, volunteers to wear the uniform, to go into harm's way, that person deserves the full support of the United States Government. And so the priority in this budget is to make sure that those who are on the frontlines of protecting you, in a war which I wish wasn't waging, in a war that came home to us on September the 11th, is to make sure they have the tools necessary to do the job. If Government's job is to protect the American people from harm, then we better make sure those we've charged with protecting you have what it takes to do so.

There's something called discretionary spending in the budget. I don't want to get to be too much of a budget expert for you, but we've got what's called mandatory spending—in other words, it's going to happen based upon formula—and discretionary spending, where the Government gets to decide on an annual basis how much is spent.

And so therefore, if you're trying to balance the budget after you've set your priority and funded it, then the Congress has to be wise about other aspects of discretionary spending. And so the budget I've submitted says that we can meet our obligations but don't have to spend up to the rate of inflation. In other words, you have to have some fiscal discipline if you want to balance the Federal budget, and that's what I'm asking Congress to do.

One of the things I presume you expect us to do is analyze programs. In other words, if they say, "This is going to do this," and the results aren't there, I think the American people expect us to eliminate those programs or cut the programs back or not fund them, and that's exactly what we do. It's a little hard sometimes to say to a person, a Member of Congress, "By the way, the program that you think is a good program is not working." But we spend a lot of time doing that in Washington, DC, and we got a pretty good record about eliminating programs that don't work. And we'll continue to work with Congress to hold people to account. That's what happens here at Micron. If your product line is not meeting expectations, you don't keep funding something that's not working. That's what Government ought to do as well.

I want to talk about an interesting topic that tends to dominate Washington and one that is necessary to make sure that we spend your money wisely and balance the budget, and that's the issue of earmarks. I'm sure you've heard about them. Earmarks are special interest items that get slipped into spending bills a lot of times at the last minute. In other words, they're moving a piece of appropriations out, and then somebody shows up and says, "Well, I need this for my district," or "I need this for my district."

In 2005, we had more than 13,000 earmarks. More than 90 percent of the earmarks never make it to the floor of the House or the Senate. Isn't that interesting?

In other words, they're never voted on. They're just dropped into a committee report, and these committee reports are not even a part of the bill that arrives on my desk. And here's what they look like.

These things didn't get voted on, and yet they have the force of law. And they provide taxpayers' dollars from a lot of things—researching wool, swimming pools, in here. They didn't vote them into law. In other words, Congress didn't vote these things into law, I didn't sign them into law, yet they have the force of law.

And therefore, it's important for Congress to continue—to reform the process, and we want to work with them. In other words, as a taxpayer, I presume you expect that every single appropriation has been looked at and analyzed and debated. In other words, let that sun shine in. It's called transparency. And if the Members of Congress think it's a good idea, then they ought to vote it up or down and then send it to my desk so I know full well that there's been full scrutiny in Congress. We can do a better job with your money, and one way to do so is to reform the earmark process.

Another way to do a better job with your money is to give me the line-item veto so I can work with Congress. In other words, what happens is, is that we have—we debate the size of the pie. In other words, in order to balance the budget, we need this much top-line spending. But a lot of times, we don't—it makes it different to deal with the slices of the pie. And I believe there needs to be a process where the President has got the capacity to work with Congress to say, "Well, maybe this slice of the pie doesn't meet a national priority," where I'm able to red line projects, for example, and send them back to Congress for an up-or-down vote.

In other words, if Congress is genuinely concerned about spending your money wisely, and I believe most Members are, then, one, they got to do something about earmarks. And secondly, they need to work



with the executive branch in order to have a tool necessary to let spending be given the full light of day. You know most States have line-item vetoes? I believe it to be a necessary reform for the Federal Government to have the same opportunity to work together.

I want to talk a little bit about entitlement programs. I told you there's discretionary spending; there's also mandatory spending, nondiscretionary spending. And the biggest programs, of course, are Social Security and Medicare. I submitted in my budget some reform for Medicare by slowing down the rate of growth from 7.4 percent per year to 6.7 percent per year, and that saves billions of dollars in doing that.

In other words, instead of spending—instead of saying these mandatory programs will grow at the rate of nearly 7½ percent, why don't we just be reasonable and see if we can slow it down a little bit. You'll hear people say, "Well, he's cutting spending." No. That may be Washington, DC, definition of "cut," but slowing the rate of spending saves you a lot of money.

Now, mandatory spending requires more than that as far as I'm concerned. We have a fundamental problem when it comes to, say, a program like Social Security. Why? Baby boomers like me are getting ready to retire. Like, my retirement date and my Social Security date happen to be the same: 2008. It's convenient. *[Laughter]* Sixty-two years old in 2008. And by the way, if you're not 60, it's not as old as it sounds. *[Laughter]* And yet there are fewer people paying into the system necessary to support the promises that have been made to me and other baby boomers. Our benefits are growing quite dramatically.

In other words, previous Congresses have said: "Vote for me; I promise you to raise the benefits inherent in Social Security," without considering the fact that the number of workers paying into the system relative to the number of beneficiaries is shrinking. And the mathematics isn't going to work. And if we don't do something

quite rapidly, in my judgment, we're going to saddle a younger generation of Americans, a younger generation of workers, with unbelievably difficult choices: raising taxes significantly to pay for the promises, slashing benefits, or slashing other programs.

Now is the time for Members of the Congress in both political parties to bring their best ideas to the table as to how to solve the problems involved with entitlement programs. And yet it's really hard to do in Washington—I must confess. There's a lot of politics in the Nation's Capital—too much, as far as I'm concerned.

And one of my jobs, and I believe the jobs of the leadership of the Congress, is to say: "Let us look at this problem in a sober light; let us come and address the significant deficiencies inherent in two really important programs—Medicare and Social Security—and let us do it for the sake of a future generation of workers." Every year we wait, the problem becomes more acute.

And so I'm hopeful, generally hopeful, that I can get Democrats and Republicans in Congress to come to the table. I'll lay out, like I have done over the past years, how I think we all can solve the problem. By the way, I've got an idea how to do so without raising your taxes. And I expect—would hope other Members would come and say, "Well, here's how we think we can solve it," and hopefully, we can find some common ground to do our duty.

See, I like to remind people that the job for those of us in Washington is to confront problems now and not pass them on to other people, is to do the hard work necessary to say to America, "Look, we know your problems, and we're going to do our best to solve them," whether it be on the domestic front or on foreign policy.

I really am upbeat about the future of the country. I feel great about it. All you've got to do is come to Micron and feel good about life. I didn't see a lot of smiles on people's faces because they had those masks on—*[laughter]*—but I detected a

bounce in people's step. I detected the fact that I'm here in an exciting place for people to work. I appreciated when the plant manager and the CEO tells me that there—spends a lot of time educating people, adding added value so that people will be able to find those jobs that are necessary in the 21st century.

I'll tell you this, that if government and private sector doesn't continue to work together to make sure people have a skill set, the jobs will go somewhere else. And therefore, now is the time to educate our people. We live in a global economy, and, therefore, lawsuits matter. If you get sued all the time in America, it's going to make it harder for you to compete with people elsewhere. The amount of taxes you pay matters if you're going to be a competitive company and provide good jobs for people.

And the budget I've submitted to the United States Congress reflects all this. It says, we can balance the budget without raising your taxes. We're just going to have to be smart about how we spend your money. It also recognizes that the decisions made in the budget will affect how this company does business.

So you've got two things to pay attention to. One, will Micron remain competitive as a result of government policy. And two, will you have more money so you get to make the decisions? And my fundamental question to the American people is, who do you want making the decisions with your money? Do you want to make it yourself, or do you want the government making those decisions? The budget I've submitted says we can meet our priorities and let you make the decisions with the hard money—with the money you've earned through your hard work.

So I'm honored to be here. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and express my views on an important subject. And I ask for God's blessings on you all. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Steven R. Appleton, chairman of the board and chief executive officer and president, Patrick T. Otte, site director, and Stephen Silberstein, plant manager, Micron Technology, Inc.; and Mayor Douglas S. Waldron of Manassas, VA.

## Statement on the Creation of the Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa *February 6, 2007*

Today I am pleased to announce my decision to create a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa. I have directed the Secretary of Defense to stand up U.S. Africa Command by the end of fiscal year 2008.

This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development,

health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.

We will be consulting with African leaders to seek their thoughts on how Africa Command can respond to security challenges and opportunities in Africa. We will also work closely with our African partners to determine an appropriate location for the new command in Africa.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

## Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-18—Medical Countermeasures Against Weapons of Mass Destruction January 31, 2007

*Subject:* Medical Countermeasures against Weapons of Mass Destruction

### BACKGROUND

(1) Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)—chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents (CBRN)—in the possession of hostile states or terrorists represent one of the greatest security challenges facing the United States. An attack utilizing WMD potentially could cause mass casualties, compromise critical infrastructure, adversely affect our economy, and inflict social and psychological damage that could negatively affect the American way of life.

(2) Our *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (December 2002) and *Biodefense for the 21st Century* (April 2004) identify response and recovery as key components of our Nation's ability to manage the consequences of a WMD attack. Our primary goal is to prevent such an attack, but we must be fully prepared to respond to and recover from an attack if one occurs. Accordingly, we have made significant investments in our WMD consequence management capabilities in order to mitigate impacts to the public's health, the economy, and our critical infrastructure. The development and acquisition of effective medical countermeasures to mitigate illness, suffering, and death resulting from CBRN agents is central to our consequence management efforts.

(3) It is not presently feasible to develop and stockpile medical countermeasures against every possible threat. The development of vaccines and drugs to prevent or mitigate adverse health effects caused by exposure to biological agents, chemicals, or radiation is a time-consuming and costly process. This directive builds upon the vision and objectives articulated in our *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* and *Biodefense for the 21st Century* to ensure that our Nation's medical countermeasure research, development, and acquisition efforts:

(a) Target threats that have potential for catastrophic impact on our public health and are subject to medical mitigation;

(b) Yield a rapidly deployable and flexible capability to address both existing and evolving threats;

(c) Are part of an integrated WMD consequence management approach informed by current risk assessments of threats, vulnerabilities, and capabilities; and

(d) Include the development of effective, feasible, and pragmatic concepts of operation for responding to and recovering from an attack.

(4) In order to address the challenges presented by the diverse CBRN threat spectrum, optimize the investments necessary for medical countermeasures development, and ensure that our activities significantly enhance our domestic and international response and recovery capabilities, our decisions as to the research, development, and acquisition of medical countermeasures will be guided by three overarching principles:

(a) Our preparations will focus on countering current and anticipated threat agents that have the greatest potential for use by state and non-state actors to cause catastrophic public health consequences to the American people.

(b) We will invest in medical countermeasures and public health interventions that have the greatest potential to prevent, treat, and mitigate the consequences of WMD threats.

(c) We will link acquisition of medical countermeasures to the existence of effective deployment strategies that are supportable by the present and foreseeable operational and logistic capabilities of Federal, State, and local assets following a WMD attack or other event that presents a catastrophic public health impact.

(5) Mitigating illness and preventing death are the principal goals of our medical countermeasure efforts. As a class, biological agents offer the greatest opportunity for such medical mitigation, and this directive prioritizes our countermeasure efforts accordingly. This directive also provides for tailoring our Nation's ongoing research and acquisition efforts to continue to yield new countermeasures against CBRN agents and for incorporating such new discoveries into our domestic and international response and recovery planning efforts.

### *Biological Threats*

(6) The biological threat spectrum can be framed in four distinct categories, each of which presents unique challenges and significant opportunities for developing medical countermeasures:

(a) *Traditional Agents*: Traditional agents are naturally occurring microorganisms or toxin products with the potential to be disseminated to cause mass casualties. Examples of traditional agents include *Bacillus anthracis* (anthrax) and *Yersinia pestis* (plague).

(b) *Enhanced Agents*: Enhanced agents are traditional agents that have been modified or selected to enhance their ability to harm human populations or circumvent current countermeasures, such as a bacterium that has been modified to resist antibiotic treatment.

(c) *Emerging Agents*: Emerging agents are previously unrecognized pathogens that might be naturally occurring and present a serious risk to human populations, such as the virus responsible for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Tools to de-

tect and treat these agents might not exist or might not be widely available.

(d) *Advanced Agents*: Advanced agents are novel pathogens or other materials of biological nature that have been artificially engineered in the laboratory to bypass traditional countermeasures or produce a more severe or otherwise enhanced spectrum of disease.

### *Nuclear and Radiological Threats*

(7) Threats posed by fissile and other radiological material will persist. Our Nation must improve its biodosimetry capabilities and continue to develop medical countermeasures as appropriate to mitigate the health effects of radiation exposure from the following threats:

(a) *Improvised Nuclear Devices*: Improvised nuclear devices incorporate radioactive materials designed to result in the formation of a nuclear-yield reaction. Such devices can be wholly fabricated or can be created by modifying a nuclear weapon.

(b) *Radiological Dispersal Devices*: Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDDs) are devices, other than a nuclear explosive device, designed to disseminate radioactive material to cause destruction, damage, or injury.

(c) *Intentional Damage or Destruction of a Nuclear Power Plant*: Deliberate acts that cause damage to a reactor core and destruction of the containment facility of a nuclear reactor could contaminate a wide geographic area with radioactive material.

### *Chemical Threats*

(8) Existing and new types of chemicals present a range of threats. Development of targeted medical countermeasures might be warranted for materials in the following categories:

(a) *Toxic Industrial Materials and Chemicals*: Toxic Industrial Materials and Chemicals are toxic substances in solid, liquid, or gaseous form that are used or stored for use for military or commercial purposes.

(b) *Traditional Chemical Warfare Agents:* Traditional chemical warfare agents encompass the range of blood, blister, choking, and nerve agents historically developed for warfighter use.

(c) *Non-traditional Agents:* Non-traditional agents (NTAs) are novel chemical threat agents or toxicants requiring adapted countermeasures.

(9) Creating defenses against a finite number of known or anticipated agents is a sound approach for mitigating the most catastrophic CBRN threats; however, we also must simultaneously employ a broad-spectrum “flexible” approach to address other current and future threats. We must be capable of responding to a wide variety of potential challenges, including a novel biological agent that is highly communicable, associated with a high rate of morbidity or mortality, and without known countermeasure at the time of its discovery. Although significant technological, organizational, and procedural challenges will have to be overcome, such a balanced strategic approach would mitigate current and future CBRN threats and benefit public health.

## POLICY

(10) It is the policy of the United States to draw upon the considerable potential of the scientific community in the public and private sectors to address our medical countermeasure requirements relating to CBRN threats. Our Nation will use a two-tiered approach for development and acquisition of medical countermeasures, which will balance the immediate need to provide a capability to mitigate the most catastrophic of the current CBRN threats with long-term requirements to develop more flexible, broader spectrum countermeasures to address future threats. Our approach also will support regulatory decisions and will permit us to address the broadest range of current and future CBRN threats.

### *Tier I: Focused Development of Agent-Specific Medical Countermeasures*

(11) The first tier uses existing, proven approaches for developing medical countermeasures to address challenges posed by select current and anticipated threats, such as traditional CBRN agents. Recognizing that as threats change our countermeasures might become less effective, we will invest in an integrated and multi-layered defense. Department-level strategies and implementation plans will reflect the following three guiding principles and objectives:

(a) Evaluate and clearly define investments in near- and mid-term defenses: We will develop and use risk assessment processes that integrate data and threat assessments from the life science, consequence management, public health, law enforcement, and intelligence communities to guide investment priorities for current and anticipated threats. We will openly identify the high-risk threats that hold potential for catastrophic consequences to civilian populations and warrant development of targeted countermeasures.

(b) Target medical countermeasure strategies to satisfy practical operational requirements: We will model the potential impact of high-risk threats and develop scenario-based concepts of operations for medical consequence management and public health mitigation and treatment of a large-scale attack on our population. These concepts of operations will guide complementary decisions regarding medical countermeasure development and acquisition.

(c) Take advantage of opportunities to buttress U.S. defenses: We will coordinate interagency efforts to identify and evaluate vulnerabilities in our current arsenal of countermeasures to protect the U.S. population. Where appropriate, we will target the development of alternate or supplementary medical countermeasures to ensure that a multi-layered defense against the most significant high-impact CBRN threats is established.



*Tier II: Development of a Flexible Capability for New Medical Countermeasures*

(12) Second tier activities will emphasize the need to capitalize upon the development of emerging and future technologies that will enhance our ability to respond flexibly to anticipated, emerging, and future CBRN threats. Importantly, this end-state will foster innovations in medical technologies that will provide broad public health benefit. Department-level strategic and implementation plans will reflect the following guiding principles and objectives:

(a) Integrate fundamental discovery and medical development to realize novel medical countermeasure capabilities: We will target some investments to support the development of broad spectrum approaches to surveillance, diagnostics, prophylactics, and therapeutics that utilize platform technologies. This will require targeted, balanced, and sustained investments between fundamental research to discover new technologies and applied research for technology development to deliver new medical capabilities and countermeasures. Although by no means all-inclusive, our goals could include identification and use of early markers for exposure, greater understanding of host responses to target therapeutics, and development of integrated technologies for rapid production of new countermeasures.

(b) Establish a favorable environment for evaluating new approaches: We must ensure that our investments lead to products that expand the scientific data base, increase the efficiency with which safety and efficacy can be evaluated, and improve the rate at which products under Investigational New Drug or Investigational Device Exemption status progress through the regulatory or approval process. In addition, we must continue to use new tools to evaluate and utilize promising candidates in a time of crisis. Examples of such tools include the "Animal Rule" for testing the efficacy

of medical countermeasures against threat agents when human trials are not ethically feasible and the Emergency Use Authorization. Although by no means all-inclusive, our desired end-state could include the use of novel approaches for improved evaluation tools, streamlined clinical trials that meet safety and regulatory needs, and the development and use of novel approaches to manufacturing.

(c) Integrate the products of new and traditional approaches: We must address the challenges that will arise from integrating these new approaches with existing processes. We must incorporate the use of non-pharmacological interventions in our response planning. This integration will forge a flexible biodefense capability that aligns our national requirements for medical countermeasures with the concepts of operation that are used in conjunction with other strategies for mitigating the public health impacts of WMD attacks.

(13) In order to achieve our Tier I and II objectives, it will be necessary to facilitate the development of products and technologies that show promise but are not yet eligible for procurement through BioShield or the Strategic National Stockpile. We will support the advanced development of these products through targeted investments across a broad portfolio, with the understanding that some of these products may be deemed unsuitable for further investment as additional data becomes available, but the expectation that others will become candidates for procurement.

**POLICY ACTIONS**

(14) We will employ an integrated approach to WMD medical countermeasure development that draws upon the expertise of the public health, life science, defense, homeland security, intelligence, first responder, and law enforcement communities, as well as the private sector, to promote a seamless integration throughout the product development life cycle.



(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services (Secretary) will lead Federal Government efforts to research, develop, evaluate, and acquire public health emergency medical countermeasures to prevent or mitigate the health effects of CBRN threats facing the U.S. civilian population. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will lead the interagency process and strategic planning and will manage programs supporting medical countermeasures development and acquisition for domestic preparedness.

(i) *Stewardship*. Not later than 60 days after the date of this directive, the Secretary shall establish an interagency committee to provide advice in setting medical countermeasure requirements and coordinate HHS research, development, and procurement activities. The committee will include representatives designated by the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security and the heads of other appropriate executive departments and agencies. This committee will serve as the primary conduit for communication among entities involved in medical countermeasure development. The chair of the committee shall keep the joint Homeland Security Council/National Security Council Biodefense Policy Coordination Committee apprised of HHS efforts to integrate investment strategies and the Federal Government's progress in the development and acquisition of medical countermeasures.

(ii) *Strategic Planning*. Not later than 60 days after the date of this directive, the Secretary shall establish a dedicated strategic planning activity to integrate risk-based requirements across the threat spectrum and over the full range of research, early-, mid-, and late-stage development, acquisition, deployment, and life-cycle management of medical countermeasures.

The Secretary shall align all relevant HHS programs and functions to support this strategic planning.

(iii) *Execution*. The Secretary shall ensure that the efforts of component agencies, centers and institutes are coordinated and targeted to facilitate both development of near-term medical countermeasures and transformation of our capability to address future challenges. The Secretary shall also establish an advanced development portfolio that targets investments in promising countermeasures and technologies that are beyond early development, but not yet ready for acquisition consideration. In order to realize the full potential for broad partnership with academia and industry, the Secretary shall ensure that HHS coordinates strategies and implementation plans in a manner that conveys integrated priorities, activities, and objectives across the spectrum of relevant Federal participants.

(iv) *Engaging the Private Sector and Non-governmental Entities*. The Secretary shall develop and implement a strategy to engage the unique expertise and capabilities of the private sector in developing medical countermeasures to combat WMD, and shall provide clear and timely communication of HHS priorities and objectives. The Secretary shall consider creating an advisory committee composed of leading experts from academia and the biotech and pharmaceutical industries to provide insight on barriers to progress and help identify promising innovations and solutions to problems such as life-cycle management of medical countermeasures. The Secretary shall designate one office within HHS as the principal liaison for non-governmental entities who wish to bring new technologies, approaches, or potential medical countermeasures

to the attention of the Federal Government.

(b) The Secretary of Defense shall retain exclusive responsibility for research, development, acquisition, and deployment of medical countermeasures to prevent or mitigate the health effects of WMD threats and naturally occurring threats to the Armed Forces and shall continue to direct strategic planning for and oversight of programs to support medical countermeasures development and acquisition for our Armed Forces personnel. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Defense shall ensure that the efforts of the Department of Defense (DOD) and HHS are coordinated to promote synergy, minimize redundancy, and, to the extent feasible, use common requirements for medical countermeasure development. The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that DOD continues to draw upon its longstanding investment and experience in WMD medical countermeasure research, development, acquisition, and deployment to ensure protection of the Armed Forces, but also to accelerate and improve the overall national effort, consistent with Departmental authorities and responsibilities, and shall ensure that DOD continues to place a special focus on medical countermeasure development for CBRN threat agents because of the unique facilities, testing capabilities, and trained and experienced personnel within the Department. These efforts will constitute the basis for interagency partnership and combined investment to safeguard the American people.

(c) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall develop a strategic, integrated all-CBRN risk assessment that integrates the findings of the intelligence and law enforcement communities with input from the scientific, medical, and public health communities. Not later than June 1, 2008, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the President through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, which shall

summarize the key findings of this assessment, and shall update those findings when appropriate, but not less frequently than every 2 years. The Department of Homeland Security shall continue to issue Material Threat Determinations for those CBRN agents that pose a material threat to national security.

(d) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Defense, and Homeland Security shall ensure the availability of the infrastructure required to test and evaluate medical countermeasures for CBRN threat agents.

- (i) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Defense, and Veterans Affairs shall leverage their partnership to identify and accelerate research, development, testing, and evaluation programs for the acquisition of medical countermeasures for CBRN threats.
- (ii) The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall develop effective and streamlined processes, including mutually agreed-upon timelines, to assist the respective Secretaries in jointly recommending that the Special Reserve Fund (SRF) be used for the acquisition of specified security countermeasures.
- (iii) The Director of National Intelligence shall facilitate coordination across the intelligence community and, in coordination with the Attorney General, engage the law enforcement community to provide all relevant and appropriate WMD-related intelligence information to DHS for the development of the integrated CBRN risk assessment that is used in prioritizing the development, acquisition, and maintenance of medical countermeasures.

#### *GENERAL*

- (15) This directive:

(a) shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and the authorities of executive departments and agencies, or heads of such departments and agencies, vested by law, and subject to the availability of appropriations;

(b) shall not be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, and legislative proposals; and

(c) is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This directive was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 7.

## Remarks in a Discussion on the National Parks Centennial Initiative in Luray, Virginia February 7, 2007

*Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne.* Mr. President and First Lady Laura Bush, on behalf of all of the wonderful people of the National Park Service, it is such an honor to have the First Couple here at this wonderful national park. And, ladies and gentlemen, those of you that are here at the roundtable, we look forward to this opportunity to have some discussions with you.

But we'd be very honored, Mr. President, just to get initial thoughts from you. As I introduce our President, let me just put it in this perspective: Two years ago, my wife Patricia and I had the great opportunity to spend 3 days with the President and the First Lady in Idaho, to see this couple, what the outdoors mean to them, how they recreate, how they replenish their energy. I just saw their connection. We went fishing, hiking, biking. I went home tired. [Laughter] They went home with renewed energy. [Laughter]

*The First Lady.* Refreshed.

*Secretary Kempthorne.* And I think that you see that same sort of approach—their love of the outdoors—in this President's Centennial Challenge Initiative.

So, Mr. President, thank you for all you're doing.

*The President.* One of the reasons I asked Dirk to be the Secretary of the Interior is because I knew that he knew how important parks are to the country. And I want to thank you and Mary for taking on your big jobs. Our national parks are really one of America's great treasures. And the fundamental question is, are we going to be wise enough to treat them as such?

When I first came into office, I was worried about a significant backlog of maintenance projects. And I want to thank Dirk for seeing through the completion or near completion of about 6,600 such projects.

And in our discussions, we talked about how to make sure the 100th anniversary of our parks, coming in 2016, really celebrates the National Park System. And so today we're going to talk about an initiative called the National Parks Centennial Initiative. And I'm looking forward to hearing from our fellow citizens about ways to make sure this initiative fully honors the Park System.

It is one thing to talk; it's another thing to act. And I've just submitted a budget to the United States Congress. In it, we've got a billion dollars new money for operating expenses. And that really helps to honor those who work hard in our Park

System. I really love being with our park rangers. These are dedicated people who have got a pretty cool job, when you think about it. [Laughter] I just want to make sure that they got the money able to do their job.

As well, we look forward to having a public-private partnership. The Federal Government will match monies raised in the private sector up to a billion dollars. Our idea is to have \$3 billion new money available for this important initiative. And I know that Dirk is going to work hard to make sure that people have their say as to how this money is spent.

And one person who has got a lot of say about the parks, in our family, is Laura. She is very much involved in our parks. She loves the outdoors. She takes a hike with her old high school buddies once a year to herald the Park System. If my entourage wasn't so big, I'd be with her. [Laughter] But it's big—[laughter]—so I stay at home.

But I really do appreciate Dirk and Mary and you all joining us. I'm looking forward to our discussion.

[At this point, the First Lady made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Yes, thanks.

[Secretary Kempthorne made brief remarks, concluding as follows.]

*Secretary Kempthorne.* With that, I'm going to introduce the other members at the roundtable. Mary Bomar, who is our National Park Service Director. She is the first naturalized citizen in the United States to become Director of the National Park Service. In just a moment, Mary, I'll ask you for some comments.

Vin Cipolla, who is the president of the National Park Foundation. And he's been there for just a couple of years. And his leadership which he has brought to the foundation is just getting such high marks.

Derrick Crandall, who is the—and I look at this—the president and CEO of the

American Recreation Coalition. He's been called, interestingly enough, the recreation guru, by USA Today. He has been able to bring about organization of over 100 different entities that all believe in the outdoors and his advocacy of the outdoors.

Gene Sykes, who is the champion of the National Parks Conservation Association. Gene is a managing partner of Goldman Sachs. I know of your love of the outdoors, the backpacking that you do repeatedly, and your particular love of the parks in Alaska.

Fred Andreae, who is a trustee, Shenandoah National Park Trust. Fred is one of these examples that, as you look at the 90 years of the National Park Service, the reason they have been able to achieve greatness is because of the partnership with philanthropic communities, with friends of the parks. And, Fred, you have established that here at Shenandoah Park. We truly appreciate that.

Chas Cartwright, who is the superintendent of this magnificent park. And you just say the name "Shenandoah," and it's so historic, and it conjures up so many great things. I also noted that in the seventies, you were a river ranger on the Salmon River in Idaho. [Laughter]

*Chas Cartwright.* I remember it fondly.

*Secretary Kempthorne.* Yes, I knew that we would bond. [Laughter]

With that, let me turn to Mary Bomar for her comments.

[Director Bomar made brief remarks.]

*Secretary Kempthorne.* Thank you, Mary.

Mr. President, you mentioned—but I thought this would be of note, because really, it builds upon an initiative you started 5 years ago—and the President referenced the 6,600 projects that were a backlog of deferred maintenance. And here they are; these are the projects. And it just shows you what has already been underway during these last 5 years. I mean, this is significant. Now we can build upon this.

And this initiative which you have launched is not partisan, it is American. This is something that all of America can rally around, and I think this will be the reaffirmation of the parks being one of the greatest gifts to the American family.

Chas Cartwright, would you make a few comments, please, about the new perspective?

*[Mr. Cartwright made brief remarks, concluding as follows.]*

*Mr. Cartwright.* So I just wanted to say, it's great having everybody here today. And thanks to the employees of Shenandoah National Park for doing such a great job.

*The President.* Particularly the guy who cleared the road. *[Laughter]* Listen, we want to thank you for your contributions here. We'll hear from the other members here in a second. I do want to say some-

thing to follow up on this, and Congress needs to hear loud and clear how important this initiative is. And I fully hope the citizens groups who are concerned about the parks beat a hasty trail to the Congress and remind the Congress about what we have done and what we need to do as good stewards of the parks.

Anyway, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. in the Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Visitor Center at Shenandoah National Park. Secretary Kempthorne referred to Gene Sykes, director and chairman of the board of trustees, National Parks Conservation Association. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady and National Park Service Director Bomar.

## Remarks in Shenandoah National Park in Luray *February 7, 2007*

Laura and I and the Secretary really appreciate the good folks here at Shenandoah National Park for their hospitality and their hard work in making this beautiful part of our country accessible to citizens.

Today I had the honor of spending time talking to a group of concerned citizens about our National Park System. We've got about 80 million acres in our Park System. There's millions and millions of visits a year by our citizens to take advantage of and participate in the special beauty of our parks. All you got to do is look out here.

We spent time talking about our understanding that these parks are national treasures, that they are fantastic places in which to learn things and to get exercise, that our parks are a way to teach our fellow citizens about the history of the country. After all, Laura and I live in the White House, which is managed by the National

Park System. Our parks are important, and the people who work in the parks are important.

I asked Dirk Kempthorne to join my administration because I know that he is committed to the National Park System. He's a man from the West who has been able to enjoy the beauty of the parks in his own home State of Idaho.

One of the things we talked about is how we can make sure the commitment that we all think is necessary to our Park System is really honored in the appropriations requests that we make to Congress.

Our parks will have its 100th anniversary in 2016. And we felt like a vital goal for this country would be to prepare those parks, to guard the parks, to conserve the parks, to make the parks relevant to the American people in honor of the 100th anniversary. And so Dirk and I and others



in this administration have come up with what we call the National Parks Centennial Initiative. It's a bold program that calls upon the Government to do its part, as well as our citizens, to become invested in a campaign to really enhance the parks.

The funding starts with a billion-dollar request over the next 10 years that I've sent up to Congress. It's really to enhance the operating missions of our parks. I'm looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to get this initiative passed. I think if any Member of Congress were to ask a Park Service employee or those who know a lot about the parks, our fellow citizens who give of their time to make sure our parks are vital, they will find out that this request is a really important request.

Secondly, we're issuing what's called the President's Challenge, and that is to—we're asking the private sector to donate up to a billion dollars over the next 10 years to help this Park System be vital and strong, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our Park System. And as they—fellow citizens contribute, whether it be through foundation, corporation, or individually, the Federal Government will match those contributions. In other words, this is a collaboration of the Federal Government and individual programs.

I've asked Dirk, after today, to go around the country and to learn from our fellow citizens and learn from the park rangers and learn from the foundations that care about our Park System how best to spend this money, how best to honor the centennial that we'll be celebrating in 2016. In other words, we really do want individuals to feel that they own a piece of this strategy. After all, the parks do belong to the people.

We believe that we've got a fantastic chance to enhance habitats in the Park System. Laura, for example, really cares about the bird population of the country, and the Park System has a fantastic—as do I, by the way, not as much as you do. *[Laughter]*

But it's a chance to make sure our Park System enhances bird migratory patterns, for example.

We want to spend time making sure that we enhance educational opportunities in our Park System through new technologies. The iPod is hip amongst some of the younger citizens here in the country, people we want to encourage to come to the parks, so we need to make sure that we can combine that technology with educational opportunities, as somebody goes walking through our parks. We want to talk about—and we will continue to talk about expanding park accessibility through a junior ranger program that Laura has been very much involved with.

We're going to hire 3,000 seasonal park rangers, and that's going to make the job of the folks who, for example, run the Shenandoah Park much easier, and more importantly, make the customer service—in other words, the citizen service—richer for somebody who comes and uses our parks.

We want to upgrade our facilities and historic buildings. We're going to add and—ask people in their different Park Systems to become recruiters of volunteers so that more and more people get involved with this fantastic national resource of ours.

So, Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you very much for the hard work you've done leading up to the budget proposal we've made. I want to thank you in advance for the hard work you're going to do, to travel our country to get input from our fellow citizens. And I thank all the people in our country who care about our Park System for your direct involvement and your sincere concerns about making sure the Park System is modern and restored and rehabilitated.

I urge our fellow citizens to use the parks. I urge you to bring your families to the parks. I think you'll find that the people who work in our Park System are genuinely decent, kind people who want



you to enjoy the great beauty of the National Park System.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Visitor Center.

## *Remarks Following a Briefing at the Department of Homeland Security February 8, 2007*

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for the hospitality. I appreciate you inviting me over to hear what has been a substantive briefing by your different operating entities.

First of all, I'm very proud of the hard work of the men and women of the Homeland Security Department. This vital Department is actively engaged in the war on terror. We are still a nation at risk. Part of our strategy, of course, is to stay on the offense against terrorists who would do us harm. In other words, it is important to defeat them overseas so we never have to face them here. Nevertheless, we recognize that we've got to be fully prepared here at the homeland.

Part of that preparation requires a robust budget. And we submitted the budget; you testified on the budget. It's about an 8-percent increase in the budgets of the Homeland Security Department.

This Department works to secure our borders. And I appreciate very much, Ralph, you and your department's hard work of doing a difficult job, and that is doing what the American people expect, and that is to have secure borders. But we're making good progress. We're modernizing a border that needed to be modernized, whether it be through fencing or the different types of high-tech investments.

I firmly believe that in order for your Border Patrol agents to be able to do their job, we need a guest-worker program, so that people don't have to sneak in our country, and, therefore, we can really enable your good folks to be able to focus on terrorism, drug runners, gun runners.

I appreciate so very much the fact that we've got a wise strategy to effect the security of our ports, cargo. We've got a lot of good people working hard overseas. In other words, we're inspecting cargo before it leaves a port—a foreign port—so that the first line of defense is away from our shores or away from our ports. And we've got a lot of good people working hard to achieve that.

I appreciate so very much the effort of TSA. You've got a hard job. It's a job that really was a response to 9/11, and that is, we don't want people getting on our airplanes that will terrorize our fellow citizens again. And I fully recognize that there are thousands of hard-working people that are trying to do their best to, on the one hand, accommodate our fellow citizens as they travel; on the other hand, protect our country from attack.

We also talked about the need to have effective response if there is a emergency, if there is a catastrophe. And one agency that has been under fire and that needed to be reorganized was FEMA, and I asked David Paulison to do just that. We took the lessons learned from Katrina and applied it to this vital Agency. And this Agency was recently tested through the tornadoes there in central Florida. And I want to thank you, Dave, and your team for a quick response to help the poor citizens who were affected by that natural disaster.

The Department of Homeland Security was initially melded together by organizations that tended to be stovepiped, independently run organizations that we felt needed to be brought under the central

planning, the central organizing principle of a single department.

The organization of such a vast enterprise has been difficult and complicated. Nevertheless, there is noticeable and substantial and measurable progress. And I appreciate all the hard-working folks for putting together an institute, part of our Government, all aiming to protect the American people.

And so, Secretary, thank you for the invitation. I appreciate the hard work of the people of this Department. I oftentimes say to the American people that you can go

about your business; you can run your enterprises; you can send your children to school knowing full well that there are thousands of our fellow citizens who work every day, 24 hours, to help you by protecting this homeland. And this is where it all starts. And I thank you for your hard work.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to W. Ralph Basham, Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection.

## **Statement on Senate Confirmation of National Security Leaders *February 8, 2007***

I am pleased that the Senate, with strong bipartisan support, has confirmed several key members of my national security team. America will benefit from the leadership of Mike McConnell as Director of National Intelligence, General George Casey as Chief of Staff of the United States Army, and Admiral William Fallon as commander of U.S. Central Command.

Mike McConnell is an experienced and proven leader who will continue implementing historic reforms of America's intelligence community designed to ensure we

receive timely, accurate information on threats to our country. General Casey's extensive knowledge of our military challenges and capabilities will enable him to lead our soldiers in successful pursuit of their mission. Admiral Fallon is an innovative thinker who will skillfully guide our military commanders as we confront our enemies in the war on terror.

I look forward to working with each of these strong leaders in combating terrorism and protecting the American people.

## **The President's Radio Address *February 10, 2007***

Good morning. Last Saturday, I addressed the annual retreat of Democrats from the House of Representatives. I thanked the Members of the new majority for their service in Congress, and we discussed our responsibility to work together on a wide range of issues, from fighting the global war on terror to making health

care more affordable to balancing the Federal budget.

One area with great potential for bipartisan cooperation is energy policy. The need for action is clear. Our Nation's reliance on oil leaves us vulnerable to hostile regimes and terrorists, who could damage our economy by disrupting the global oil supply. A spike in oil prices anywhere in the

world could lead to higher prices at gas pumps here in America. And burning oil and gasoline creates air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Republicans and Democrats both recognize these problems. We agree on the solution: We need to diversify our energy supply and make America less dependent on foreign oil. The best way to do that is by developing new energy technologies here at home. So the Federal Government has provided more than \$10 billion over 5 years for research into alternative sources of energy. Our scientists and engineers have made great progress, and our Nation is now on the threshold of dramatic breakthroughs in clean energy technology.

These advances in energy technology will help us meet a great new national goal: to reduce America's gasoline usage by 20 percent in the next 10 years. I call this goal "Twenty in Ten," and appreciate the support that many Democrats and Republicans have shown for it.

I know there are different views about the best way to meet this goal. Some say we should increase the supply of alternative fuels. Others say we should decrease demand for gasoline. I believe we need to do both. So on the supply side, I proposed a new mandatory fuels standard that will require the use of 35 billion gallons of renewable and other alternative fuels by 2017. That is nearly a fivefold increase over the current target. On the demand side, I proposed to reform fuel economy standards to make cars more energy efficient, just as my administration did for light trucks.

This past week, we took a key step toward my "Twenty in Ten" goal when I sent Congress my budget for the next fiscal year. The budget proposes \$2.7 billion to expand alternative energy research, a 53-percent increase over the 2006 funding level. These funds will support further research into cellulosic ethanol, which can be produced from sources like wood chips and grasses. These funds will also support

promising technologies beyond ethanol, such as new forms of biodiesel, lithium ion batteries, and hydrogen fuel cells.

I look forward to working with Congress to pass this budget and to meet my "Twenty in Ten" goal. I'm optimistic because the technology we need to achieve this goal is advancing every day. A few weeks ago, I traveled to a DuPont research facility in Delaware, where scientists told me that they are close to making the use of cellulosic ethanol a reality. Imagine what technologies like this would mean for your daily life. You could fill up your gas tank with fuel that comes mostly from an American prairie or farm instead of an oil well overseas. You could drive to work in a car that runs on electricity instead of gasoline, or on hydrogen fuel cells that emit no pollution. You would see the rise of dynamic new businesses that create jobs for American workers and sell alternative energy products around the world.

This is an ambitious vision, but with the talent and enterprise of our people, it can be achieved. Every Member of Congress who cares about strengthening our economy, protecting our national security, and confronting climate change should support the energy initiatives I have set out. By working together to pass energy legislation soon, we can help solve one of the great challenges facing our generation, and we can leave behind a cleaner and better world for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 9, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Message to the Congress Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China

February 11, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China:

- Twenty Honeywell model QA 750 accelerometers to be incorporated into railway geometry measurement systems for China's Ministry of Railways.
- Equipment and technology associated with the production and testing of composite components for Boeing commercial aircraft.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
February 11, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 12.

## Remarks at a Dinner in Honor of the Ford's Theatre Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration

February 11, 2007

Good evening, and welcome. Laura and I are delighted to have you here as we celebrate the 198th birthday of Abraham Lincoln. And we're really glad you're here.

We thank Ford's Theatre for helping us honor this great American President. We thank David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin for scholarship that has given us a deeper appreciation of Lincoln's life and purpose. We welcome all the Lincoln scholars who are here.

We are here tonight to remember the life, the incredible life and the great sacrifice of the man who saved our Union. We remember Abraham Lincoln's eloquence, his wisdom, his unshakeable faith in the enduring truth that we're all created equal. He worked to renew the promise of America's founding and to build a more perfect union for all Americans.

As we approach the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth, his words and principles continue to guide our Nation. We look to his example for courage and to find the better angels of our nature. His legacy is the birthright of all Americans, and tonight we honor those who helped pass the story of his life from generation to generation.

In this story of this good and decent man, we really find the best of America. And so tonight I would like to offer a toast to our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, and to our blessed country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin, members, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Advisory Committee. The transcript

was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 12.

## **Remarks Following a Meeting With President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania *February 12, 2007***

*President Bush.* It's my honor to welcome a personal friend and a friend of freedom and peace to the Oval Office. Mr. President, I respect you, I respect your country. Lithuania has been a country whose history has been one of great tragedy. You yourself have lived through that tragedy. And it's so refreshing for a person like me to talk to somebody and to strategize with somebody who knows the great blessings of living in a free society.

The example of your country is an important example for the world, and that is that freedom is universal, that those of us who have the benefits of living in a free society must prevent a country such as yours from ever again being subjected to the tyranny of a few. You know full well the suffering that your relatives went through.

And therefore, I find it—I'm not surprised that in a struggling democracy like Afghanistan, your country has stood up bravely to support the Karzai Government and the people of Afghanistan. And I thank you. And I thank the citizens of your country for your willingness to contribute to peace by helping a young democracy survive. I thank you very much for your support for the people of Iraq. It's hard work in Iraq. But nevertheless, it is inspiring to know that Lithuania has said, "We want to help the people realize the blessings of a free society."

We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about energy independence. I was very pleased by the strategy that you and others in the Baltics are working to achieve, to achieve energy independence. We share the same objectives here in America, and

I look forward to working with you, as new technologies become available, to make us all less dependent on oil and natural gas.

Secondly, the President was quite adamant about visa waiver. I can understand your strong position, Mr. President. I thank you very much for your clarity of thought. There should be no doubt that here in the Oval Office that President Adamkus represented the will of the majority of Lithuanian people, when discussed visa waiver and his desire for the people of his country to be treated like most of the other people in the European Union. I assured him we'll work with Congress to get a fair piece of legislation forward as quickly as possible so we can deal with this issue once and for all.

All in all, I'm so grateful that you and the First Lady came by to say hello here in the Oval Office. And I know Laura was very much looking forward to entertaining your good wife over there at the Residence. I thought the business session here went very well in a very constructive way. And again, I welcome you back to the Oval Office.

*President Adamkus.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. I believe the visit is just reconfirmation of the Lithuanian people for what we stand for. And I believe there is no doubt that our commitments—international commitments, joining United States, actually based on the principles, principles which were the guiding light for us during the very difficult times of the Soviet occupation, almost for a half of the century.

But at the same time, like I indicated to you, knowing what it means to be free and knowing, I mean, that this freedom still is not available in some part of the world, this is why we are with our, I would say, meager resources, but standing by you in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Kosovo. And definitely, we are going to stand shoulder with shoulder just to make sure that the remaining people who cannot even enjoy today those kind of privileges—free speech, respect for human rights—would be given to them.

So I want to just thank you once again, I mean, for the support we are receiving. We are going to work together, especially in developing situations like we just mentioned during our conversations here, about

the latest statements in Munich. I believe this is not going to sway away the free people from the—I mean, its ideals, the direction we are going together, and I think that in the final outcome will be—this is what we dream about; this is for what the American people stand for, for centuries, and the day is coming.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir.

*President Adamkus.* Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Appreciate you being here. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

## Remarks at a Celebration of African American History Month February 12, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. I'm so pleased that you all have joined us for the 81st celebration of African American History Month. During this special month, we reflect on the many ways African Americans have shaped our Nation's history, and we honor outstanding achievements by our fellow citizens.

One of those achievements took place two Sundays ago in Miami, Florida—took place at a football game. [*Laughter*] It might just have been a game for some, but for a lot of folks, it was a moment, an historic moment. And we congratulate Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith for their strong leadership and their example they have set. That's an achievement.

I'm also proud to be here with another football coach who deserves a lot of credit, Sylvester Croom, who is the head football coach from Mississippi State University. His achievement is the first African American coach in the Southeastern football league—

Southeastern Conference. He was picked because he's a strong leader and a fine man. And I thank you for blazing trails.

I'm proud to be here with Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State. So last night on this very stage, we celebrated Abraham Lincoln, and we welcomed Doris Kearns Goodwin, who wrote a book called "The Team of Rivals." Abraham Lincoln surrounded himself with fine Cabinet officers, all of whom wanted one thing—his job. [*Laughter*] Not so fast, Madam Secretary. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate so very much Members of the Congress for joining us: First, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Charlie Rangel. That's an achievement. [*Laughter*] I'm looking forward to working with this achievement to get some things—[*laughter*—to get some things done. He's a good man and a smart guy. Senator Norm Coleman from Minnesota—Senator, thank you for coming.



From the U.S. Court of Appeals, DC Circuit, one of the most important benches in America, Justice Janice Rogers Brown. Good to see you, Janice; thank you. And Dewey—good move, Dewey. Dewey tried to lead the standing ovation. That was—[laughter]—a loyal husband.

I appreciate Dr. Dorothy Height. Thank you for coming, Dr. Height. Roslyn Brock, who is the vice chairman of the board of directors of the NAACP. Roslyn, it's great to see you. Thanks for coming. Proud you're here. Thanks for taking time.

I am so pleased that the Jackson High School Black History Tour Group from Jackson, Michigan, is with us, and Director Shirley Pitts. Thanks for coming. I'm looking forward to hearing you. Proud you're here.

The theme of this year's African American History Month is "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas." For hundreds of years, the people of Africa were brought and—were bought and sold by colonial merchants and transported as cargo to this hemisphere. The journey endured by millions of Africans is one of the largest migrations of history and one of the great crimes of history. For the men, women, and children who survived this journey, life in the New World was a life in chains. They toiled for the bread that others would eat. They were often denied even the comfort of suffering together. And their families were broken up when a spouse or child was sold.

Yet despite these assaults on culture and humanity, the children of Africa persevered. They kept faith that the freedom that God intended for all would one day be theirs. And across this hemisphere, in different places and at different times, that faith would be redeemed.

In America, their first real hope of freedom came on New Year's Day in 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in a room right upstairs. The heroes of the civil rights movement continued the struggle for free-

dom, and by their courage, they changed laws and opened up the promise for millions of our citizens.

Today, African Americans are seizing opportunities gained at great price, and they're making their mark in this wonderful country in countless ways. We see their character and achievement in the neighborhoods across our Nation, and we see it right here in this room, right here in the White House.

One of those faces is familiar to us: Wesley Autrey. You know, you might remember Wesley from the State of the Union Address. I remember Wesley was, like, I think, sending a hand signal to you, Mr. Chairman. So was I, by the way. [Laughter] I love you, man. [Laughter] Yes, not yet, Wesley. I've got to tell the story one more time. [Laughter]

So in case you haven't heard the story, he was waiting at a Harlem subway station. He saw the guy fall into the path of a train. He had seconds to act. He jumped onto the track, and he pulled the man into a space between the rails, and he held him as a train went right over them. And so they said, "You're a hero." He said, "No." Yet Wesley—I told him—I said, "You're a hero." He told me, "No." I said, "Wesley, I disagree, as do millions of our fellow citizens." [Laughter]

And so we're proud you're here again. We thank you for your courage. We thank you for your commitment to a life of a stranger. What a wonderful example you've set for young and old, black, white, anybody in the United States of America. Welcome back here. Hey, buddy. Yes, sir. Thank you, man.

I want to tell you the story about Bonnie St. John. She grew up in California, which is—most places in California are not very close to the snow. [Laughter] But she wanted to be a skier. The problem was, at age 5, she lost one of her legs, but she never lost her dream. She said she fell down a lot while learning to ski, but she also

learned that the key to success was how fast she got up after the fall.

And so she went to Harvard, and she became a Rhodes scholar. And then she won medals in downhill skiing in the Paralympics. She owns her own small business. She's writing an inspirational book to encourage others. She is the kind of person that you really want to be around and the kind of person that shows that individual courage matters in life. And so, Bonnie, thanks for coming. God bless.

So at one time in my life, I was a baseball person. *[Laughter]* Nearly all my life I was a baseball fan. And so I remember a pitcher named Jim "Mudcat" Grant. Some of you baby boomers might remember Mudcat. He pitched for the Minnesota Twins. They went to the 1965 World Series, and he won 25 games. He founded what's called the Black Aces. This is an organization made up of African American pitchers who have won at least 20 games in a single season.

I view the organization as a way not only to herald success but to inspire others. See, it wasn't all that often—let me just say this: At certain points in our past, we didn't have a lot of African American pitchers. And I want to thank you, Mudcat, for showing courage, character, and perseverance. And also, thank you for setting an example.

With you today happens to be a—I like to call him a former Texas Ranger; Chicago Cubs fans remember him as a Chicago Cub. Any baseball fan knows he's a Hall of Famer—and that's Fergie Jenkins, a member of the Black Aces, as well as Mike Norris, former pitcher for the—*[applause]*.

Sir—Mudcat, don't sit down yet—sit up yet. Mudcat Grant, everybody.

There happens to be other Black Aces in baseball, one of whom joined us—Dontrelle Willis of the Florida team. Dontrelle can—he can throw. *[Laughter]* So I thought I was looking at a little, tiny left-hander when I first heard Dontrelle Willis was going to be here. No. You might

stand up and show everybody that you're not a little, tiny left-hander. Dontrelle, welcome.

Thank you, Mudcat, for bringing your friends. And thank you for bringing class to the baseball diamond.

We've got two folks here who know how to reach for the stars, and that would be Robert Curbeam and Joan Higginbotham. And I really mean that literally. See, these are astronauts who went into space with the crew of the space shuttle in early December. Their job was not much of a job, just to rewire the International Space Station. *[Laughter]* It sounds complex—*[laughter]*—and it is. It was one of the most challenging missions in NASA's history.

They did their job and, thankfully, came home. And in doing so, I suspect they've earned more frequent flier miles than anybody here. *[Laughter]* I really appreciate the fact that they are furthering humanity's path of discovery, and I appreciate the fact that you say loud and clear: Our country is unlimited in its opportunities for people from all walks of life. We're really proud you're here. Thanks for coming.

Tyrone Flowers is with us. His is an interesting story, one that speaks to a good heart, I suspect, a gracious and glorious God as well. You see, he was a basketball star, and he was headed for college and perhaps a scholarship. He was living the dream of a lot of folks. And he got shot, and he's paralyzed.

The interesting thing about this good man is, a lot of people would have either quit or sought revenge. But not him. He took a different path and found a different calling. He went to a community college. He earned a bachelor's degree. And then he became a lawyer—nothing wrong with that. *[Laughter]* Fourteen years ago, he and his wife founded a group called Higher M-Pact. Higher M-Pact has this goal: to help today's high-risk urban youth become tomorrow's leaders. That is a noble goal. It is a necessary goal, and it's a goal that

I suspect is more likely to be achieved because this good man has decided to turn a horrific act into an act of love. And we welcome you and thank you.

So as you can see, this is a little different kind of speech. It's one where all I had to do was just simply talk about the accomplishments and lives of some of our citizens, and their stories speak a lot louder and a lot clearer than I could have. This is a—I always tell people, the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. The strength of the African American community has always lied in the hearts and souls of our citizens, people who refuse to allow adversity to diminish the spirit and extinguish the drive to make America live up to its promise.

And that's what we're honoring today, ordinary citizens who do unbelievably fine things. I can't think of any better way to celebrate African American History Month. And our call and our need is to continue to remember, promise belongs to everybody. And our call for this country is never

to rest until equality is real, opportunity is universal, and every citizen can realize his or her dreams in the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

And now it's my honor to introduce the Jackson High School Black History Tour Group. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony K. Dungy, head coach, National Football League Indianapolis Colts; Lovie Smith, head coach, National Football League Chicago Bears; Doris Kearns Goodwin, member, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Advisory Committee; Dewey Parker, husband of Judge Janice Rogers Brown; civil rights leader Dorothy I. Height; Mike Norris, former pitcher, Major League Baseball Oakland Athletics; and Renee Flowers, wife of Tyrone J. Flowers, founder, Higher M-Pact. The National African American History Month proclamation of January 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Voluntarism *February 13, 2007*

I just had a fascinating discussion with members of my administration and some of our citizens who deeply care about the future of the country. Laura and I want to thank you all for joining us. We had two people who actually study the importance of volunteerism to the—for the health of the country.

A couple points I'd like to make: One, we are a nation of people who take time out of their lives on a regular basis to help a fellow citizen realize the full potential of America. We've got a lot of people volunteering in the country, and one of my calls is for people to do more of it. And there's plenty of opportunities to find out where you can volunteer. You can go, for

example, on the [usafreedomcorps.gov](http://usafreedomcorps.gov) web page, and you can find programs close to you that will give you an opportunity to follow your heart.

Secondly, I fully recognize there's an important role for government in our society, but I also want our fellow citizens to know, there's a really important role for you. If you're concerned about the future of America, you can volunteer to help make our future brighter. You can mentor a child, you can teach somebody to read, you can go visit the elderly, you can feed the hungry, you can find shelter for the homeless, and you'll make a significant contribution to America. And as you do so, you'll find

you make a significant contribution to your own self-worth and your own soul.

We're heralding volunteerism here today. It is a really important aspect of American society. I'm proud of our fellow citizens who have answered the call. I encourage you to continue on. And for those of you who want to enrich your own life, you can find a way to volunteer and help somebody else, and it will do just that.

So thank you all for joining us. Appreciate your good work. God bless those of you who are volunteering. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks Following a Tour of the YMCA Anthony Bowen *February 13, 2007*

Thanks. The reason I'm here is that we're heralding volunteerism in America. No better place to come where volunteers are doing their work. One of the most important things we can do in our society is to mentor, is to serve as examples and to share knowledge with people so that everybody has a chance to realize the potential of the country. We've got mentors here, people who could be doing something other than being here today, but have chosen to mentor a child.

And so I personally want to thank you very much. And I encourage people to volunteer. One of the great things about our country is that there are millions of people around our Nation who take it upon themselves to help improve the community in which they live, by lending their talents and their time to mentor a child or teach

somebody to read or feed the hungry or provide shelter for the homeless.

My job as the President is to rally the armies of compassion and to herald those examples where people are selflessly helping out others, such as here at this YMCA, right here in Washington, DC, and to call upon our fellow citizens to recognize that by helping somebody else, you really help yourself in many ways. You strengthen your spirit, and you strengthen your soul.

So thank you all for having me. I'm thrilled to be here with the mentors and the mentorees. Volunteerism is an—has been an integral part of our country, and is today, and it needs to be in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m.

### Statement on the Death of Charlie Norwood *February 13, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Congressman Charlie Norwood. Charlie was a good friend and a strong, spirited legislator who always stuck to his principles, remembering that his duty was to represent the best interests of the citi-

zens of his district. Throughout his seven terms in Congress, he was a strong advocate for patients' rights, high-quality education, and protecting the homeland. As a lawmaker, he had the ability to deliver on

his promises. I enjoyed working with him and valued our close friendship.

After becoming ill, Charlie demonstrated his extraordinary strength by continuing to

serve our Nation with the same dedication. He was a good man and a true patriot.

Laura and I send our prayers to Charlie's wife Gloria and his children and grandchildren.

## Statement on the Six-Party Talks *February 13, 2007*

I am pleased with the agreements reached today at the six-party talks in Beijing. These talks represent the best opportunity to use diplomacy to address North Korea's nuclear programs. They reflect the common commitment of the participants to a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons.

In September 2005, our nations agreed on a joint statement that charted the way forward toward achieving a nuclear-weapons-free peninsula. Today's announcement represents the first step toward implementing that agreement.

Under the agreements reached today, North Korea has committed to take several specific actions within the next 60 days. Among other things, North Korea has agreed to shut down and seal all operations

at the primary nuclear facilities it has used to produce weapons-grade plutonium, and has agreed to allow international inspectors to verify and monitor this process. In addition to those immediate actions, North Korea has also committed to disclose all its nuclear programs and disable its existing nuclear facilities, as an initial step toward abandoning all of those programs and facilities under international supervision.

The other parties have agreed to cooperate in economic, humanitarian, and energy assistance to North Korea. Such assistance will be provided as the North carries out its commitments to disable its nuclear facilities.

I commend Secretary Rice, Ambassador Hill, and our negotiating team in Beijing for their hard work.

## The President's News Conference *February 14, 2007*

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming in on an icy day. I have just finished a conversation with General David Petraeus. He gave me his first briefing from Iraq. He talked about the Baghdad security plan. It's the plan that I described to the Nation last January, and it's a plan that's beginning to take shape. General Petraeus and General Odierno talked about how the fact that the Iraqi Government is following through on its commitment to deploy three additional

army brigades, Iraqi Army brigades in the capital. We talked about where those troops are being deployed, the position of U.S. troops with them, as well as the "embeds" with the Iraqi troops. And we talked about the plan.

He also talked about the new Iraqi commander. The commander who Prime Minister Maliki picked to operate the Baghdad security plan is in place. They're setting up a headquarters, and they're in the process of being in a position to be able to

coordinate all forces. In other words, there's still some work to be done there to get the command and control center up and running in Baghdad.

We talked about the fact that our coalition troops that are heading into Baghdad will be arriving on time. In other words, I'm paying attention to the schedule of troop deployments to make sure that they're there, so that General Petraeus will have the troops to do the job—the number of troops to do the job that we've asked him to do.

We talked about the coordination between Iraqi and coalition forces. And I would characterize their assessment as—the coordination is good. In other words, there's good conversation, constant conversation between the commanders of our troops and their troops, and that's a positive development.

The operation to secure Baghdad is going to take time, and there will be violence. As we saw on our TV screens, the terrorists will send car bombs into crowded markets. In other words, these are people that will kill innocent men, women, and children to achieve their objective, which is to discourage the Iraqi people, to foment sectarian violence, and to frankly discourage us from helping this Government do its job.

Yesterday there was a suicide bomber. In other words, there's an active strategy to undermine the Maliki Government and its Baghdad security plan. And our generals understand that; they know that they're all aimed at frankly causing people here in America to say it's not worth it. And I can understand why people are concerned when they turn on the TV screens and see this violence. It's disturbing to people, and it's disturbing to the Iraqi people. But it reminds me of how important it is for us to help them succeed. If you think the violence is bad now, imagine what it would look like if we don't help them secure the city—the capital city of Baghdad.

I fully recognize we're not going to be able to stop all suicide bombers; I know

that. But we can help secure that capital, help the Iraqis secure that capital so that people have a sense of normalcy, in other words, that they're able to get a better sense that this Government of theirs will provide security. People want to live in peace; they want to grow up in a peaceful environment. And the decision I made is going to help the Iraqi Government do that.

When General Petraeus's nomination was considered 3 weeks ago, the United States Senate voted unanimously to confirm him, and I appreciated that vote by the Senators. And now Members of the House of Representatives are debating a resolution that would express disapproval of the plan that General Petraeus is carrying out. You know, in recent months, I've discussed our strategy in Iraq with Members of Congress from both political parties. Many have told me that they're dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq. I told them I was dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq. And that's why I ordered a comprehensive review of our strategy.

I've listened to a lot of voices; people in my administration heard a lot of voices. We weighed every option, and I concluded that to step back from the fight in Baghdad would have disastrous consequences for people in America. That's the conclusion I came to; it's the conclusion members of my staff came to; it's the conclusion that a lot in the military came to.

And the reason why I say "disastrous consequences," the Iraqi Government could collapse; chaos would spread; there would be a vacuum; into the vacuum would flow more extremists, more radicals, people who have stated intent to hurt our people. I believe that success in Baghdad will have success in helping us secure the homeland.

What's different about this conflict than some others is that if we fail there, the enemy will follow us here. I firmly believe that. And that's one of the main reasons why I made the decision I made. And so



we will help this Iraqi Government succeed.

And the first step for success is to do something about the sectarian violence in Baghdad so they can have breathing space in order to do the political work necessary to assure the different factions in Baghdad—factions that are recovering from years of tyranny—that there is a hopeful future for them and their families. I would call that political breathing space. And by providing this political breathing space—in other words, giving the Maliki Government a chance to reconcile and do the work necessary to achieve reconciliation—it'll hasten the day in which we can change our force posture in Iraq.

A successful strategy obviously—a successful security strategy in Baghdad requires more than just military action. I mean, people have to see tangible results in their lives. I mean, they have to see something better. They not only have to feel secure where they live, but they've got to see positive things taking place.

The other day, the Iraqi Government passed a \$41 billion budget, 10 billion of which is for reconstruction and capital investment. There's a lot of talk in Washington about benchmarks. I agree, "benchmarks" meaning that the Iraqi Government said they're going to do this, for example, have an oil law as a benchmark. But one of the benchmarks they laid out, besides committing troops to the Iraqi security plan, was that they'll pass a budget in which there's \$10 billion of their own money available for reconstruction and help. And they met the benchmark, and now, obviously, it's important they spend the money wisely.

They're in the process of finalizing a law that will allow for the sharing of all revenues among Iraq's peoples. In my talks with Members of Congress, some have agreed with what I'm doing; many who didn't—they all, though, believe it's important for the Iraqi Government to set benchmarks and achieve those benchmarks. And

one benchmark we've all discussed was, making it clear to the Iraqi people that they have a stake in the future of their country by having a stake in the oil revenues. And so the Government is in the process of getting an oil revenue law that will help unify the country.

The Iraqi Government is making progress on reforms that will allow more of its citizens to reenter political life. Obviously, I'm paying close attention to whether or not the Government is meeting these benchmarks, and will continue to remind Prime Minister Maliki that he must do so.

We've given our civilians and commanders greater flexibility to fund our economic assistance money. Part of the strategy in Baghdad is to clear and then to hold and then to build. We've been pretty good about clearing in the past; we haven't been good about holding, "we" being the Iraqis and coalition forces. So we spent time today talking to General Petraeus about the need—his need and his understanding of the need to hold neighborhoods so that the people themselves in the capital city feel more secure.

But also part of the strategy is to make sure that we build. And so we're giving our commanders flexibility with reconstruction money that they have at their disposal. We're also sending more PRTs, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, into Iraq. We're trying to speed up their arrival into Iraq so that the Iraqi people see tangible benefits from the Government that they elected under one of the most progressive Constitutions in the Middle East.

Later this week, the House of Representatives will vote on a resolution that opposes our new plan in Iraq, before it has a chance to work. People are prejudging the outcome of this. They have every right to express their opinion, and it is a nonbinding resolution. Soon Congress is going to be able to vote on a piece of legislation that is binding, a bill providing emergency funding for our troops. Our troops are counting on their elected leaders in Washington,

DC, to provide them with the support they need to do their mission. We have a responsibility, all of us here in Washington, to make sure that our men and women in uniform have the resources and the flexibility they need to prevail.

Before I'm going to take some questions, I'd like to comment about one other diplomatic development, and that took place in the Far East. At the six-party talks in Beijing, North Korea agreed to specific actions that will bring us closer to a Korea Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons. Specifically, North Korea agreed that within 60 days, it will shut down and seal all operations at the primary nuclear facilities it has used to produce weapons-grade plutonium. It has agreed to allow international inspectors to verify and monitor this progress. It is committed to disclosing all of its nuclear programs as an initial step toward abandoning these programs.

In exchange, five other parties at the table—that would be China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States—have got commitments. We will meet those commitments as this agreement is honored. Those commitments include economic, humanitarian, and energy assistance to the people of North Korea.

This is a unique deal. First of all, unlike any other agreement, it brings together all of North Korea's neighbors in the region as well as the United States. The agreement is backed by a United Nations Security Council resolution. That resolution came about—the sanctions came about as a result of the resolution because of a unanimous vote on the Security Council.

This is good progress. It is a good first step. There's a lot of work to be done to make sure that the commitments made in this agreement become a reality, but I believe it's an important step in the right direction.

And with that, I'll be glad to take your questions, starting with you, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Mr. President, on Russia, is the Vladimir Putin who said, "The United States is undermining global security and provoking a new arms race," the same Vladimir Putin whose soul you looked into and found to be trustworthy? Has he changed? Are U.S.-Russian relations deteriorating?

*The President.* I think the person who I was referring to in 2001 is the same strong-willed person. He is a person with whom I have had agreements and disagreements throughout the course of my Presidency and his. We've disagreed on the utility of NATO. I've tried to convince Vladimir that NATO is positive; it's a positive influence; that democracies on your border are good things to have. Democracies tend not to fight each other. And I firmly believe NATO is a stabilizing influence for the good, and that helps Russia. Evidently, he disagrees with that assessment; part of his speech was expressing concerns about NATO.

There's a lot we can work together on, and that's what's important for American people to understand. We know that we've got common goals that make sense for both our peoples. Two such goals are Iran, convincing the Iranians to get rid of its nuclear weapons. And Russia's leadership on this issue is very important to getting a Chapter VII resolution out of the United Nations. And by the way, they were constructive, in terms of the resolution I just described about North Korea. In other words, where we have common interests and we work together on those common interests, we can accomplish important things for the security of our own people as well as the security of the world.

And secondly, Russia and the United States work very closely on proliferation concerns. We're both concerned about the proliferation of technologies that could end up hurting our people and other people in the world.

And so there's—it's a complicated relationship. It's a relationship in which there are disagreements, but there's also a relationship in which we can find common ground to solve problems. And that's the spirit I'll continue to work with Vladimir Putin on.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

### *Iran/War in Iraq*

Q. Thank you, sir. General Pace says that these bombs found in Iraq do not by themselves implicate Iran. What makes you so certain that the highest levels of Tehran's Government is responsible?

*The President.* Yes—

Q. And how can you retaliate against Iran without risking a war?

*The President.* What we do know is that the Qods Force was instrumental in providing these deadly IEDs to networks inside of Iraq; we know that. And we also know that the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government; that's a known. What we don't know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Qods Force to do what they did.

But here's my point: Either they knew or didn't know, and what matters is, is that they're there. What's worse: that the Government knew or that the Government didn't know? But the point I made in my initial speech in the White House about Iraq was, is that we know they're there, and we're going to protect our troops. When we find the networks that are enabling these weapons to end up in Iraq, we will deal with them. If we find agents who are moving these devices into Iraq, we will deal with them. I have put out the command to our troops—I mean, to the people who are commanders that we'll protect the people—the soldiers of the United States and innocent people in Iraq and will continue doing so.

Now, let me step back on Iran itself. We have a comprehensive strategy to deal

with Iraq [Iran].\* There's a variety of issues that we have with Iraq [Iran].\* One, of course, is influence inside of Iraq. Another is whether or not they end up with a nuclear weapon. And I believe an Iran with a nuclear weapon would be very dangerous for world peace, and have worked with other nations of like mind. And it turns out, there's a lot of countries in the world that agree with that assessment. After all, we did get a Chapter VII resolution out of the United Nations that included EU-3 as well as Russia and China. That's a positive development.

The message to the Iranian people is, is that your leaders are making decisions that are isolating you in the world, thereby denying you a brighter future. And I believe Iran is a unbelievably vital nation. It's got a great history; it's got wonderful traditions; it's got very capable, smart people. There is—I believe there's also a desire to not be isolated from the world. And our policies are all aimed at convincing the Iranian people there's a better way forward, and I hope their Government hears that message.

Yes, anyway, that's a long answer to a short question, and now you're trying to get to me to another one, aren't you? Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Excuse me, David—David.

Q. Thank you, sir. I'd like to follow on Iran. Critics say that you are using the same quality of intelligence about Iran that you used to make the case for war in Iraq, specifically about WMD that turned out to be wrong, and that you are doing that to make a case for war against Iran. Is that the case?

*The President.* I can say with certainty that the Qods Force, a part of the Iranian Government, has provided these sophisticated IEDs that have harmed our troops. And I'd like to repeat: I do not know

---

\* White House correction.

whether or not the Qods Force was ordered from the top echelons of Government. But my point is, what's worse: them ordering it and it happening or them not ordering it and it's happening? And so we will continue to protect our troops.

David, our strategy is comprehensive in order to resolve problems that will affect our own peace and the peace in the world. And the biggest problem I see is the Iranians' desire to have a nuclear weapon. And as you know, we've been dealing with this issue ever since you've been covering me and pretty much ever since I've been the President. And we've made it very clear to the Iranians that if they would like to have a dialog with the United States, there needs to be a verifiable suspension of their program. I would hope that they would do that. I would like to be at the—have been given a chance for us to explain that we have no desire to harm the Iranian people.

But my focus is on making sure that this weapon is dealt with—the program is dealt with in a constructive, peaceful way. And we'll continue to work toward achieving our common objectives with other nations in the world in a peaceful way.

Sheryl [Sheryl Stolberg, New York Times].

Q. —using faulty intelligence to provoke Iran?

*The President.* Well, no, I heard your question. And I told you, I was confident that the Qods Force, a part of the Iranian Government, was providing weaponry into Iraq. And to say it is provoking Iran is just a wrong way to characterize the Commander in Chief's decision to do what is necessary to protect our soldiers in harm's way. And I will continue to do so.

Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

#### *Six-Party Talks*

Q. Mr. President, on the North Korea deal, the former U.N. Ambassador, John Bolton, yesterday said, quote, "It's a bad, disappointing deal, and the best thing you can say about it is that it will probably

fall apart." This is from a man you repeatedly praised for his judgment and leadership at the United Nations. His main criticism is that the financial pressure led North Korea back to the table, and now it's being released. How do you respond to that?

*The President.* I strongly disagree, strongly disagree with his assessment. I have told the American people, like the Iranian issue, I wanted to solve the North Korean issue peacefully, and that the President has an obligation to try all diplomatic means necessary to do so. I changed the dynamic on the North Korean issue by convincing other people to be at the table with us, on the theory that the best diplomacy is diplomacy in which there is more than one voice—that has got an equity in the issue—speaking.

And so we had a breakthrough as a result of other voices than the United States saying to the North Koreans, "We don't support your nuclear weapons program, and we urge you to get rid of it in a verifiable way." Perhaps the most significant voice that had been added to the table was China. But the South Korean voice was vital, as was the Japanese and Russian voices as well. So the assessment made by some that this is not a good deal is just flat wrong.

Now, those who say the North Koreans have got to prove themselves by actually following through in the deal are right—and I'm one. This is a good first step. It will be a great deal for the North Korean people if their Government follows through with the agreement, which, by the way, started in September of 2005. The agreement that we announced the other day was a continuation of the initial agreement in September of 2005. And for those who say that, well, this is an interesting moment, and now it's up to the North Koreans to do that which they say they will do, I couldn't agree more with you.

And the first phase is to shut down and seal their facility, their main weapons manufacturing facility, and then disclose their

programs. And for that, they'll receive some help from the South Koreans, the equivalent of 50,000 tons of fuel.

And the second phase is to disable and abandon their facilities. In other words, this is a phased approach that will enable all of us to say to our respective populations, we're watching carefully and that there's a opportunity for the North Koreans to prove that this program can work.

If they do the second phase, there is a—there will be about the equivalent of a million tons—minus the 50,000 tons—available of food, economic assistance, and fuel. I am particularly interested in helping get food to the North Korean people. Now, that's not going to happen until there's some verifiable measures that have been taken.

The financial measures that you're speaking about are really a separate item, because it has everything to do with—it's a banking issue that our Treasury Department is analyzing to determine whether or not funds were illicitly moved through the bank.

Let's see, yes, sir.

#### *Iran/War in Iraq*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to follow up on Iran one more time. You saying today that you do not know if senior members of the Iranian Government are, in fact, behind these explosives—that contradicts what U.S. officials said in Baghdad on Sunday. They said the highest levels of the Iranian Government were behind this. It also—it seems to square with what General Pace has been saying, but contradicts with what your own Press Secretary said yesterday.

*The President.* Can I—let me explain it to you, Ed [Ed Henry, Cable News Network], I can't say it more plainly: There are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Qods Force. And as you know, I hope, that the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government. Whether Ahmadi-nejad ordered the Qods

Force to do this, I don't think we know. But we do know that they're there, and I intend to do something about it. And I've asked our commanders to do something about it. And we're going to protect our troops.

Q. But given some of those contradictions, Mr. President—

*The President.* There's no contradiction that the weapons are there and they were provided by the Qods Force, Ed.

Q. What assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate?

*The President.* Ed, we know they're there; we know they're provided by the Qods Force; we know the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government. I don't think we know who picked up the phone and said to the Qods Force, "Go do this," but we know it's a vital part of the Iranian Government.

What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed. My job is to protect our troops. And when we find devices that are in that country that are hurting our troops, we're going to do something about it, pure and simple.

Now David says, "Does this mean you're trying to have a pretext for war?" No, it means I'm trying to protect our troops; that's what that means. And that's what the family members of our soldiers expect the Commander in Chief and those responsible for our troops on the ground. And we'll continue do so.

Yes, ma'am. You're not a "ma'am." Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

#### *Situation in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with the National Intelligence Estimate that we are now in a civil war in Iraq? And also, you talk about victory, that you have to have victory in Iraq; it would be catastrophic if we didn't. You said again today that the enemy would come here, and yet you say



it's not an open-ended commitment. How do you square those things?

*The President.* You know, victory in Iraq is not going to be like victory in World War II. And it's one of the challenges I have, to explain to the American people what Iraq will look like in a situation that will enable us to say, we have accomplished our mission.

First, the—Iraq will be a society in which there is relative peace. I say “relative peace” because if it's, like, zero car bombings, it never will happen that way. It's like—I mean, the fundamental question is, can we help this Government have the security force level necessary to make sure that the ethnic cleansing that was taking place in certain neighborhoods has stopped?

Look, there's criminality in Iraq as well as the ethnic violence. And we've got to help the Iraqis have a police force that deals with criminals. There is an Al Qaida presence in Iraq, as you know. I believe some of the spectacular bombings have been caused by Al Qaida. As a matter of fact, Zarqawi—the terrorist Zarqawi, who is not an Iraqi—made it very clear that he intended to use violence to spur sectarian—car bombings and spectacular violence—to spur sectarian violence. And he did a good job of it.

And so there—and then there's this disaffected Sunnis, people who believe that they should still be in power in spite of the fact that the Shi'a are the majority of the country. And they're willing to use violence to try to create enough chaos so they get back in power.

The reason I described that is that no matter what you call it, it's a complex situation, and it needed to be dealt with inside of Iraq. We've got people who say “civil war”; we've got people on the ground who don't believe it's a civil war. But nevertheless, it is—it was dangerous enough that I had to make a decision to try to stop it, so that a government that is bound by a constitution, where the country feels rel-

atively secure as a result of a security force that is evenhanded in its application of security; a place where the vast resources of the country—this is a relatively wealthy country, in that they've got a lot of hydrocarbons—is shared equally amongst people; that there is a federalism that evolves under the Constitution, where the local Provinces have got authority as well; and where people who may have made a political decision in the past and yet weren't criminals can participate in the life of the country; and is an ally in the war on terror—in other words, that there is a bulwark for moderation as opposed to a safe haven for extremism. And that's what I would view as successful.

*Q.* Do you believe it's a civil war, sir?

*The President.* I can only tell you what people on the ground, whose judgment—it's hard for me, living in this beautiful White House, to give you an assessment—firsthand assessment. I haven't been there. You have; I haven't. But I do talk to people who are and people whose judgment I trust, and they would not qualify it as that. There are others who think it is. It is, however, a dangerous situation, thereby requiring action on my part.

Listen, I considered several options: One, doing nothing—and that if you don't believe the situation was acceptable, then you should do something. And I didn't believe the situation was acceptable.

Secondly, I could have listened to the advice of some and pulled back and hoped for the best. I felt that would be extraordinarily dangerous for this young democracy, that the violence in Baghdad could escalate mightily and then spill out across the country, creating chaos, vacuums into which extremism would flow. Or make the decision I made, which is to reinforce the troops that were on the ground, to help this Iraqi Government and security force do what they're supposed to do.

*Sir,* you dropped?

*Q.* Bad hands. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Yes.



Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Modern guy, you know—you got the Blackberry and everything there.

*Military Families/U.S. Armed Forces*

Q. I'd like to ask you about troop morale.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. As you know, a growing number of troops are on their second, third, or fourth tour in Iraq. There have been a growing number of reports about declining morale among fighting men. I spoke personally to an infantry commander—tough guy, patriot—who says more and more of the troops are asking, questioning what they're doing here. Does this come as a surprise to you? Are you aware of this? Is it a minority opinion? Is it a growing opinion? And does it concern you?

*The President.* I am—what I hear from commanders is that the place where there is concern is with the family members, that our troops, who have volunteered to serve the country, are willing to go into combat multiple times, but that the concern is with the people on the homefront. And I can understand that. And I—and that's one reason I go out of my way to constantly thank the family members. You know, I'm asking—you're obviously talking to certain people—or a person. I'm talking to our commanders. Their job is to tell me what—the situation on the ground. And I have—I know there's concern about the homefront. I haven't heard deep concern about the morale of the troops in Iraq.

Q. Would a commander tell you that? Would he—[inaudible]—because you're the President of the United States?

*The President.* Yes, they'd tell me that. Sure, absolutely. Just like they told me that they thought they needed extra troops to do the job. Sure.

Listen, I want our troops out of there as quickly as possible. But I also want to make sure that we get the job done, and I made the decision I made in order to do so.

Jim [Jim Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times].

*Iran/Diplomacy*

Q. You spoke positively about the role of diplomacy in North Korea, and you obviously gave it a long time to work. Where does diplomacy fit in, in terms of Iran, and do we have any leverage if we try diplomacy there?

*The President.* Well, I guess you could call getting the EU-3, China, and Russia on the same page on a Chapter VII resolution successful diplomacy. I thought that was diplomacy. And it took a long time to get there. I mean, we're working hard to send a concerted message to the Iranians, a focused, unified message that the world believes you should not have a nuclear program. And so this is a multilateral approach to try to get the Government to alter its course on a nuclear weapons program.

I can't think of any more robust diplomacy than to have more than one party at the table talking to the Iranians. And we did so through the United Nations at this case. If they want us at the table, we're more than willing to come, but there must be a verifiable suspension of this weapons program that is causing such grave concern.

We'll continue to work with other nations. Matter of fact, I believe that it is easier for the United States to achieve certain diplomatic objectives when we work with other nations, which is precisely why we adopted the strategy we did in dealing with the Iranians.

Sheryl.

*U.S. Congress/Iraq*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, it seems pretty clear where this Iraq vote in the House is headed. Your Press Secretary has said repeatedly that Members of Congress ought to watch what they say and be concerned about the message that

they're sending to our enemy. I'm wondering, do you believe that a vote of disapproval of your policy emboldens the enemy? Does it undermine your ability to carry out your policies there? And also, what are you doing to persuade the Democratic leadership in Congress not to restrict your ability to spend money in Iraq?

*The President.* Yes, thanks. A couple of points: One, that I understand the Congress is going to express their opinion, and it's very clear where the Democrats are, and some Republicans; I know that. They didn't like the decision I made. And by the way, that doesn't mean that I think that they're not good, honorable citizens of the country—just have a different opinion. I considered some of their opinions and felt like it would not lead to a country that could govern itself, sustain itself, and be an ally in the war on terror—one.

Secondly, my hope, however, is that this nonbinding resolution doesn't try to turn into a binding policy that prevents our troops from doing that which I have asked them to do. That's why I keep reminding people, on the one hand, you vote for David Petraeus in a unanimous way, and then the other hand, you say that you're not going to fund the strategy that he thought was necessary to do his job, a strategy he testified to in front of the Senate. I'm going to make it very clear to the Members of Congress, starting now, that they need to fund our troops, and they need to make sure we have the flexibility necessary to get the job done.

Secondly, I find it interesting that there is a declaration about a plan that they have not given a chance to work. Again, I understand; I understand. The other part of your question?

*Q.* It emboldens the enemy—

*The President.* Oh, yes. The only thing I can tell you is that when I speak, I'm very conscious about the audiences that are listening to my words. The first audience obviously is the American people. My second audience would be the troops and their

families. That's why I appreciate the question about whether or not—about the troop morale; it gave me a chance to talk to the families and how proud we are of them.

Third, no question, people are watching what happens here in America. The enemy listens to what's happening; the Iraqi people listen to the words, the Iranians. People are wondering; they're wondering about our commitment to this cause. And one reason they wonder is that in a violent society, the people sometimes don't take risks for peace if they're worried about having to choose between different sides, different violent factions. As to whether or not this particular resolution is going to impact enemy thought, I can't tell you that. But I can tell you that people are watching the debate.

I do believe that the decision I made surprised people in the Middle East. And I think it's going to be very important, however, that the Iraqi Government understand that this decision was not an open-ended commitment, that we expect Prime Minister Maliki to continue to make the hard decisions he's making.

Unlike some here, I'm a little more tolerant of a person who has been only in government for 7 months and hasn't had a lot of—and by the way, a Government that hasn't had a lot of experience with democracy. And on the other hand, it's important for him to know, and I believe he does know, that the American people want to see some action and some positive results. And listen, I share that same desire.

The faster that the Maliki Government steps up security in Baghdad, the more quickly we can get to what Baker-Hamilton recommended, and that is embedding and training over the rise in presence, protection of the territorial integrity of Iraq, and a strong hunt for Al Qaida and terrorists who would try to use that country as safe haven. I thought the Baker-Hamilton made a lot of sense, their recommendations. We just weren't able to get there if the capital

was up in flames. And that's why I made the decision I made.

Yes, Peter [Peter Baker, Washington Post].

#### *CIA Employee Identity Leak Investigation*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, we've now learned through sworn testimony that at least three members of your administration, other than Scooter Libby, leaked Valerie Plame's identity to the media. None of these three is known to be under investigation. Without commenting on the Libby trial, then, can you tell us whether you authorized any of these three to do that—

*The President.* Not going to talk about it.

Q. —or were they authorized without your permission?

*The President.* Yes, thanks, Pete. I'm not going to talk about any of it. Thank you.

Q. They're not under investigation, though, sir?

*The President.* Peter, I'm not going to talk about any of it.

Q. How about pardons, sir? Many people are asking whether you might pardon somebody—

*The President.* Not going to talk about it, Peter. [Laughter] Would you like to think of another question? Being the kind man that I am, I will recycle you. [Laughter]

John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

#### *Economic Sanctions/Iran*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Do you like that one—"recycling" him? [Laughter]

Q. That took care of one of my questions as well, sir, but—

*The President.* If that's the case, sit down. Next question. [Laughter]

Q. A lot of our allies in Europe do a lot of business with Iran, so I wonder what your thoughts are about how you further tighten the financial pressure on Iran, in

particular, if it also means economic pain for a lot of our allies?

*The President.* Yes. It's an interesting question. One of the problems—not specifically on this issue, just in general—that—let's put it this way: Money trumps peace, sometimes. In other words, commercial interests are very powerful interests throughout the world. And part of the issue in convincing people to put sanctions on a specific country is to convince them that it's in the world's interest that they forgo their own financial interest.

And, John, that's why sometimes it's tough to get tough economic sanctions on countries. And I'm not making any comment about any particular country, but you touched on a very interesting point.

And so therefore, we're constantly working with nations to convince them that what really matters in the long run is to have the environment so peace can flourish. In the Iranian case, I firmly believe that if they were to have a weapon, it would make it difficult for peace to flourish. And therefore, I'm working with people to make sure that that concern trumps whatever commercial interests may be preventing governments from acting. I make no specific accusation with that statement. It's a broad statement. But it's an accurate assessment of what sometimes can halt multilateral diplomacy from working.

Let's see here. Ann [Ann Compton, ABC Radio].

#### *Iraq/2008 Presidential Election*

Q. Thank you. Iraq is not only being debated in Congress, but it's going to be debated in the Presidential election that's coming ahead. Is that debate—is there a chance that that is going to hurt your progress in Iraq? And is it appropriate, at some point, perhaps, for the Government to brief the Presidential candidates so they have a better understanding of what it is you're trying to do?

*The President.* Thank you for that question. I thought for a minute you were going

to try to get me to comment on the Presidential race. And I'd just like to establish some ground rules here with those of you who are stuck following me for the next little less than 2 years: I will resist all temptation to become the pundit in chief and commenting upon every twist and turn of the Presidential campaign. As much as I like politics and am intrigued by the race—it's very similar to how I deftly handled Baker's question—I won't comment.

Secondly, I remember a Member of Congress came to me before one of my speeches—I think it was the Iraq speech as opposed to the State of the Union speech—and said, "You'd better be eloquent in order to convince the American people to support this plan." He didn't say "articulate"; he said "eloquent." [Laughter] And my point to the person was, what really matters is what happens on the ground. I can talk all day long. But what really matters to the American people is to see progress—which leads to your point, Martha, and that is, progress can best be measured by whether or not the people can see noticeable changes of security inside the capital city. In this case, the Baghdad security plan has got to yield peace in certain mixed neighborhoods, for example.

And so therefore, to the extent that it affects votes, speeches, perceptions, elections, what really is going to matter is what happens ultimately. And that's all I really care to comment about it. You know, it's—

Q. Do you think you could win reelection—

*The President.* I'm not running. [Laughter] And I know that's going to disappoint some of you. But, anyway, that's pundit in chief-type questions, so I'm not going to answer those. Pundit in chief—trying to get me to be pundit in chief. No.

Let's see here. Hutch [Ron Huteson, McClatchy].

*Support for Troops in Iraq*

Q. Morning.

*The President.* Yes, thanks.

Q. I think I'd like to follow on Sheryl's question about undermining the troops.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. Do you have to support the war to support the warrior? I mean, if you're one of those Americans that thinks you've made a terrible mistake, that it's destined to end badly, what do you do? If they speak out, are they by definition undermining the troops?

*The President.* No, she actually asked "the enemy," not "the troops." But I'll be glad to answer your question. No, I don't think so at all. I think you can be against my decision and support the troops; absolutely. But the proof will be whether or not you provide them the money necessary to do the mission.

I said early in my comment—my answer to Sheryl was that somebody who doesn't agree with my policy is just as patriotic a person as I am. And your question is valid. I mean, can somebody say, "We disagree with your tactics or strategy, but we support the military"—absolutely, Ron, sure. But what's going to be interesting is if they don't provide the flexibility and support for our troops that are there to enforce the strategy that David Petraeus, the general on the ground, thinks is necessary to accomplish the mission.

Michael [Michael Allen, Politico]. Michael, who do you work for? [Laughter]

*Bipartisanship in Congress/Legislative Agenda*

Q. Mr. President, I work for politico.com.

*The President.* Pardon me? Politico.com?

Q. Yes, sir. Today. [Laughter]

*The President.* Do you want a moment to explain to the American people exactly what—[laughter].

Q. Mr. President, thank you for the question. [Laughter]

*The President.* Quit being so evasive. [Laughter]

Q. You should read it.

*The President.* Is it good? You like it?

*Q.* David Gregory endorsed—

*The President.* David Gregory likes it. I can see the making of a testimonial. [Laughter] Anyway, go ahead, please.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. You spoke hopefully about your ability to work with Democrats, their willingness to work with you in this new world. I wonder how that's going so far, what you've learned about how they think, and does the current debate constitute grounds for divorce?

*The President.* Interesting way to put it. First of all, I think they're patriotic people who care about our country—back to Hutch's penetrating comment—or question. I do. I was very appreciative of the reception I got at the State of the Union. It was a cordial, respectful reception that gave me a chance to talk about what I believe. I was also very grateful for the reception I received at the Democratic retreat that I went to there in Virginia.

You know, my impression of the meeting there was that we share a lot in common. We're people that actually put filing papers down and ran for office; we're willing to put our families through the grind of politics; we wanted to serve our country, that we care deeply about what takes place in Washington, America, and the world.

My hope is, is that we can get positive pieces of legislation passed, because I think there's a lot of expectation that the difference of opinion on Iraq would make it impossible for us to work on other areas. I disagree with that assessment. And I hope I'm right, and the best way to determine whether I'm right is, will I be able to sign legislation that we have been able to work on?

One such piece of policy is a balanced budget. There seems to be agreement that we should have a balanced budget. I laid out one way forward to achieve that balance, and it shows that we can balance the budget without raising taxes and do so in a 5-year horizon. And I would like to work with the Democrat leadership as

well as obviously my Republican folks, to get it done.

Secondly, an interesting opportunity is immigration. As you know, I strongly believe that we need to enforce our borders and that—and have taken steps to do so. But I also believe that in order to enforce the borders, we need a temporary-worker program so that people don't try to sneak in the country to work, that they can come in an orderly fashion, and take the pressure off the Border Patrol agents that we've got out there, so that the Border Patrol agents don't focus on workers that are doing jobs Americans aren't doing but are focusing on terrorists and criminal elements, gun runners, to keep the country—both our countries safe—Mexico and the United States safe.

I also know that we need to deal with the people who are here—the 12 million people who are here illegally. I have said multiple times that we can't kick them out of our country. It doesn't make any sense to me to try to do that, and I don't think—maybe some feel that way, but I don't feel that way. But I also don't believe we should give them automatic amnesty—automatic citizenship, which I view as amnesty. And we look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to have a comprehensive immigration plan.

Energy is an opportunity for us to work together. We've done a lot of work in the past on promoting alternative sources of energy. America has done more than any nation in the world in promoting alternatives and renewables, all aiming to make sure our economy grows, that we have energy independence, and that we're good stewards of the environment. And I look forward to working with the Democrats on the energy independence initiative I laid out.

One such initiative was the mandatory fuel standards that relies upon alternative fuel to power automobiles. Ethanol is the first and most notable place where we can start, but we also need to spend monies



to develop technologies that will enable us to make energy out of products other than corn, switchgrass or wood chips, for example.

The problem with relying only on corn is that—by the way, when your demand for corn stays high, the price tends to go up, and your hog farmer gets disgruntled with the alternative energy plan. And therefore, what's going to matter is that new technologies come on line as quickly as possible to take the pressure off of corn ethanol—or corn, as a result of being used in ethanol, and we can work with Congress to do that. That's an area we can work.

Health care: I got a letter the other day from a group of Republican and Democrat Senators talking about the desire to work on health care. And they liked some of my ideas. But my only point is, is that there's an opportunity for us to work together to help the uninsured have private insurance so they can be—so they can get good health care. And there's an opportunity to work together there.

The Governors are coming into town soon. And I'm going to have Secretary Leavitt describe to them the affordable grants program that is a part of our comprehensive approach, including rewriting the Tax Code.

Finally, No Child Left Behind needs to be reauthorized. I fully understand that if you read your newspaper articles—which I do, sometimes—and listen carefully, you'll hear voices in both parties saying they don't like No Child Left Behind—it's too much testing, or we don't want to be held to account, or whatever they say. The bill is working. It makes a lot of sense.

There's an income gap in America that I talked about when I went to Wall Street. And what's clear to me is that our kids have got to have education so that in this global economy, the jobs of the 21st century stay here at home. And it starts with good education. And therefore, I will argue vociferously that No Child Left Behind Act needs to be reauthorized—it's working; it's

an important piece of legislation—and will reach out to Democrat Members, as well as Republican Members, to get this bill reauthorized.

And so there's a lot of areas, Mike. I'd say it's a little early in the process. This is a 2-year term. We've got time to work together to get important pieces of legislation done. And I like the start. As a matter of fact, this afternoon I've got members of both parties, both Chambers coming down to visit about how we can continue to work together to get some legislation done.

As I told the Democrats, and as the Democrats have made clear to me in my visits, that neither of us are going to abandon our principles, that I don't expect them to change their principles, and they shouldn't expect me to. But there's ways for us to work together to achieve legislative successes for the common good. That's what the American people want to see, and that's what I believe we can do. Is it going to take work? Yes, it's going to take work, but it's okay. That's why you pay us all this money.

Richard [Richard Wolffe, Newsweek].

*Iran*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Last question, then I've got to go have lunch with Bob Gates, Secretary of the Defense.

What are you looking at there? Checking the time? For the viewer out there—you're getting a big—timekeeper and everything. [Laughter]

Q. I don't mean to interrupt. [Laughter]

*The President.* I just thought he was looking at the watch because he was getting bored. I wasn't sure, you know?

Q. I'm never bored.

*The President.* Remember the debates?

Q. Yes.

*The President.* Yes. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, Republican and Democratic Presidents before you sat down for face-to-face talks with the Soviet Union, a



nation that was clearly hostile, tyrannical, and had a huge nuclear arsenal. Why do you think that face-to-face talks between yourself and the leadership of Iran would be any more compromising for you?

*The President.* Richard, if I thought we could achieve success, I would sit down, but I don't think we can achieve success right now. And therefore, we'll want to work with other nations. I think that we're more likely to achieve our goals when others are involved as well. I really don't want to put the situation—listen, let me put it this way: I want to make sure that in the Iranian issue that the whole world stays engaged, because I believe that's a more effective way of convincing the Iranians that—to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions. That's why.

Look, I know this is a world in which—and I'm not suggesting you're this way—but this is a world in which people say, "Meet, sit down and meet." And my answer is, "If it yields results, that's what I'm interested in." And so I believe the strategy that—and by the way, I remember this during the North Korean issue, debate. People kept saying, "Well, all you've got to do is sit down with the guy." And I kept saying, "Well, I think it's going to be more effective if we have other people at the table with us saying the same thing, so that just in case he decides not to honor the agreement, there will be other people saying the same thing I'll say, which is, 'You said one thing; you did another.' " It will make it easier for us to send that message that the world, pretty well united in solving this problem peacefully.

And so that's why I made the decision I made. It sounds tempting for somebody to say, "All you've got to do is sit down with the people." I'm in a little different position in that I'm trying to achieve certain objectives. And we are making progress on the Iranian issue. If you step back to early on in the process, there was doubt as to whether or not the world would come together, sometimes because of the reason

John mentioned, in other words, the conflicting interests. And I believe we are making good progress toward solving this issue peacefully.

And we'll continue to try to solve the issue peacefully. It's an important issue whether or not Iran ends up with a nuclear weapon. It's one of these issues that people are going to look back and say: "You know, how come they couldn't see the impending danger? What happened to them?" You've heard me say that often about what would happen if we don't—if we were to abandon our efforts in the Middle East for stability and peace through forms of government that are more likely to defeat an extremist ideology that would like to be able to prevail.

And it's a—at any rate, that's why I made the decision I made. Presidents have to weigh different options all the time. Look, I fully understand there are some who are—don't agree with every decision I make. I hope the American people understand I make those decisions because I believe it's going to yield the peace that we all want.

Listen, thank you for your time. Enjoyed it very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:01 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, commander, Iraqi Army; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. Reporters referred to Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; White House Press Secretary Tony Snow; and I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, former Chief of Staff to Vice President Cheney.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia

February 14, 2007

*President Bush.* Madam President, thanks for coming. This is the second Oval Office visit I've had with the first democratically elected woman President from Africa. Now, the first time we met you were wondering whether or not it was possible to achieve your dreams, and you asked for our help. I was impressed by your spirit at the last meeting.

This meeting, there is no doubt in your mind that you can achieve your dreams. And I am impressed by your confidence but, more importantly, your deep concern for the people of Liberia. And so I pledge our ongoing help to you and your Government. I thank you very much for setting such a good example for not only the people of Liberia but for the people around the world, that new democracies have got the capability of doing the hard work necessary to rout out corruption, to improve the lives of the citizens with infrastructure projects that matter. And we want to help you; we really do.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the President worked out an agreement that I hope other nations follow, and that is, we effected debt relief for Liberia. And I call upon other nations that have got debt with this vital country to follow our lead and to give this country a chance to succeed.

Secondly, today we're announcing an initiative where the Treasury Department is providing monies so that the IMF and other international bank—lending institutions will be able to have the confidence in going forward to help relieve obligations of Liberia. And the reason this is important is, you want to give this young country a chance to succeed by eliminating some of the interest obligations and burdens so that there is room to grow.

And so, Madam President, I love your spirit. We spent a lot of time talking about education. If anybody who understands the importance of education, it's the President. She understands that her country has got vast potential; it's got resources, but the biggest potential of all is the people. And we want to help you. Really glad you came back. I'm thrilled to call you friend.

*President Johnson Sirleaf.* Mr. President, I'm just so pleased for this extraordinary opportunity to meet you a second time in 1 year. We came back this time to report on progress, to tell you in this first year of our administration, with the strong support of your Government—led by yourself, personally—we've been able to set our goals. We've identified the four areas in which we want to concentrate our effort, and that's peace and security, economic revitalization, governance and the rule of law, and infrastructure.

And under each of these areas we've achieved important first steps. We've set the country on the way to recovery, and now we're back here to tell you that we're about to embark on the next phase. And the next phase is to do even more: get our kids back in school, to create jobs for our people, to open up our economy, restart our mines and our forestry sector and our agriculture, get our refugees and our displaced persons back into their villages and in their communities, on their farms, producing for self-sufficiency.

All of those things are beginning to happen. Our kids are back in school; our enrollment has increased by 40 percent. And now, as he told you, we just need to get this debt off our backs. And that's the last thing you've done for us. And Secretary Rice was just exceptional in taking the leadership yesterday in our forum. And once she did that, others are beginning to follow.

And you've just made a great call to all of them to tell them to follow. And we think it's going to happen. If we get the 3.7 external billion debt off us, we can then access resources; we can expand the progress we've made; we can accelerate the implementation of all of our programs.

And so we're just so pleased about that. We thank you for what is being done in the security sector reform, the training of our new army, the professionalization of our police force. All of that will enable us to consolidate the peace and then really begin to deliver to the Liberian people. We're fighting corruption; we're starting to put people in court; we've created a code of conduct for public officials, anticorruption policy and strategy.

All of these things would not have happened, Mr. President, if we didn't have your strong support and the support of your colleagues in the Government and also on

the Hill. We're thankful that we enjoy bipartisan support on the Hill. And we're meeting a lot of them in these 2 days. And they've just been there for us and giving you the support that you need from there to enable you to continue to support us.

We want you to know: Liberian people are very thankful; Liberian people are resolved never to go to war again. They want the simple things in life: send their children to schools, have jobs, be able to give their families a square meal at the end of the day, be able to get around. And we want you to know that those things are happening. We thank you for how—what you have done to put us on this path.

*President Bush.* Thank you, Madam President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on the Second Anniversary of the Death of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon *February 14, 2007*

On the second anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the United States reaffirms its support for a free and democratic Lebanon that is able to chart its own course. The United States joins the Lebanese people in demanding the truth behind Prime Minister Hariri's murder and calling for the establishment of a special tribunal for Lebanon to bring to justice those who murdered Rafiq Hariri and others who stood for Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of yesterday's bus bombings outside

Beirut. The evil perpetrators of these attacks will not silence the Lebanese people's demands for justice and democracy in an independent Lebanon.

The Lebanese people's greatest tribute to Rafiq Hariri, Minister Basil Fuleihan, and others who gave their lives for a free Lebanon would be to come together across sectarian divides to build the free, stable, and prosperous Lebanon that Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri dedicated his life to create.

Remarks to the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research  
February 15, 2007

Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. President. [Laughter] That's got kind of a nice ring to it. [Laughter] Chris, thanks for inviting me. I appreciate the chance to come and share some thoughts with the men and women of AEI. I admire AEI a lot; I'm sure you know that. After all, I have been consistently borrowing some of your best people. More than 20 AEI scholars have worked in my administration. A few have returned to the fold; you're going to have to wait 2 more years to get another one to return to the fold. Dick Cheney is occupied. [Laughter] He sends his best.

I appreciate what the AEI stands for. This institute has been a tireless voice for the principles of individual liberty, free enterprise, limited government, and a strong national defense. And no one embodied these principles better than the late Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. She was a professor, author, diplomat, Presidential adviser, and a key architect in our victory in the cold war.

In 2003, I had the honor of asking her to lead the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. And I would like to share with you what she told that commission. She said, "[America's] national policy is to assert that all human beings are born free; all human beings are equal in inherent rights and human dignity." That's the policy of the Bush administration as well. I believe in the universality of freedom, and I believe that this country—this grand country of ours has an obligation to help people realize the blessings of freedom. I appreciate so very much that Jeane Kirkpatrick was such a well-spoken advocate for that basic truth. I am proud to join you in paying tribute to her life and the legacy of a great American stateswoman.

I appreciate the board of directors of the AEI for giving me this forum. Thanks

for trying to stay on the leading edge of thought as well. It's really important that ideas be conceived, circulated, and embraced. I want to thank Members of the Congress who have joined us today—there they are. Good, yes. [Laughter] All friends: Pete King from New York, Trent Franks from Arizona, Mario Diaz-Balart from Florida, and fellow Texan, Mike McCaul. Thanks for coming; appreciate you being here. I thank the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us; proud you're here. Thanks for taking time out of a busy schedule to come and hear this address. I appreciate members of the United States Armed Forces who have joined us. I thank the dignitaries and friends of the AEI and members of my administration who have joined. Don't linger—[laughter]—get back to work. But thank you for being here. [Laughter] I fully expect you to stay awake for the entire address. [Laughter]

As scholars and thinkers, you are contributing to a nationwide debate about the direction of the war on terror. A vigorous debate is healthy for our country—it really is—and I welcome the debate. It's one of the true hallmarks of a free society, where people can get up and express their beliefs in a open forum. Yet 5 years into this war, there is one principle of which every member of every party should be able to agree on—in other words, after all the debate, there is one thing we all ought to be able to agree on, and that is: We've got to fight the terrorists overseas so we don't have to face them here at home again.

We're acting on that principle. Since the attacks of September the 11th, we have been on the offense. I believe the best way to do our duty in securing the homeland is to stay on the offense. And we're not alone. That's what our fellow citizens have got to understand. We're not in this

fight against extremists and murderers alone.

Recently in the Philippines, that country's special forces conducted raids in which they killed two top leaders of an Al Qaida-affiliated terrorist organization—a group that we believe was responsible for kidnapping four American citizens and killing two of them. In Tunisia, authorities recently broke up a terrorist cell that was planning to attack the American and British Embassies. In Spain, police captured several fugitives wanted for aiding the escape of terrorists responsible for the Madrid train bombings. In the past year, nations including Denmark, Italy, France, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Turkey, Canada, and Britain have broken up terrorist cells. The enemy is active, and so are those of us who love freedom. It's in the interests of the United States to encourage other nations not to relent and not to give in, but to keep the pressure on those who try to have their way by murdering the innocent. And that's exactly what we'll continue to do.

This war against the terrorists, this war to protect ourselves, takes place on many fronts. One such front is Iraq. We're on the offense in Iraq, as we should be, against extremists and killers. I recently announced a new strategy for Iraq. It's a plan that demands more from the Iraqi Government. Not only do we demand more from the Iraqi Government, but so do—the Iraqi people demand more from the Iraqi Government. They want to live in peace. It's important for our fellow citizens to understand, a mother in downtown Baghdad wants her child to be able to walk the streets peacefully, just like mothers here in America want their children to be able to go to a playground and play peacefully.

I made Baghdad the top security priority. In other words, it's important, in order to achieve our objective, that the capital city of this grand country be secure. And I sent reinforcements to our troops so they can accomplish that mission. I spent a lot of

time with members of my administration thinking about the way forward in Iraq. And we listened to a lot of opinions and a lot of different ideas. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success.

And the reason why I mention success is, it's important for us to succeed. It's important for us to help this young democracy fight off the extremists so moderation can prevail. It's important for us to stand with this young democracy as they live—as they try to build a society under the most modern Constitution written in the Middle East, a Constitution approved by millions of their citizens.

One of the interesting things that I have found here in Washington is, there is strong disagreement about what to do to succeed, but there is strong agreement that we should not fail. People understand the consequences of failure. If we were to leave this young democracy before the job is done, there would be chaos, and out of chaos would become vacuums, and into those power vacuums would flow extremists who would be emboldened, extremists who want to find safe haven.

As we think about this important front in the war against extremists and terrorists, it's important for our fellow citizens to recognize this truth: If we were to leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy would follow us home.

Our new commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, is now on the ground in Baghdad. I visited him by secure video yesterday. He reports that coalition troops are arriving on schedule. He says the Iraqi Government is following through on its commitment to deploy three additional army brigades in the capital. Prime Minister Maliki has said, "Part of our strategy is to put more Iraqis in the fight in the capital city to achieve our objective," and he's doing that. So far, coordination between Iraqi and coalition forces has been good—they are beginning joint operations



to secure the city by chasing down the terrorists and insurgents and the criminals and the roaming death squads. They're doing what the Iraqi people want in Baghdad; they want a peaceful life.

The initial signs of progress are encouraging. Yet it's important for us to recognize that this is the beginning of what will be a difficult operation in the Iraqi capital. Our troops are risking their lives. As they carry out the new strategy, they need our patience, and they need our support. When General David Petraeus's nomination was considered 3 weeks ago in the United States Senate, the Senators voted unanimously to confirm him to his new position, and I appreciate that affirmation, that strong statement for this good general.

Now the House is debating a resolution that disapproves of our new strategy. This may become the first time in the history of the United States Congress that it has voted to send a new commander into battle and then voted to oppose his plan that is necessary to succeed in that battle.

Members of Congress have every right to express their opinion, and I fully expect them to do so. The resolution they're now debating is nonbinding. Soon the Congress is going to vote on a piece of legislation that is binding, a bill to provide emergency funding for our troops. Our men and women in uniform are counting on their elected leaders to provide them with the support they need to accomplish their mission. We have a responsibility—Republicans and Democrats have a responsibility to give our troops the resources they need to do their job and the flexibility they need to prevail.

As we implement a new strategy in Iraq, we are also taking new steps to defeat the terrorists and extremists in Afghanistan. My administration has just completed a top-to-bottom review of our strategy in that country, and today I want to talk to you about the progress we have made in Afghanistan, the challenges we face in Afghanistan, and

the strategy we're pursuing to defeat the enemies of freedom in Afghanistan.

It wasn't all that long ago that we learned the lessons of how terrorists operate. It may seem like a long time ago—5 years is a long time in this day and age of instant news cycles—but it really isn't all that long ago, when you think about the march of history. In Afghanistan, we saw how terrorists and extremists can use those safe havens, safe havens in a failed state, to bring death and destruction to our people here at home.

It was an amazing turning point in the history of our country, really, when you think about it. It was a defining moment for the 21st century. Think about what I just said, that in the remote reaches of the world, because there was a failed state, murderers were able to plot and plan and then execute a deadly attack that killed nearly 3,000 of our citizens. It's a lesson that we've got to remember. And one of the lessons of that September the 11th day is that we cannot allow terrorists to gain sanctuary anywhere; we must not allow them to reestablish the safe haven they lost in Afghanistan.

Our goal in Afghanistan is to help the people of that country to defeat the terrorists and establish a stable, moderate, democratic state that respects the rights of its citizens, governs its territory effectively, and is a reliable ally in this war against extremists and terrorists. Oh, for some that may seem like an impossible task. But it's not impossible if you believe what Jeane Kirkpatrick said, and that freedom is universal; that we believe all human beings desire to live in freedom and peace.

Over the past 5 years, we've made real progress toward the goal I just described. In 2001, Afghanistan was a totalitarian nightmare, a land where girls could not go to school, where religious police roamed the streets, where women were publicly whipped, where there were summary executions in the Kabul soccer stadium, and where the terrorists operated freely—they



ran camps where they planned and trained for horrific attacks that affected us and other nations.

Today, 5 short years later, the Taliban have been driven from power, Al Qaida has been driven from its camps, and Afghanistan is free. That's why I say, "We have made remarkable progress." Afghanistan has a democratically elected President named Hamid Karzai. I respect him. I appreciate his courage. Afghanistan has a National Assembly chosen by the Afghan people in free elections.

Under the Taliban, women were barred from public office. Today, Afghanistan's Parliament includes 91 women. President Karzai has appointed the first woman to serve as a Provincial governor.

Under the Taliban, free enterprise was stifled. Today, the Afghan economy has doubled in size since liberation. Afghanistan has attracted \$800 million in foreign investment during that time.

Under the Taliban, there were about 900,000 children in school. Today, more than 5 million children are in school; about 1.8 [million]\* of them are girls.

Under the Taliban, an estimated 8 percent of Afghans had access to basic health care. Today, the United States has built or renovated 681 health clinics across the country. Now more than 80 percent of Afghans have access to basic health coverage—health care.

Under the Taliban, Afghans fled the country in large numbers, seeking safety abroad. Today, more than 4.6 million Afghan refugees have come home, in one of the largest return movements in history.

In today's Afghanistan, people are free to speak their minds; they're free to begin to realize dreams. In today's Afghanistan, there's a NATO Alliance that is taking the lead to help provide security for the people of Afghanistan. In today's Afghanistan, the terrorists who once oppressed the Afghan people and threatened our country are

being captured and killed by NATO forces and soldiers and police of a free Afghanistan. Times have changed. Our work is bringing freedom. A free Afghanistan helps make this country more secure.

We face a thinking enemy, and we face a tough enemy. They watch our actions, they adjust their tactics, and in 2006, this enemy struck back with vengeance. As freedom began to spread, an enemy that cannot stand the thought of a free society tried to do something about it, tried to stop the advance of this young democracy. It's not the only place in the world where the enemy struck back in 2006. They struck back in Iraq. They struck in Lebanon. This should be a lesson for our fellow citizens to understand—where these group of people find freedom, they're willing to resort to brutal tactics.

It's an interesting enemy—isn't it?—an enemy that can't stand the thought of somebody being able to live a peaceful life, a life of hope, an optimistic life. And it's an enemy we've got to take seriously.

Across Afghanistan last year, the number of roadside bombs almost doubled, direct fire attacks on international forces almost tripled, and suicide bombings grew nearly fivefold. These escalating attacks were part of a Taliban offensive that made 2006 the most violent year in Afghanistan since the liberation of the country.

And so the fundamental question is, how do you react? Do you say: "Maybe it's too tough? Let's just kind of let this young democracy wither and fade away." Do we forget the lessons of September the 11th? And the answer is, absolutely not.

And so the Taliban offensive that was launched was turned back by incredible courage of the Afghan soldiers and by NATO forces that stood strong. You see, I believe the Taliban felt that they could exploit weakness. I believe that they said to themselves, "If we can, we'll test NATO and cause NATO leaders to turn their back on this young democracy." After the fierce battles throughout the year 2006, the

---

\* White House correction.

Taliban had failed in their objective of taking and holding new territory.

In recent months, the intensity of the fighting has died down—that's only natural. It does every year when the snow and ice set in there in Afghanistan. But even in these winter months, we stayed on the offense against the Taliban and Al Qaida. This January, NATO reconnaissance units observed a major Taliban incursion from Pakistan—with about 150 Taliban fighters crossing the border into the Paktika Province. So NATO and Afghan forces launched a coordinated air assault and ground assault, and we destroyed the Taliban force. A large number of enemy fighters were killed; they were forced to retreat, where they were engaged by Pakistani troops.

Just 2 weeks ago, NATO launched an air strike against Taliban fighters who had seized the town of Musa Qala in Helmand Province. A key Taliban commander was brought to justice.

The snow is going to melt in the Hindu Kush Mountains, and when it does, we can expect fierce fighting to continue. The Taliban and Al Qaida are preparing to launch new attacks. Our strategy is not to be on the defense, but to go on the offense. This spring, there is going to be a new offensive in Afghanistan, and it's going to be a NATO offensive. And that's part of our strategy: relentless in our pressure. We will not give in to murderers and extremists.

And we're focused on five key goals that I want to share with you. First, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai increase the size and capabilities of the Afghan security forces. After all, for this young democracy to survive in the long term, they'll have their own security forces that are capable and trained. We don't have to teach them courage. These folks understand courage. They're willing to fight for their country. They're willing to defend this young democracy. And so it's in our interest and the interest of NATO countries to provide training so they have more strong

fighters—so we're going to increase the size of the national police from 61,000 to 82,000 by the end of 2008. And we'll help them develop new specialties: new civil order brigades, counternarcotics, and border surveillance.

We're going to increase the Afghan Army—today, it's 32,000; that's not enough to do the job in this vast country—to 70,000 by the end of 2008. It's one thing to get them trained and one thing to get them uniforms, but they're also going to have to have ways to move around their country. So we're going to add Commando battalions, a helicopter unit, combat support units. In other words, we're going to help this young democracy have a fully integrated security force that will respond to the commands of the elected officials.

Capable troops need intelligence. This is a war that requires good intelligence on all fronts. So the United States and our allies will work with Afghanistan's leaders to improve human intelligence networks, particularly in the areas that are threatened by the Taliban. Together with the Afghan Government and NATO, we created a Joint Intelligence Operations Center in Kabul—so all the forces fighting the terrorists in Afghanistan have a common picture of the enemy. That may sound simple to those of us who have gotten used to sophisticated systems to protect ourselves. This is important innovation in Afghanistan.

America and our allies are going to stand with these folks. That's the message I want to deliver to the Afghanistan people today. Free debates are important, but our commitment is strong: We will train you, we will help you, and we will stand with you as you defend your new democracy.

The second part of our strategy is to work with our allies to strengthen the NATO force in Afghanistan. Today, Afghanistan is NATO's most important military operation. Isn't it interesting that NATO is now in Afghanistan? I suspect 20 years ago, if a President stood in front of AEI and said, "I'll make a prediction

to you that NATO would be a force for freedom and peace outside of Europe,” probably never would have invited the person back. [Laughter] Today, NATO is in Afghanistan. And I thank the leaders of the NATO countries for recognizing the importance of Afghanistan in our own security and enhancing the security of our own countries.

For NATO to succeed, member nations must provide commanders on the ground with the troops and the equipment they need to do their jobs. Many allies have made commitments of additional forces and support, and I appreciate those commitments, but not nearly as much as the people in Afghanistan appreciate them. Norway, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic have all agreed to send special operation forces to Afghanistan. Britain, Poland, Turkey, and Bulgaria have agreed to additional troops. Italy has agreed to send aircraft. Romania will contribute to the EU police mission. Denmark, Greece, Norway, and Slovakia will provide funding for Afghan security forces. Iceland will provide airlift. The people of Afghanistan need to know that they’ve got a lot of friends in this world who want them to succeed.

For NATO to succeed, allies must make sure that we fill the security gaps. In other words, when there is a need, when our commanders on the ground say to our respective countries, “We need additional help,” our NATO countries must provide it in order to be successful in this mission.

As well, allies must lift restrictions on the forces they do provide so NATO commanders have the flexibility they need to defeat the enemy wherever the enemy may make a stand. The alliance was founded on this principle: An attack on one is an attack on all. That principle holds true whether the attack is on the home soil of a NATO nation or on allied forces deployed on a NATO mission abroad. By standing together in Afghanistan, NATO forces protect our own people. And they must have

the flexibility and rules of engagement to be able to do their job.

Third, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai improve Provincial governance and develop Afghanistan’s—and to help develop Afghanistan’s rural economy. Many Afghans in remote regions fight with the Taliban simply because there are no other jobs available. The best way to dry up Taliban recruits is to help Afghanistan’s Government create jobs and opportunity. So NATO is operating 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country. These teams are made up of civilian and military experts. They are helping the Afghan Government extend its reach into distant regions; they’re improving security; and they’re helping to deliver reconstruction assistance. In other words, I just described military operations that are necessary, but in order for these young democracies to survive, there’s got to be more than just military. There has to be political development and tangible evidence that a government can provide opportunity and hope. And these Provincial Reconstruction Teams do just that.

These teams will help build irrigation systems, improve power production, provide access to microcredit. The idea is to encourage entrepreneurship, job formation, enterprise. These teams will undertake new efforts to train Provincial and local leaders. We take democracy for granted. Democracy hasn’t exactly been rooted deeply in the Afghan history. It takes awhile for people to understand how to function as an elected official. It takes help for people to understand the obligations to respond to the people. And these teams will train Provincial and local leaders.

Another key element to bringing stability to Afghanistan is building roads. Lieutenant General Eikenberry, who served with distinction in Afghanistan, just finished his tour; he was the senior commander there. He said, really, something very interesting that caught my attention. He said, “Where the roads end in Afghanistan, the Taliban

begin.” And so in order to help the security of this country, the international community has stepped up its roadbuilding campaign across Afghanistan. So far, the United States and other nations have completed construction of more than 4,000 miles of roads—that sounds like a lot, and it is a lot. We’re also talking about a big country.

Much of the ring road—we call it the ring road—that links Provincial capitals to Kabul is pretty well complete. And that’s important, because, first of all, roadbuilding brings jobs to young men who might be recruited by the Taliban. But roads enable people to get commerce to centers of trade. In other words, roads promote enterprise. Enterprise provides hope. Hope is what defeats this ideology of darkness. And so we’re going to build another 1,000 roads [1,000 miles of roads]\* in 2007. It’s an important effort, and our allies need to follow through on their commitments to help this young democracy have a road system that will enable it to flourish and survive.

Fourth, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai reverse the increase in poppy cultivation that is aiding the Taliban. After a decline in 2005, Afghanistan saw a marked increase in poppy cultivation last year. This is a direct threat to a free future for Afghanistan. I have made my concerns to President Karzai pretty clear—not pretty clear, very clear—and that in order for him to gain the confidence of his people and the confidence of the world, he’s got to do something about it, with our help.

The Taliban uses drug money to buy weapons—they benefit from this cultivation—and they pay Afghans to take up arms against the Government. And so we’re helping the President in a variety of ways to deal with the problem. First, he has established what’s called a Central Narcotics Tribunal in Kabul. One way to deal with the drug problem is for there to be a push back to the drug dealers, and a

good way to push back on the drug dealers is, convict them and send them to prison. He has improved the Afghan Eradication Force, this is mobile units that can deploy across the country to help governors in their eradication efforts.

We’re supporting him. We’re supporting him through direct aid on these mobile units, and we’re supporting him to expand alternative livelihood programs. I mean, look, these poppy growers are trying to make a living. And the idea is to provide these farmers with credit and seeds and fertilizer and assistance to bring their products to market. So the strategy to eliminate poppies is to encourage the Government to eradicate and to provide alternative means for a livelihood and to help have the roads so that when somebody grows something somebody wants to buy in Kabul, there’s a road to be able to take the product along to the markets.

It’s important, and we’re going to stay focused on the poppy issue. And when the President and his Government is able to make progress on it, it will really inspire countries who want to help to do more.

Finally, we’re going to help President Karzai fight corruption. And one place where he needs help is in the judicial system. There’s nothing more discouraging when justice is not fair. And Afghans too often see their courts run by crooked judges. It’s important to have the confidence of the people in a free society. Crooked judges makes it hard to earn that confidence.

And so we’re—President Karzai, to his credit, has established a Criminal Justice Task Force that is now after public corruption. This task force has 400 prosecutors, [prosecutions]\* and there are ongoing investigations. The United States, Britain, and Norway are providing full-time prosecutors, judges, police, and defense attorneys to mentor their Afghan counterparts. And I appreciate our own citizens going over there. Must be neat, really; I guess “neat” isn’t a sophisticated word, but it must be

---

\* White House correction.

heartening to be somebody who's helping this young democracy develop a judicial system that is worthy. And I cannot—thank our citizens for taking time out of their lives to go.

The United States has built or renovated 40 judicial facilities. We've distributed more than 11,000 copies of the Afghan Constitution. We've trained more than 750 Afghan judges and lawyers and prosecutors. The United States and Italy have helped the Afghan Government establish a National Legal Training Center in Kabul. The international community is helping this new Government build a justice system so they can replace the rule of the Taliban with the rule of law.

Now, there's another part of our strategy I want to share with you, and that is to help President Musharraf defeat the terrorists and extremists who operate inside of Pakistan. We're going to work with Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance cooperation to defeat what I would call a common enemy. Taliban and Al Qaida fighters do hide in remote regions of Pakistan—this is wild country. This is wilder than the Wild West. And these folks hide and recruit and launch attacks.

The President understands our desire to work with him to eliminate this kind of action. People say, "Well, do you think President Musharraf really understands the threat of extremists in his midst?" I said, "Yes, I do." You know how I know? They've tried to kill him. Al Qaida has launched attacks against the President of this country. He understands. He also understands that extremists can destabilize countries on the border or destabilize countries from which they launch their attacks. And so he's launched what they call a frontier strategy, and that is to find and eliminate the extremists and deliver better governance and economic opportunity.

We're helping him in these efforts. It's in our interest to help him. We provided him—we've helped him equip his security forces that are patrolling the border regions

with Afghanistan. We're funding construction of more than 100 border outposts, which will provide their forces with better access to remote regions of this part of the country. We've given him high-tech equipment to help the Pakistani forces locate the terrorists attempting to cross the border. We're funding an air wing, with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, to give Pakistan better security, better swift response, and better surveillance.

President Musharraf is going to better be able to now deal with this problem. Bob Gates went out and visited with him recently—had a good response. He's an ally in this war on terror, and it's in our interest to support him in fighting the extremists.

I also had an interesting meeting at the White House last September—and that is, I hosted a private dinner with President Musharraf and President Karzai, right there in what's called the Family Dining Room. It was a fascinating discussion. Clearly there are different histories and different anxieties about the way forward. We did reach some agreements, however: that it's in all our interests for people to work together, for example, to improve intelligence sharing. It's in our interest to expand trade between these two countries. In other words, on the one hand, it's in our interest to work closely on security for security operations, but it's also in our mutual interest—all three of our interests—to provide different alternatives for people to choose from.

Remember, I said earlier that oftentimes, people support the Taliban—or sometimes, they support the Taliban in Afghanistan because it's the only job they can find. If that's the case—and I believe it's true—we need to help these folks provide an economy that gives hope. And so one way we can do this is what we call reconstruction opportunity zones that exist on both sides of the Pak and Afghan border. These zones will give residents the chance to export locally made products to the United States, duty free. That's our contribution.



Got a vast market, wealthy country with a lot of consumers, and it's not going to take much to provide hope if we can get little manufacturing enterprises set up, local entrepreneurs to be able to manufacture goods and sell them here in our country. It's a tiny contribution for us and a major contribution for providing the conditions necessary for stability.

Well, I'm going to continue to work with both the leaders. It's a useful role for the President of the United States to be in constant contact with both Presidents, to remind them of the great obligations we have to fight the extremists and to help people realize dreams.

So our strategy in this country is robust and important. A lot of attention here in the United States is on Iraq. One reason I've come to address you is, I want to make sure people's attention is also on Afghanistan. I'm asking Congress for \$11.8 billion over the next 2 years to help this young democracy survive. I've ordered an increase in U.S. forces in Afghanistan. We've extended the stay of 3,200 troops now in the country, for 4 months, and we'll deploy a replacement force that will sustain this increase for the foreseeable future.

These forces and funds are going to help President Karzai defeat common enemies. Success in Afghanistan is important for our security. We are engaged in a long ideological struggle between the forces of moderation and liberty versus the forces of destruction and extremism. And a victory for the forces of liberty in Afghanistan will be a resounding defeat in this ideological struggle. It's in our national interest that we succeed, that we help President Karzai and the people of Afghanistan succeed. And I'm confident that with persistence and patience and determination, we will succeed.

And the biggest source for success is the Afghan people themselves. They want their freedom. Freedom is universal. Jeane Kirkpatrick was right: People around the world, regardless of their faith, their background, or their gender, want to be free. There

is tangible evidence in Afghanistan: Eight million people went to the polls to choose their President in a free election. We take it for granted. But 8 million people said, "We want to be free." Imagine how far that society has come from the days of the Taliban. There's courage in that country. People are showing faith in freedom and courage to defend that freedom.

I want to tell you an interesting story about an Afghan security officer at Camp Phoenix near Kabul. This fellow has worked at this base for 4 years—nearly 4 years. His job was to guard the front gate and screen cars before they are allowed to approach a U.S. military checkpoint. He is very popular with our troops; people who have gotten to know him like him a lot. They appreciate his courage and his personality, and they call him Rambo. [Laughter] Must have been a lot for the Afghan citizen to be called Rambo, but that's what they call him.

One day Rambo was on duty, a car loaded with explosives tried to crash through the front gate—they were attempting to get to our troops. This fellow did not hesitate; he jumped in the car, and he prevented the terrorist from exploding the device. He saw somebody who was about to harm our citizens, our troops; he then jumps into the car and stops the attack. A U.S. Army sergeant then responded, helped him pull the guy out of the car.

One of our U.S. soldiers who was there said this, he said: "He saved our lives. I promised him I'd name my first-born son after him." The guy is hoping for a boy. [Laughter]

It's a human story. It's a story that speaks of courage and alliance, respect for life. To me, it's a story that says, these people in Afghanistan want to do what is necessary to survive and succeed, and it's in our interest to help them.

I am really proud that our Nation helped liberate the 25 million people of that country. We should be proud to stand alongside



the people of Afghanistan, the newly liberated Afghanistan. And I know we're all proud of the men and women who have helped liberate that country—the men and women who wear our uniform who helped liberate that country and continue to make the sacrifices necessary.

I thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about a strategy for success, a strategy that is part of our efforts to make sure that a generation of Americans, beyond our generation, will look back and say: "They did their duty to protect the homeland, and as a result, we can live in peace."

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher DeMuth, president, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, USA, commander, Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and Afghan security officer Jamal "Rambo" Udin. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on Congressional Action on Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Legislation

*February 15, 2007*

I am pleased that the final bill for the Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations process complies with the overall spending limits that I set. That means for the third year in a row, domestic discretionary spending will be below inflation. However, I remain concerned that the bill, in many cases, reflects the wrong spending priorities. In particular, the bill shifts funding needed for our Armed Forces to unrequested domestic programs. The Congress should work to address these priorities without adding to the deficit.

I am pleased this legislation makes progress on earmarks, but there is more to do. As the Congress takes up the 2008 budget, it should continue to take steps to improve transparency for all earmarks, provide the option of an up-or-down vote for each earmark, and reduce the number and cost of earmarks by at least half.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.J. Res. 20, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–5.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama

*February 16, 2007*

*President Bush.* *Senor Presidente, bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca.* I'm glad you're here.

*President Torrijos Espino.* Thank you, President.

*President Bush.* I always enjoy my discussions with you. You're a visionary leader

who cares deeply about the people of Panama.

I can remember very fondly my visit to your country. I remember going to the Panama Canal, and I was impressed by the operations, impressed by the scope of the Canal. And you told me that, for the good of the world, "We're going to build an adjunct to the Canal." And I said, "Well, that's an ambitious agenda." And then, sure enough, as you sit here now, you tell me it's going to come to be. So I congratulate you on having a vision, and I congratulate you on being a leader.

I'm impressed by the economic statistics that we talked about. You told me that you care deeply about your people and you want them working, and they're working. The unemployment rate is down. Commerce is beginning to expand. And that's positive news for Panama, it's positive news for Central America, and it's also good news for us in America.

I appreciate so very much your desire to work out any differences we have on a free trade agreement. I am committed to a Panamanian free trade agreement because I believe it's in the interest of the United States that we have a free trade agreement with your vital country. And I assure you that we'll work in good faith to get an agreement done, and I will call upon the United States Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to support this deal that will help both nations.

We had an interesting discussion about biofuels. I reminded the President that I said in the State of the Union Address that the United States is committed to having

about 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels as a part of our fuel mix within a 10-year period of time. Biofuels means ethanol, or biofuels means fuel derived from palm.

It just so happens, Panama has got the capacity to make a lot of biofuels. And I believe your capacity to make biofuels and our desire to use biofuels will make an interesting match as we work to become less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment.

And so I appreciate so very much your vision on that issue as well. I'm looking forward to working with you. And once again, *bienvenidos aqui*.

*President Torrijos Espino. Gracias, Presidente.* Thank you.

I'm very pleased and recognize your commitment for pushing the free trade agenda and trying to finish the free trade agreement with Panama and the rest of the Latin American countries. And also, I'm very satisfied to know that Latin America is still a very important part of your international agenda, with your trip that's coming next, and of course, all the cooperation that we can have in research of biofuels will help all of our countries be less dependent on oil, have more opportunity for our economies to grow.

So it's been, as always, a very sincere and a very fruitful meeting with you, President.

*President Bush. Gracias, amigo. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Ambassador-Designate to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker February 16, 2007

*The President.* I just had a lengthy conversation with our nominee to be the Am-

bassador from the United States to Iraq. I've gotten to know Ambassador Ryan

Crocker during my time as President because he's been—fulfilled a very important mission for the United States, and that is the Ambassador to Pakistan, where he served ably and served well. And I'm confident I picked the right man to be our new Ambassador in Iraq.

The Ambassador will follow General David Petraeus into Iraq. So now we've got a new military commander and a new head of our diplomatic mission there. These are two competent individuals who will help us implement our new strategy in the country of Iraq. And that new strategy has said that we're going to help this young Iraqi Government be able to sustain itself and defend itself by enforcing security in the capital city.

I was telling the Ambassador that I had a visit today with Prime Minister Maliki via secure SVTS. I was pleased that he's meeting benchmarks that he had set out for his Government. One of the benchmarks was to move Iraqi troops into the city of Baghdad—troops that will be complemented by our own troops. He is meeting those obligations. A second such benchmark is that he would change the rules of engagement so that criminals, regardless of their religion, would be brought to justice in equal fashion. He is meeting that benchmark. Thirdly, he passed a budget, of which \$10 billion is available for reconstruction. He said he would do that; the budget has been passed; he has met that benchmark. And that's good news for the Iraqi people, and it should give people here in the United States confidence that this Government knows its responsibilities and

is following through on those responsibilities.

And so the Ambassador heads into a really important assignment, carrying a message of hope to the Iraqi people that the United States wants them to succeed, and a message of urgency to the Iraqi Government that our patience is not unlimited and that we expect that Government to perform. And as I said, I was able to tell the Prime Minister how much, how closely we're watching, that we've got a good, new man coming as Ambassador, and that we appreciate the fact that he's beginning to meet the benchmarks that he set out for his people.

Mr. Ambassador, Godspeed, and thank you.

*Ambassador-designate Crocker.* Thank you, sir. Pleased to have your confidence.

*The President.* Thank you.

By the way, we're looking forward to quick Senate confirmation. He's had his hearing. And of course, when I call him "Ambassador," it's not Ambassador to Iraq—it's Ambassador-designee to Iraq—but Ambassador now in Pakistan. And the Senate needs to confirm him as quickly as possible so he can join General Petraeus and do the job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

## The President's Radio Address *February 17, 2007*

Good morning. Today I would like to talk to you about an urgent priority for

our Nation: confronting the rising costs of health care.

In my State of the Union Address, I invited Democrats and Republicans in Congress to work with my administration to reform our health care system. In the past few weeks, I've discussed my health care proposals with citizens across our country. Next week, I'll visit a hospital in Tennessee to hear directly from people who do not have access to basic, affordable health insurance. I will also meet with a panel of experts at the White House to discuss how we can build a vibrant market where individuals can buy their own health insurance.

The problem with our current system is clear: Health care costs are rising rapidly, more than twice as fast as wages. These rising costs are driving up the price of health insurance and making it harder for working families to afford coverage. These rising costs also make it harder for small businesses to offer health coverage to their employees. We must address these rising costs so that more Americans can afford basic private health insurance.

One of the most promising ways to make private coverage more affordable and accessible is to reform the Tax Code. Today, the Tax Code unfairly penalizes people who do not get health insurance through their job. If you buy health insurance on your own, you pay much more after taxes than if you get it through your job. I proposed to end this unfair bias in the Tax Code by creating a standard tax deduction for every American who has health insurance, whether they get it through their job or on their own.

For example, every family that has health insurance would get a \$15,000 deduction on their taxes. This deduction would also apply to payroll taxes so that even those who pay no income taxes would benefit. Americans deserve a level playing field. If you're self-employed, a farmer, a rancher, or an employee at a small business who buys health insurance on your own, you should get the same tax advantage as those who get their health insurance through their job at a big business.

At the same time, I proposed Affordable Choices grants to help States provide coverage for the uninsured. Governors across our country have put forward innovative ideas for health care reform. Under my proposal, States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens would receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. Next week, the Nation's Governors will come to Washington to discuss challenges facing their States. I've asked my Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mike Leavitt, to meet with the Governors and discuss ways we can work together to help reduce the number of uninsured Americans.

Reforming health care is a bipartisan priority. Earlier this week, I was pleased to receive a letter from 10 Senators—5 Democrats and 5 Republicans—who expressed their desire to work together on health care reform. I look forward to discussing our proposals and hearing more about their ideas. I appreciate the commitment of this bipartisan group to work with my administration, and I will continue to reach across party lines to enact common-sense health care reforms.

From my conversations with Democrats and Republicans, it is clear both parties recognize that strengthening health care for all Americans is one of our most important responsibilities. I am confident that if we put politics aside, we can find practical ways to improve our private health care system and help millions of Americans enjoy better care, new choices, and healthier lives.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8 a.m. on February 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 16, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press

Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Honoring President George Washington's 275th Birthday in  
Mount Vernon, Virginia  
*February 19, 2007*

Thank you all for coming. Laura and I are honored to be with you in this historic place on this special anniversary. I feel right at home here. After all, this is the home of the first George W. [Laughter] I thank President Washington for welcoming us today. He doesn't look a day over 275 years old. [Laughter]

We're really glad you're here. I look out and see a lot of the kids who are here today. When I was your age, I was a little fellow from Midland, Texas, and my grandmother brought me here. And then Laura and I brought our daughters here. And the reason I bring this up, this is a good place for Americans to come and bring your families. And we welcome you here today.

You know, we're celebrating around the country President's Day, but the folks that work here call it Washington's birthday. We've been celebrating this holiday for more than two centuries, and this morning we continue this tradition by honoring a man who was our first President, the Father of our Country, and a champion of liberty.

I appreciate Gay Gaines and the—regent of Mount Vernon Ladies Association. I appreciate Jim Rees, who is the executive director. I thank Togo West, who is the chairman of the Mount Vernon Advisory Committee. I appreciate the military who have joined us. General, thank you for being here today with us. I thank the members who work hard to make sure that Mount Vernon is preserved for the future. And I thank all of—you all for being here.

You know, George Washington was born about 80 miles down the river from Mount

Vernon in the year 1732. As a young man, he went West and explored the frontier, and it changed his life. As he grew older, he became convinced that America had a great westward destiny as a nation of free people, independent of the empires of Europe. George Washington became the central figure in our Nation's struggle for independence. At age 43, he took command of the Continental Army. At age 51, he was a triumphant hero of the war. And at age 57, he was the obvious and only choice to be the first President of the United States.

With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to take George Washington's successes for granted and to assume that all those events were destined to unfold as they did. Well, the truth is far different. America's path to freedom was long, and it was hard, and the outcome was really never certain. Honoring George Washington's life requires us to remember the many challenges that he overcame and the fact that American history would have turned out very differently without his steady leadership.

On the field of battle, Washington's forces were facing a mighty empire, and the odds against them were overwhelming. The ragged Continental Army lost more battles than it won, suffered waves of desertions, and stood on the brink of disaster many times. Yet George Washington's calm hand and determination kept the cause of independence and the principles of our declaration alive.

He rallied his troops to brilliant victories at Trenton and Princeton. He guided them through the terrible winter at Valley Forge.

And he marched them to Virginia for the war's final battle at Yorktown. In the end, General Washington understood that the Revolutionary War was a test of wills, and his will was unbreakable.

After winning the war, Washington did what victorious leaders rarely did at the time: he voluntarily gave up power. Many would have gladly made George Washington the king of America. Yet all he wanted to do was return here to Mount Vernon and to be with his loving wife Martha. As he wrote with satisfaction to his friend Lafayette: "I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig tree."

George Washington's retirement did not last long. In the years after the Revolution, America's freedom was still far from secure. There were uprisings and revolts. States argued over their borders. And under the Articles of Confederation, the Federal Government was virtually powerless. With the United States in crisis, George Washington was called back to public life to preside over a convention of the States. And the result was the United States Constitution and a new executive office called the Presidency.

When the American people chose Washington for the role, he reluctantly accepted. He wrote a friend: "My movement to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution." George Washington accepted the Presidency because the office needed him, not because he needed the office.

As President, George Washington understood that his decisions would shape the future of our young Nation and set precedent. He formed the first Cabinet, appointed the first judges, and issued the first veto. He also helped oversee the construction of a new Federal city between the Northern and Southern States. The Nation's new Capital would take his name, and George Washington hoped it would in-

spire Americans to put the welfare of their Nation above sectional loyalties.

This son of Virginia had come to see himself first and foremost as an American, and he urged his fellow citizens to do the same. More than two centuries later, the story of George Washington continues to bring Americans together. Every year, about a million people visit Mount Vernon to learn about this good man's life. We find the best of America in his spirit and our highest hopes for ourselves in his character. His honesty and courage have become the stuff of legend. Children are taught to revere his name and leaders to look to him for strength in uncertain times.

George Washington's long struggle for freedom has also inspired generation of Americans to stand for freedom in their own time. Today, we're fighting a new war to defend our liberty and our people and our way of life. And as we work to advance the cause of freedom around the world, we remember that the Father of our Country believed that the freedoms we secured in our Revolution were not meant for Americans alone. He once wrote: "My best wishes are irresistibly excited whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom."

President Washington believed that the success of our democracy would also depend on the virtue of our citizens. In his farewell address to the American people, he said: "Morality is a necessary spring of popular government." Over the centuries, America has succeeded because we have always tried to maintain the decency and the honor of our first President.

His example guided us in his time; it guides us in our time; and it will guide us for all time. Thank you for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:04 a.m. at the Estate Mansion. The proclamation of February 16 titled 275th Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.



Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocols to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region  
*February 15, 2007*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (the “Protocol”) to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, with Annexes, done at Oranjestad, Aruba, on October 6, 1999, and signed by the United States on that same date. The report of the Secretary of State is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the “Cartagena Convention”) is a regional framework agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Regional Seas Program of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). It sets out general legal obligations to protect the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, Straits of Florida, Caribbean Sea, and immediately adjacent areas of the Atlantic Ocean—collectively known as the Wider Caribbean Region. The United States became a Party to the Cartagena Convention in 1984. The Cartagena Convention envisions the development of protocols to further elaborate certain of its general obligations and to facilitate its effective implementation.

Negotiated with the active participation and leadership of the United States, the Protocol addresses one of the most serious sources of marine pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region. It is estimated that 70 to 90 percent of pollution entering the marine environment emanates from land-based sources and activities. Among the principal land-based sources of marine pollution in the Caribbean are domestic waste-

water and agricultural nonpoint source runoff. Such pollution contributes to the degradation of coral reefs and commercial fisheries, negatively affects regional economies, and endangers public health, recreation, and tourism throughout the region.

The Protocol and its Annexes list priority source categories, activities, and associated contaminants that affect the Wider Caribbean Region, and set forth factors that Parties will be required to apply in determining prevention, reduction, and control strategies to manage land-based sources of pollution. In particular, the Parties are required to ensure that domestic wastewater discharges meet specific effluent limitations, and to develop plans for the prevention and reduction of agricultural nonpoint source pollution. The Protocol is expected to raise standards for treating domestic wastewater throughout the region to levels close to those already in place in the United States.

The United States would be able to implement its obligations under the Protocol under existing statutory and regulatory authority.

The Protocol is the first regional agreement to establish effluent standards to protect one of our most valuable resources, the marine environment. It differs markedly from other, similar regional agreements in its conceptual approach and the specificity of its obligations. As such, the Protocol is expected to set a new standard for regional agreements on this subject. Early ratification will demonstrate our continued commitment to global leadership and to the protection of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol

and its Annexes, with the declaration described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
February 15, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 20.

## Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for J. Michael McConnell as Director of National Intelligence

February 20, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Good morning. I'm proud to be here at Bolling Air Force Base to congratulate Mike McConnell on becoming our Nation's second Director of National Intelligence. I'm really pleased that Mike's wife Terry, his four children—Erin, Mark, Jennifer, and Christine—their grandchildren, his sister—[*laughter*—]and other family members have joined us. It's a big deal to watch your dad and granddad get sworn in to a position of this importance.

I appreciate members of my administration who have joined us, in particular the Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates; General Michael Hayden, Director of the CIA; Bob Mueller, Director of the FBI; and other important figures too numerous to mention. Thank you for serving our country.

I appreciate the members of the intelligence community who have joined us. Part of the reason I have come is to honor this good man, and part of the reason I have come is to honor your good work. This Nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

The Director of National Intelligence holds one of the most difficult and important positions in our Government. In this time of war—and we are a nation at war—the President and his national security team must have the best intelligence about the plans and purpose of the enemy. And the job of the Director of National Intelligence is to ensure that we do. The Director of National Intelligence is the President's

principal adviser on intelligence matters. He is also the leader of our entire intelligence community. He advises me about the national intelligence budget. He oversees the collection and analysis of intelligence information. He works to ensure that all of our intelligence agencies and offices work together as a single, unified enterprise.

These are enormous challenges, and Mike McConnell has the experience and the character and the talent to meet them. He spent most of his adult life working in the intelligence world. He served as the executive assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence, as the chief of naval forces division at the National Security Agency, as director of intelligence for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Operation Desert Storm, and as the Director for the National Security Agency. He's got a solid resume.

He also earned our Nation's highest award for service in the intelligence field. He not only has got a good resume, he backed it up with good action. His work over a career spanning three decades is earning the admiration of his colleagues, the respect of the intelligence community, and a reputation in Washington for personal integrity and effective leadership. In short, you're going to like working with him—[*laughter*—]and so am I.

Mike's long experience gives him a unique understanding of the threats we face in this new century. He knows that

the terrorists who struck America on September the 11th, 2001, are determined to strike our Nation again. He understands that the enemy uses the tools of our modern economy—from rapid transportation to instant communications to global finance—to spread their extremist ideology and facilitate new attacks.

He knows that his task as the Director of National Intelligence is to make certain that America stays ahead of this enemy and learns their intentions before they strike. He knows that we must stop them from harming our citizens, that the most important task of this Government of ours is to protect the American people.

In his new position, Mike builds on the work of an outstanding leader of our intelligence community, Ambassador John Negroponte. The creation of the Director of National Intelligence was one of the most important reforms enacted in response to the attacks of September the 11th. John Negroponte was the first person to fill this new and essential position. He did so with talent and distinction.

During his time in office, John established the DNI as a core member of my national security team. He increased the unity of our intelligence community. He helped strengthen our national counterterrorism capabilities and improved information sharing between our intelligence and law enforcement communities.

John's vision and vigilance helped keep the American people safe from harm. I appreciate his leadership as America's first Director of National Intelligence, and I thank him for agreeing to continue to serve our country as Deputy Secretary of State.

Mike McConnell will expand on the vital reforms that John Negroponte set in motion. I've asked Mike to focus on several key areas. I've asked him to better integrate the intelligence community, making our different intelligence agencies and offices stronger, more collaborative, and better focused on the needs of their customers.

I've asked him to improve information sharing within the intelligence community and with officials at all levels of our Government, so everyone responsible for the security of our communities has the intelligence they need to do their jobs. I've asked him to ensure that our intelligence agency focus on bringing in more Americans with language skills and cultural awareness necessary to meet the threats of this new century. I've asked him to restore agility and excellence to our acquisition community and ensure that our Nation invest in the right intelligence technologies. I've asked him to ensure that America has the dynamic intelligence collection and high-quality analysis that we need to protect our country and to win this war against these extremists and radicals.

As he carries out his new duties, Mike McConnell will be relying on the thousands of dedicated intelligence professionals who work day and night to keep us safe. They are America's first line of defense against the terrorists. And while many of their accomplishments must remain secret to our fellow citizens, those accomplishments are known to me. And they're doing good work. You're doing good work. And the American people owe you a strong debt of gratitude. I appreciate your willingness to take on the difficult and dangerous assignments. And you just need to know, you've got the full support of this Government and the American people.

Our intelligence community is going to have an able leader in Mike McConnell. I want to thank Congress for swiftly confirming Mike to this vital position. I look forward to working with him as a key member of my national security team. I'm anxious to have him in that Oval Office every morning. *[Laughter]* I hope he's anxious to show up. *[Laughter]*

He'll find that I value the intelligence products that you create. He's going to find

that the intelligence product is an important part of my strategic thought and important part of helping me get this Government to respond to do our most important duty, which is to protect you. I look forward to working with Mike. I'm comfortable in knowing this is a good man who cares about one thing only, and that's his country. And I thank his family for sup-

porting him as he returns to Government service.

And now I ask my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, to administer the oath of office.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. at Bolling Air Force Base. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director McConnell.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Care *February 20, 2007*

I just had a very interesting discussion with people who are deeply concerned about the status of health care in America today. These men and women around the table are charged with designing products for businesses, both large and small, and individuals.

And I discussed my health care plan that would allow—would equalize the Tax Code so that the individual would be more likely to be able to purchase a plan, because I believe a good health care system is one that rewards the consumer, encourages the consumer, and makes sure the consumer has got the capacity to make viable choices. And when you have consumers in charge of their health care decisions, it is a force that is likely to keep the health care costs down.

And so part of our discussion was, how do we encourage the development of an individual market? And I thank you very much for your insights and your concerns about the current health—the state of health care today in America.

I have the duty to talk to the American people about what I think will be a better alternative than one in which the Federal

Government makes the health care decisions for the patient and the provider. And I laid out such a plan in my State of the Union.

And now I call upon Members of the Congress to analyze this plan very carefully, to recognize the best decisions are made between the patients and their providers, and to work with the administration in a bipartisan fashion to make sure that health care is accessible and affordable for as many Americans as is possible.

We have a duty here in Washington to take care of the poor, the disabled, and the elderly, and we're meeting that duty. And now we have a duty to make sure the health care system is responsive to the American people, and I look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to do just that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:53 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Chattanooga, Tennessee  
February 21, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm honored to be here. Jim, thank you. We just toured a pretty fantastic hospital. He talked about robotics that are being used to operate on. He said that I was on the machine, and he's right, but there wasn't anybody at the other end of the machine, you'll be happy to hear. [Laughter]

I want to talk today about health care. I see people wearing our uniform; I want to thank you for wearing the uniform. I am the Commander in Chief, and proudly so. I'm also the educator in chief. The job of the educator in chief is to try to educate people about different ways to solve major problems facing our country, and we've got a problem with health care. It's not affordable, and it's not accessible to too many of our people. And the fundamental question is how to deal with it. And so today we're going to have a conversation with experts. We've got people who call themselves experts, like me and the Secretary and the Governor. And we got people who are living experts because they're having to deal with the health care problems.

And so I want to thank you for joining us. I particularly want to say thanks to Michael Leavitt, who is the Secretary of Health and Human Services. I asked him to join my Cabinet. He came from the State of Utah, where he was a Governor. I happen to believe Governors know how to set agendas and know how to achieve results. You've got you such a Governor here in the State of Tennessee as well. And, Mr. Governor, we appreciate you joining us. Mike and—[applause].

I think you're going to find it interesting as we discuss the proper relationship between the Federal Government and States, as we design programs that help individuals be in charge of their health care decisions.

And so we're going to have a discussion with some of your fellow citizens here, and I want to thank you all for joining us. It seemed like a pretty good idea when you accepted—[laughter]—and then you got out here—look at all the people and cameras. Anyway, I think you're going to find it interesting. I know I'm looking forward to hearing what you all have to say.

I'm keeping pretty good company today, as you can see. Not only have we got the Governor; we've got the Lieutenant Governor with us today. Lieutenant Governor Ramsey is with us. Thanks for coming. There he is, yes, Ramsey.

I am very proud of you—the Senators you've got up there—that you sent up to Washington. The senior Senator, Lamar Alexander—appreciate you coming, Lamar. Proud to be here. He's a good, thoughtful guy, who, by the way, paid me and Laura a high compliment the other day in the newspapers in Tennessee when he noticed that we had worked hard to increase the budget of the National Park System, thereby directly benefiting the people who care about the parks in eastern Tennessee. And so thank you for not only helping us get that piece of legislation into the process; I'm looking forward to getting it passed during the appropriations process.

The other United States Senator is a fellow you know pretty well, a man who made his marks in paving the roads and filling the potholes, former mayor Bob Corker. Thanks for coming.

And finally, the United States Congressman—all he talks about is "Chatt-town," every time I see him. He says, "You remember Chattanooga, now, Mr. President, don't you?" [Laughter] "You came here when you were not in public office. We expect you to come back in public office." And I'm glad, Zach, that I finally listened to you when it came to my travel schedule.

I'm really thrilled to be here in this beautiful part of our country, and I'm also proud to be in the presence of your Congressman, Zach Wamp. Thanks for being here.

We got the mayor with us today—the mayors. We got the mayor, Ron Littlefield, of Chattanooga. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming; proud to have you here. Mayor Claude Ramsey of Hamilton County. I told the mayor, I said, “In Texas, we call them county judges.” [Laughter] So I said, “I might just call you ‘Judge.’” And he said, “Well, Mr. President, you can call me whatever you want to call me.” [Laughter] Mayor, thanks for coming; appreciate you being here.

I do want to thank the good folks who work at Erlanger. Thanks for putting up with me and the entourage. We really had a wonderful tour. And the truth of the matter is, you can put all the robotics you want in a hospital, or all the x rays; what really matters is the compassion and care given by people. And so I want to thank the docs and the nurses and the staff of that wonderful facility for being on the leading edge of compassion.

It was really interesting, a couple of docs showed us some stroke recovery procedures, and one of the examples was a 26-year-old woman who got a stroke, and she couldn't talk. And then the next film they put up there was her talking, and how happy she was. And it had to make you feel great, doc, to know that you saved somebody's life. And so I thank you.

And the mission, by the way, of government is to make sure that the quality of health care received by our patients around this country remains the best in the world. Private medicine works. And we need to make sure that we put good policies in place to make sure private medicine is the norm, quality care is given to as many Americans as possible. And that's what we're here to discuss.

Now, look, we got a problem, and the problem is, health care costs are rising too

fast for a lot of our individuals and small-business owners. Here's one of them right here. He's about to testify—[laughter]—about the rising cost of health care, see. Individuals are being priced out of the market. And so what is the proper policy to deal with it? You sent us up to Washington to identify problems, but you also sent us up there to identify solutions. And so I want to share some solutions with you today, some ideas that I hope the Members of Congress take seriously.

A first philosophical note is that the best decisions are made by providers and patients, not by government or insurance companies. In other words, if you want a health care system that really works, you want the decisionmaker to be the individual, in consultation with somebody who knows what they're talking about, somebody trained to help that person make the proper decision; that would be your doctor.

Secondly, that when it comes time to helping people who need help, it makes sense for us to make sure the Federal Government does its job and to work in concert with States. Now, I believe the Federal Government has a solemn responsibility to take care of the sick—I mean, the disabled, the elderly, and the poor. We have made that commitment, and we've got to honor that commitment.

Recently, we took on a big issue in the Congress, and that was to make sure that the Medicare system provided modern medicine for our seniors. And we passed new legislation that said, we're going to help with pharmaceutical drugs, that for the poor, they'll get their pharmaceuticals; but for those who aren't poor, they'll have some choices to make about how best to suit their needs when it comes to medicine. See, I believe in choice. I told you: I want those patients making the decisions.

And guess what? It's working. Part D reform for Medicare is working. I congratulate the Secretary on helping implement this piece of legislation.



My point to you is, is that we take our responsibility seriously. We want to make sure there's adequate funding, and we will. We want to make sure that funding ends up in the hands of people who need help.

Other ways to control costs are to make sure that we introduce information technology into health care. If you want to be honest about it—I think we probably ought to be—a lot of health care is kind of lagging behind the rest of the country when it comes to IT. I mean, they're still filling out forms by hand, doctors signing things, which leads to, sometimes, confusion, since doctors can't write very well. [Laughter] Paper gets lost. Files move around, and they get reshuffled the wrong way. We need to help make sure that health care is as modern as other aspects of our society. We want people to have a medical identification record that you can take with you—by the way, that is secure from people snooping.

I'll tell you an interesting example of that is, our Veterans Affairs Department has done a good job of providing individualized health care records on the computers. And so when Katrina hit in New Orleans, all the files were destroyed for a lot of the health care providers, but each individual vet had his own health care chip. And so when they went to Houston, for example, they were able to take that, plug it into a computer. The doctors there at the VA was able to see what the previous treatments were or what the person needed, and there was a seamless transition from care in New Orleans to care in a VA place somewhere else.

And so we've got—we're working on that, and the Federal Government can help. After all, we're a huge provider of health care. We want there to be price transparency in health care. I don't know about you, but I don't remember ever asking how much something was going to cost when it came to health care. I do when it comes to a car—or I used to. [Laughter] I will soon. [Laughter] But there's not

many consumers asking: "What does it cost, doc? And what's the quality of the product?"

And so there's—transparency in pricing will help control costs. It's amazing what happens when consumers are making decisions. And one way to help consumers to make decisions is to encourage systems that put consumers in charge of health care decisions, like health savings accounts. Like, if you're running a small business, you need to look at a health savings account. People can save money with health savings accounts. These are innovative products, innovative ways of providing insurance for yourself and your family, where you actually save money tax free if you don't spend money on yourself.

We believe there needs to be association health plans. I'm very worried about small businesses not being able to afford insurance but not nearly as worried as the CEOs of small businesses. It's got to pain somebody running a small business to know they can't provide their employee with the coverage they need. And yet small businesses aren't able to have the same advantages that big corporations get when it comes time to spreading risk across a lot of people they're insuring.

And so I believe small businesses ought to be able to pool risk across jurisdictional boundary. That's fancy words for, I think a restaurant in Chattanooga ought to be able to put their employees in the same risk pool as a restaurant from Houston, Texas, so you can spread risk. Those are called association health plans.

Here's another innovative way to help people be able to have affordable insurance. I strongly believe we've got to do something about lawsuits. I don't want to get too—[applause]. We've got a system in some States where you can't find an ob-gyn in a county because the lawsuits are running these good people out of the county. And by the way, it's running up the cost of medicine. A doc, whether they'll admit it to you or not, can't help but think

in the back of their mind: “I might get sued; I’m going to practice a little extra medicine.” That’s called the defensive practice of medicine. But it means that you’re paying more for health costs than are absolutely necessary. If I was a doctor and worried about a lawsuit, I’d be doing the same thing. I’d be protecting myself for fear of a lawsuit that could conceivably damage my capacity to stay in business.

And I happen to believe lawsuit reform is a national issue. When I first got up to Washington, Governor, I thought the States ought to take care of it. And then I found out that we’re spending about \$28 billion of your money as a result of the defensive practice of medicine. See, we spend a lot of money on Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs. And so when somebody is practicing extra medicine to avoid the consequences of a lawsuit, it’s costing our taxpayers money.

And I decided it was a national issue that requires a national response. And we hadn’t done a very good job of getting that liability bill passed out of the Senate, but these two Senators are with us. And I’m going to keep pushing, so long as I’m the President, to get good national liability reform so to make medicine more accessible and more affordable for more of our citizens.

You probably think I’m going to do all the talking. Yes. [*Laughter*] My wife—by the way, who sends her love—would tend to agree with you. [*Laughter*] By the way, I am a lucky man that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me, and I really—[*applause*]*—*I know this isn’t very objective, but I firmly believe the country is lucky to have her as the First Lady, I really do.

There are some ideas I just laid out for people to think about on how to deal with the rising cost of medicine. I’ve got an idea as to how to make sure people can get private insurance. We ought to be striving to help people buy insurance so that hospitals like Erlanger don’t have to pick up the tab.

So the fundamental question is, how do we help? Well, the Tax Code needs to be changed. If you work for a large corporation in Chattanooga, Tennessee, you get your health care free, basically. In other words, you don’t have to pay any tax on the benefits. If you work for a small company and that small company can’t afford your health care and you go out and buy health care on your own, you pay with after-tax dollars. In other words, it costs you more than the person who works for a large company to buy insurance, and that’s unfair.

We’re worried about helping make sure people can afford health care. But the Tax Code is so structured that if you’re an individual or somebody working for a company that can’t afford health care, you’re disadvantaged relative to a company that is a larger company.

And so here’s an idea that Congress needs to consider: If you’re married, got a family, and buying health care, you get a \$15,000 deduction from your income taxes, right off the top. It doesn’t matter whether you’re working for the largest company in Chattanooga or one of the smallest; you get that deduction. If you’re single, you get to deduct \$7,500 from your—not only your income tax but your payroll taxes. And the reason you do that—and you’re going to hear some examples of how this will help our fellow citizens—one, it helps somebody afford insurance; two, it will help in the development of a market for individuals in the insurance world.

Right now there’s a limited market for the individual. It makes it hard to find a product that either suits your needs or you can afford. The more policies written to meet the individual—in other words, the larger the risk pool—the more likely it is that costs will come down for the individualized policy. That’s just the way it works. Yet the Tax Code discourages the individual from being in the market.

Now, one of the concerns I have about such a plan is that some people can’t afford

insurance, some people won't be able to get insurance. This plan will help a lot of people afford it, like the uninsured, the working uninsured. Now, remember, the Government is going to take care of the poor—that's called Medicaid—and SCHIP, plus what the innovative policies Phil is doing here in Tennessee. The Government is going to take care of the elderly; we take care of the disabled. And here's a way to help people who are working uninsured afford insurance. We'll give you some examples here in a minute.

But I am also worried that there is—that the process will kind of leave out people who may have preexisting conditions. In other words, it's okay for the individual who's healthy to go get insurance, but how about the person that's not healthy? And therefore, Secretary Leavitt is designing a plan that says, we will give you flexibility with Federal money that we give you—to the State to help you design risk pools—like they're doing here in Tennessee—that will help you take care of the uninsurable, like you're doing here in Tennessee. In other words, it's a collaboration with the Federal Government and the State government to come up with innovative ways to deal with the issues as a result of adverse selectivity because of individual policies being the norm.

And so I'm going to have Leavitt start us off in talking about it. And by the way, in return for flexibility, we expect the States to design basic health care coverage—coverage that doesn't have all kinds of mandates on it; coverage that means somebody is more likely to be able to afford health care. And again, that's what the Governor has done here in Tennessee.

You've got yourself—you're on the leading edge of some really interesting ideas in your State. You really are. And I want Mike to kick off the discussions, and then we're going to bring the Governor in. And then—we're getting ready to talk among ourselves here. Anyway, Michael.

[At this point, Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt and Governor Philip N. Bredesen, Jr., of Tennessee made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Yes, Governor, thanks. It's really important for me and Mike to know that we've got Governors on the frontlines of health care decisionmaking, designing programs that meet the needs of your State. Truth of the matter is, I'd rather, Governor, you be making these decisions than some of our brothers and sisters in Washington. [Laughter]

*Gov. Bredesen.* I would agree with that, Mr. President.

*The President.* A couple of points—he said—you know, this is an interesting statistic—I think it's before age 30, most youngsters will have had, like, eight or nine jobs. Isn't that interesting? Baby boomers like us, we're not used to that kind of turnover in the job market, which means you better have health care policies that are able to follow the person.

One reason there's uncertainty in our economy is, people are worried about whether or not they're going to be able to have health insurance if they do what is the norm, which is to change jobs. And so I like the idea of the Governor designing a plan—health savings account has got the same sense of portability—you can take it with you. It's your—you own the deal.

And the other thing he talked about: preventative care. I want to remind you; it doesn't cost any money to walk outside and walk for a couple of miles. Make sure when you ride your mountain bike, you don't crash on caliche. [Laughter]

We've got Joe Cofer with us—mighty doctor.

*Joe Cofer.* Thank you, President Bush.

*The President.* What kind of doc are you?

*Dr. Cofer.* Surgeon.

*The President.* Oh, yes?

*Dr. Cofer.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* And what kind?

*Dr. Cofer.* General surgeon.

*The President.* Feeling pretty good here, by the way, thank you. [Laughter]

*Dr. Cofer.* If you need something out, let me know.

*The President.* Yes. You're working at Erlanger?

*Dr. Cofer.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Good. Do you like working there?

*Dr. Cofer.* I love it.

*The President.* I guess otherwise you wouldn't be working there. [Laughter]

*Dr. Cofer.* I'd still be working there. [Laughter]

*The President.* Oh, that's right. Yes. That's a smart thing, the old boss is sitting over there—[laughter]. Give us your concerns. What's on your mind?

*Dr. Cofer.* Well, I think that the plans you've set forth are very important. I think we've got to develop health care for those that are uninsured, and I'd like to tell you about what we've done with Project Access.

*The President.* I'd like to hear it.

*Dr. Cofer.* Okay. First, let me welcome you and Secretary Leavitt, from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, from Erlanger Hospital, and all the physicians who practice here in Hamilton County. Thank you for coming to Chattanooga, the best kept secret in America, and thank you for coming here to talk about health care.

*The President.* Working the chamber of commerce angle, that's good. [Laughter]

*Dr. Cofer.* That's right.

*The President.* Yes. Don't forget the Governor now; the University of Tennessee has got the budget, right?

[*Dr. Cofer, surgeon, Erlanger Hospital—Baroness Campus, and chairman, Project Access, made further remarks.*]

*The President.* You know, the great strength of the country is not our military, nor the size of our wallets; it's the size of our hearts and the compassion for fellow citizens. I appreciate, doc, what you're doing. We have an admonition to love our

neighbor like we'd like to be loved ourself. A government cannot make people love one another. That happens when loving citizens decide: I'm going to help solve a problem.

And I thank you for recognizing that the Federal Government and the State government can't solve all the problems. Instead of waiting around for them to do something they cannot possibly do, you have stood up and done it yourself. And for that, I congratulate you and thank you and the citizens.

Our job is to keep the economy growing as best we can so people are able to help themselves and get out of poverty and be able to afford health care, and to do smart policies to be able to make sure that the uninsured numbers shrink. That's the objective. That's the goal. That's why Phil is doing what he's doing. That's why I'm suggesting that Congress revisit the Tax Code to make it easier for citizens to be able to afford insurance.

We've got Danny Jennings with us. Welcome, Danny. You're married?

*Danny Jennings.* Yes.

*The President.* Yes, you are. And how many children?

*Mr. Jennings.* Two.

*The President.* Ages?

*Mr. Jennings.* Eight and ten.

*The President.* They're Chattanooga baseball fans?

*Mr. Jennings.* Probably will be after this. [Laughter]

*The President.* That's good. Yes. What do you do for a living?

*Mr. Jennings.* I manage a nursery in McMinnville, Tennessee.

*The President.* Really? Fantastic. Now's your chance if you want to put a pitch out there for some rhododendron. [Laughter]

*Mr. Jennings.* Those are coming in soon, by the way. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, yes, see. I'm just showing off a little—flora. [Laughter]

Tell me about your health care. Are you insured?

*Mr. Jennings.* No. At the present time, no. I'm in between insurance companies. I've had problems in the past with the rising cost of health insurance and, of course, the deductibles. And then there's pre-existing conditions, which drive the price up even more.

*The President.* Yes. So here's a guy that's got two children.

*Mr. Jennings.* Yes.

*The President.* Eight and ten—and young family in America has got no health insurance. And it's got to be a little bit intimidating for you.

*Mr. Jennings.* Oh, absolutely. I own my own home, and yes, that's very intimidating.

*The President.* One of the reasons I've asked Danny to come is because I want to help you understand how the standard deduction, in his case, of \$15,000, will help him better afford health insurance. As I understand it right now, that when you—it costs Danny about \$450 a month to be able to get insurance to cover his family's needs.

*Mr. Jennings.* Yes.

*The President.* If we can get Congress to change the Tax Code—now, here's a fellow working for a small company that does not have insurance, can't afford to go in the market himself. But if we can get the standard deduction passed so that he's able to deduct \$15,000 off his income tax and payroll tax, he saves about \$4,500 a year in taxes, which means that the cost per month for him and his family for health insurance goes down to \$47 a month when you apply the tax savings.

The reason I asked Danny to come is because I want you to understand that the standard deduction can mean a lot to a fellow who's working and trying to be able to afford private health insurance. In other words, there's more money in his pocket as a result of the tax standard deduction, and there's more peace of mind knowing that his kids and that he and his wife are covered.

*Mr. Jennings.* Absolutely.

*The President.* So I want you to do me a favor. You don't need to write Wamp; he's on board. We'll find you another Congressman to write. [Laughter] Sounds pretty good.

*Mr. Jennings.* Absolutely.

*The President.* Yes, I think it will work for you, Danny. I really do. And Danny, I'm concerned about a lot of our citizens, but I don't like to think about a society where the cost of health care has gotten such that a fellow who is trying to do the best he can for his family—got him a house, got him a steady job, but he can't afford health care. And here's one idea for the people of this—for the Congress to think about. Lets Danny make the decision; he gets to buy health insurance; but he's got 4,500 extra dollars to do so on an annual basis.

*Mr. Jennings.* Definitely.

*The President.* Thanks for coming.

*Mr. Jennings.* Thank you.

*The President.* Marty Ginn.

*Martha "Marty" Ginn.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Glad you're with us.

*Ms. Ginn.* I'm glad to be here.

*The President.* What do you do for a living, besides being—she's got the toughest job in America, and that's being a single mom. That's the toughest job, by the way, in my judgment. So what do you do?

*Ms. Ginn.* I'm an office manager in McMinnville, Tennessee. I've been working there for about 10 years.

*The President.* Good.

*Ms. Ginn.* And I love it.

*The President.* Do you?

*Ms. Ginn.* Yes, I do. I'm very good at it.

*The President.* It's important to have high job satisfaction. Are you good at it?

*Ms. Ginn.* Yes, sir. [Laughter]

*The President.* Give the girl a raise, will you? [Laughter] And so do you have health insurance?

*Ms. Ginn.* No, sir.



*The President.* Yes, so you work for a company that does not offer health insurance?

*Ms. Ginn.* Yes, sir. I have a—I have inquired on some insurance, but I have a preexisting condition—I have trouble with my left knee—and the quotes were just outrageous. So I'm just kind of stuck.

*The President.* So you'd rather go without insurance—or not rather go—you just can't afford it. Let me put it that way.

*Ms. Ginn.* Well, there you go.

*The President.* It's not a matter of rather; it's a matter of necessity.

*Ms. Ginn.* Can't afford it.

*The President.* Yes. Since Marty is a single person, she gets to deduct \$7,500 off of income and payroll taxes, which would yield her about \$1,900 in savings on an annual basis, which could then be applied toward health insurance. In other words, Marty can't afford health insurance; the plan needs to—we've got to have something in government to help encourage people who cannot afford health insurance to do so. One is to help deal with the cost, and we've laid out some ways to do it, but another is to change the Tax Code.

She doesn't get the same benefit when she buys health insurance as somebody working for a larger company. That's patently unfair. I know it wasn't designed that way when they did that in the health care system. But it's unfair for her. And all I'm going to ask from people in Congress is, be fair. Treat the Martyrs of the world in a fair way. And we believe in treating her fairly; she'll be able to better afford health care.

*Ms. Ginn.* That would be great. [Laughter]

*The President.* Yes. Good. And you've got your daughter out there. She's 21?

*Ms. Ginn.* My son.

*The President.* Your son? Yes.

*Ms. Ginn.* My son.

*The President.* As I said, your son. [Laughter]

*Ms. Ginn.* Trust me; he's a son. [Laughter]

*The President.* That's good. Is he listening to his mother?

*Ms. Ginn.* He always does.

*The President.* Yes. Mine can't say the same thing. [Laughter]

*Ms. Ginn.* The Marines taught him well.

*The President.* He's a marine?

*Ms. Ginn.* Yes.

*The President.* Yes, ma'am. I appreciate it. I know you're proud of him. Where is he? Is he out there? Yes, sir. Thanks for serving. Thank you. Yes, sir. He yelled, "Semper Fi," at the Commander in Chief—proudly received.

*Audience member.* Hooah!

*The President.* There you are. [Laughter] Okay. That's enough. [Laughter]

Amy Childers—isn't that right?

*Amy Childers.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* So are you gainfully employed?

*Ms. Childers.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Like, what do you do?

*Ms. Childers.* I'm an interior designer in Nashville, Tennessee.

*The President.* Great. You came over with the Governor?

*Ms. Childers.* I did.

*The President.* That's good—from the same area. Nashville is an exciting town, isn't it?

*Ms. Childers.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* It really is a vibrant town; it's an exciting place. Thanks for coming. And so who do you work for?

*Ms. Childers.* I work for Lumen Lamps.

*The President.* Yes. That means you sell lamps?

*Ms. Childers.* I do. [Laughter]

*The President.* I'm occasionally in the market. [Laughter] And so what's your—give us a feel—your company—once again, she works for a company that does not provide health insurance.

*Ms. Childers.* We are a very small company. I'm the only full-time employee besides my employer, and he can't afford for



us. And so I turned 35 last summer and my—

*The President.* You don't look a day over 34. [Laughter]

*Ms. Childers.* Most people say 22, but thanks. [Laughter]

*The President.* Good one. Yes, I'm not running again. [Laughter]

*Ms. Childers.* I'll let you slide. [Laughter]

*The President.* Who invited Amy? Where is the guy? [Laughter]

*Ms. Childers.* Okay. So I turned 35, and my cover went from \$130 a month to \$210. So my dad wasn't supposed to know this—I dropped that health insurance—

*The President.* He knows it now. [Laughter]

*Ms. Childers.* Yes, he does.

*The President.* I hate to tell you, Amy, but see those cameras back there? [Laughter]

*Ms. Childers.* He's over there.

*The President.* Where is your dad? Is he here?

*Ms. Childers.* He is.

*The President.* Good. Okay, well, I'll see him afterwards.

*Ms. Childers.* All right.

*The President.* I'll cover for you. [Laughter] So anyway, you dropped your health insurance because—

*Ms. Childers.* It went up to \$210 a month, and so I got one that's \$5,000 deductible at \$100 a month.

*The President.* Here's the thing, Amy, look, I can't tell you how many people there are that work for small businesses who cannot afford insurance. I mean, a big slug of the uninsured in America works for small business companies; some, by the way, of the uninsured are young people who never think they're going to get sick and don't bother to buy insurance. But a big slug work for people that are struggling to make ends meet.

It's hard to be a small-business owner. It's hard to survive in a competitive world. And yet we've got to make sure our small businesses are strong; after all, they create

70 percent of the new jobs in America. We want the entrepreneurial spirit to be strong. One of the roadblocks to success is the cost of health care. And so here's a man who's got a small business. He has to make a difficult decision not to provide insurance for his employee. She has to decide.

Doesn't it make sense to change the Tax Code so that Amy Childers can better afford insurance? And so if she gets the \$7,500 deduction, she saves about \$2,000 a year—which means something other than the kind of plan you have is more affordable to you. Isn't that right?

*Ms. Childers.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Yes. See, the reason I've asked these three folks to come to talk about—first of all, I just want people to be able to identify with what it means to be in a society in which you either don't have health insurance or you don't have adequate coverage. And there's a lot of our citizens who are just that way, and we've got to do something about it. It's not right, and it's not fair.

And there's an interesting debate going on—how best to solve the problem. Some say, "Well, maybe the Federal Government ought to do it all." I don't believe that. I believe we can do a combination of good policy with the Tax Code, good policy to help those who we have an obligation to help, good policy with State, and good policy with charity, to make sure that we're able to provide that mosaic so that people can know that the society is better off as a result of accessible and affordable health care.

Now, we've got a man—thank you for coming, by the way. You did a wonderful job.

Will Smith, living the American Dream.

*Will Smith.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Is that an accurate statement?

*Mr. Smith.* Yes, it's a correct statement.

*The President.* You know, I love a society where a fellow like Will Smith says, "I want

to start my own business.” We want people from all across the country saying, “I want to take a risk and start my own business.” It’s good for the country. Ownership is good for the country. Creating jobs through the small-business sector is good for the country.

So tell us what you’re doing.

*Mr. Smith.* All right. I’m a developer, sir. I was one of the—we’re the largest real estate developer in the city right now.

*The President.* Really? Good. Married?

*Mr. Smith.* Yes, married—four kids.

*The President.* That’s good. And the name of your company?

*Mr. Smith.* It’s WAS Properties.

*The President.* Put his wife’s name in the deal. Will, and your wife’s name is Andrea?

*Mr. Smith.* Andrea.

*The President.* See, W–A. Get it? Will and Andrea? [*Laughter*] And Smith—S. [*Laughter*]

*Mr. Smith.* That’s correct.

*The President.* That is a smart move to put the wife’s name in the company. [*Laughter*] So what are your problems?

*Mr. Smith.* Well, I have 9 full-time employees, and I count my contractors, which is about 50—subcontractors, which is about 50 employees. And in the nine employees that I have full time, they’re not only just my employees; they’re part of my family, because they’ve been with me for about 4 or 5 years. And we just can’t afford insurance for them.

*The President.* First of all, I want you to hear the spirit that he just talked to me. He said, “These are my close friends.” In other words, these are more than just employees. A CEO of a small business views—many times—views the employees as family. And so he’s concerned about whether or not he is providing for his family, which is frankly an obligation of people who run a company. But the problem is, insurance has gotten too expensive to be able to do that, I guess.

*Mr. Smith.* Exactly.

*The President.* Yes. So I got an idea for you—two ideas. One is to look at health savings accounts—high deductible plans with a cash contribution to take care of ongoing medical expenses. If your employee does not spend the money, he or she gets to keep it and earn money tax-free and gets to save it; that’s one idea. You ought to take a look.

The other idea is—I know I’m beating a dead horse, but sometimes you have to say the same thing over and over and over again, and I’m going to say it one more time: We need to let Will and his employees be able to deduct the cost—a standard deduction off their income taxes so that he’s got just as good a chance to provide insurance for his employees that big companies do here in Chattanooga. That’s what we need to do. It is a really important idea.

I know that you’re looking and you’re scrambling, but it would be a lot easier if you were able to work with your employees because of the money that they save as a result of tax deductions.

*Mr. Smith.* That’s correct.

*The President.* And so the whole purpose, by the way, of this discussion is to help the individual, but to also help the entrepreneur do their duty. That’s why I’ve come. I’ve really come to say thanks to your Governor for being innovative. See, he’s helping lay out a basic health care plan. One of the problems we have at State level is that over time, a lot of mandates have been added to insurance. You know, the hair follicle benefit, well, you don’t need hair follicles, particularly if you have hair. [*Laughter*] If you’re going bald, you might think you do, but it’s probably not a necessary part of a health care plan.

I’m not saying that’s happening in Tennessee. [*Laughter*] But after a while—the Governor knows what I’m talking about, and so does this Governor—it’s hard to resist. And so they get—these insurance plans get all kinds of things added on to them, which makes the expense beyond the reach.

And so the Governor said: “Look, we’re going to try—well, that’s fine; we’ll have those plans; but we’re going to devise another plan too, just to provide for basic health care.” That will help his employees, and so will change in the Tax Code.

I firmly believe we can do a better job in helping people get private insurance than we’re doing today. Matter of fact—and we need to. See, the status quo is unacceptable. And so I’ve come to talk to you about some ideas, and I want to thank you for giving us the forum to do that. Ideas matter in the public life. And here’s an idea, a series of ideas.

I strongly urge both Republicans and Democrats to take a look at what we’ve announced. We want to work with people in Washington, DC. I’m tired of the politics, just like you’re tired of the politics. We can do a better job of finding common ground on commonsense ideas to solve common problems.

And so I thank you for giving us a chance to come today. I want to thank our fellow citizens—my fellow citizens for joining us in helping to illuminate the problem and helping me highlight the solution.

Governor, I’m honored that you came. You didn’t need to come. It’s a great honor that you’re here. In return, Laura and I will have you for dinner next Sunday night. [Laughter] Well, we were going to do it anyway but—[laughter]—all the Governors are coming to town. I’m looking forward to welcoming your Governor. [Laughter] And I thank the Secretary. Doc, thanks for coming.

God bless you all. Thanks for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:33 p.m. at the Chattanooga Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Brexler, president and chief executive officer, Erlanger Health System; and Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey of Tennessee.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Alternative Fuel Sources in Franklinton, North Carolina

February 22, 2007

*The President.* Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. I like to tell people, part of my job is to be the educator in chief. And today we’re at a really interesting facility in North Carolina to talk about what’s possible, what dreamers are doing to enable us to achieve a very important national goal, and that is to become less dependent on oil from overseas, thereby ensuring that our national security interests are better intact and our economic security interests are better intact and that we’re better stewards of the environment. That’s what we’re here to talk about.

But before I do, I do want to thank some people. First, Laura sends her regrets. I’m a lucky boy to have her—[laugh-

ter]—to have her as my wife. We’ve got a lot of friends here in Carolina, and she sends her best wishes to our Carolina friends. I told some folks yesterday, I’m not very objective when it comes to my wife, but I think the country is really lucky to have her as the First Lady.

We’re here at Novozymes, which is a company that makes enzymes. We’re going to talk to Thomas, who is the president and plant manager, about what they do here and why it’s relevant. But before we get there, I do want to say something about Steen Riisgaard. He’s the president and CEO, Steen. He flew over from Denmark. I can’t thank you enough for coming. I appreciate you being here. It’s interesting— isn’t it?—when you’re able to sit in North

Carolina and talk about a Danish company that is investing to not only help us become less dependent on oil but, equally importantly, is investing capital, which enables citizens from the United States to find good work.

I toured around the facility, and I asked people at the facility how long they had been working here. And a lot of people have been here 20-plus years. So for those people who are worried about free trade, I want you to remember that if this country were to wall ourselves off from the world, we would miss opportunities to find markets for our products and, at the same time, miss opportunities for citizens who work at a facility like this to find good work. It's in our interests that we have free and fair trade.

And so I thank you very much, Steen, for investing in the United States of America, and I appreciate the fact that you're sensitive to the needs of the workers here in the United States of America. And I see you're sitting next to your Ambassador. Mr. Ambassador, welcome. I'm glad you're here.

A person who understands the vast potential in the lands here in North Carolina to make us less dependent on oil is Richard Burr. He's the United States Senator. I'm proud he's joined us today, and thank you for coming, Senator. *[Applause]* There you go. Congressman G.K. Butterfield, thank you for being here, G.K. Appreciate you coming. He's the United States Congressman from the neighboring district, but he has enough interest in making sure that we succeed in alternative sources of energy that he's here. He's also on an important subcommittee in the House. I appreciate your interest, appreciate you joining us.

I want to thank the agricultural commissioner from the great State of North Carolina, Steven Troxler, who's joined us today. Steve, thank you for coming. There he is, right there. Good to see you. See, Steve needs to take an interest in this, like he is, because doesn't it make sense to be

able to say to our farmers, "Grow what you can grow so we become less dependent on oil." I like the idea of a President being able to say: "Wow, the crop report is in; we're growing more corn than ever before, which means we're importing less oil from overseas." It's an exciting time to think about, that our farmers not only are going to grow what we need to eat, but it's going to grow what we need to run our automobiles.

And that's coming. That's what we're here to discuss today. I know it sounds like a pipedream to some, you know, there goes the optimistic President talking again. But you're going to hear from some experts here. I'm just a history major. *[Laughter]* And I'm with Ph.D.s. *[Laughter]* Let me remind you who the President is. *[Laughter]* Yes.

But the Ph.D.s are providing the brain power necessary to help plants like this develop technologies that will enable us to convert wood chips into fuels that are running automobiles. It's an interesting time—isn't it?—when you're able to say, we're on the verge of some breakthroughs that will enable a pile of wood chips to become the raw materials for fuels that will run your car.

I appreciate the mayor, Jenny Edwards, here, mayor of Franklinton, for joining us. Where are you, Madam Mayor? Thanks for coming. Proud to see you again. And all the Novozymes employees, I appreciate you setting this deal up, and I appreciate you putting up with the hundreds who travel with me. *[Laughter]* And thank you for your warm hospitality. I really do.

Look, here's the—I just told you the goal. The goal is for the United States to be—to diversify away from old, old ways. And it's possible. And I do believe it is a proper use of your money, taxpayers' money, to spend to encourage research on interesting ideas. We spent about \$12 billion since I've been your President to try to stimulate technologies that will literally change the way we live. A lot of that money

has gone into clean coal technologies. If you're worried about dependency on oil from overseas, then it seems to make sense to me that we ought to be able to have the technology so that we can better use the resources we have here at home.

I don't know if you know this, we've got about 250 years worth of coal in America. That's what they estimate. And it makes sense, therefore, to spend money at the Federal level to develop technologies so we can burn that coal in environmentally friendly ways. The idea is to have zero-emission coal-fired plants here in America, and it's possible, and we're making progress toward that goal.

I happen to believe that if you're concerned about the environment and want to deal with renewable sources of energy, that we need to pursue nuclear power. Those powerplants emit zero greenhouse gases. It doesn't require any hydrocarbons from overseas to run those plants. So we're beginning to license new plants. We're spending money on wind and solar energies. It makes sense to be able to—as the price of hydrocarbons goes up, it makes sense that there be alternative sources of energy coming to the market as quickly as possible.

So we're making pretty good progress. But if you really want to reduce the amount of oil that you consume, you got to reduce the amount of gasoline you use. In other words, if you say, "We want to reduce our dependence on oil," what you really got to do is change gasoline usage in the United States. And there's a couple of exciting things that are taking place—one is new battery technologies. We're spending money at the Federal level—and by the way, there's a lot of private sector money going into alternative sources of energy. And someday, you're going to be able to get in your car, particularly if you're a big-city person, and drive 40 miles on a battery. It's coming. And by the way, the car doesn't have to look like a golf cart—[laughter]—it could be a pickup truck. [Laughter]

And that technology is around the corner. And if we're able to drive the first 40 miles, or, say, 20 miles on gasoline [electricity],\* there's a lot of big-city folks that will never have to use a drop of gasoline on a daily basis. They'll be driving via electricity. These are lithium ionic batteries, technology—so when you hear that term, you just got to know, there's a lot of folks and a lot of money aiming hard to get this to the market as quickly as possible. Why? Because we've set a goal for the United States to be less dependent on oil.

Secondly—and this is what we're here to talk about today—is ethanol. It says that the new developments in ethanol—in other words, fuel derived from corn—can be diversified. Here's the problem. Right now we're consuming about 7 billion gallons of ethanol a year made from corn. And it's a pretty standard process. People here at this facilities have developed the enzymes necessary to break the corn down in an efficient way so that we can use ethanol derived from corn. The problem is, we got a lot of hog growers around the United States—and a lot of them here in North Carolina—who are beginning to feel the pinch as a result of high corn prices. A lot of the cattle people around the United States—I have got a few of them in my home State of Texas—they're worried about high corn prices affecting their making a livelihood. In other words, the demand for corn, because of agricultural use and now energy use, is causing corn prices to go up. I bet you the agriculture commissioner is hearing from folks.

And so how do—the question then is, how do you achieve your goal of less dependence on oil without breaking your farmers? without breaking your hog raisers? Corn farmers happen to like it, but I'm talking about the—[laughter]—people dependent on corn.

---

\* White House correction.



And here's how: You develop new technologies that will enable you to make ethanol from wood chips or stalk grass or agricultural waste. And that's what we're here to talk about. Is it possible, and if it is possible, how close are we to achieving the technological breakthroughs that I believe are possible so that our—so that we're changing our habits?

And these are exciting times; they really are. I've always said, "America needs to stay on the leading edge of technological change." It will mean we remain a really important economy in the world, but it will also mean that our folks will be able to find good, high-paying jobs.

In this case, being on the leading edge of technological change means that we'll also be able to deal simultaneously with economic insecurities that come when China demands more for oil, the world produces less, the price of oil goes up, and so does the price of gas at the pump here in North Carolina; national security concerns, where some people who've got oil don't like us, and therefore, may be willing to use their energy resources to try to cause America to take a different view of the world—and environmental concerns. And all these three concerns come together with technology as the solution.

And so, Thomas, tell people what you do. [Laughter]

*Thomas Nagy.* Well, that was a nice introduction, and thank you, Mr. President. You may know, and many of you here—first of all, I want to welcome you very, very deep from my heart, and from all my colleagues here in Franklinton, welcome to North Carolina, welcome to Novozymes, and also, welcome to the guests here.

*The President.* Well, thank you. Like, you're the president, right?

*Mr. Nagy.* Well, you're the President. I'm—[laughter]—well, okay, no; any-ways—

*The President.* It didn't take him long to learn, you know. [Laughter]

*Mr. Nagy.* Novozymes is the world's leading biotechnology company within the field of industrial enzymes and microorganisms. We market more than 600 products around the globe, and all of these products have the same in common, that they—sort of like, it's good for the environment. It's good for businesses because when using our products, you use less resources, less energy, less water, and hence, you make better use—

*The President.* So you make enzymes.

*Mr. Nagy.* We make enzymes. And enzymes is sort of like the key component you need to have when you convert starch or the corn to sugar that you can then make to alcohol or the ethanol.

*The President.* Right.

*Mr. Nagy.* But also, it's got to be the key component when you want to make your switchgrass or your biomass to sugar and then to ethanol.

*The President.* So the enzyme begins to break down the raw materials in a particular raw material that will enable us to make more ethanol.

*Mr. Nagy.* That is correct.

*The President.* Is that what you're saying?

*Mr. Nagy.* Yes.

*The President.* Now—so is this a—is this like a huge distillery? [Laughter]

*Mr. Nagy.* Our plant here?

*The President.* Yes.

*Mr. Nagy.* Well, you could say what we do here—we use microorganisms, and the way we make these enzymes is by the use of these microorganisms. And you could compare our process to if you brew beer or wine. We take some agriculture raw materials like starch, again, or corn, and then we ferment the enzymes, basically, like you would ferment wine. Then the product here is the enzymes that we can then ship off to ethanol plants around in the U.S. And they use it today to break down the starch in corn and make ethanol. So we are a key provider of a key technology to make this happen for you.



*The President.* Absolutely. And I presume that one of the bottlenecks to achieving widespread ethanol production is the cost of enzymes. Have you seen any appreciable decline in the cost of enzymes since you have been producing it?

[At this point, Mr. Nagy, president, Novozymes North America, Inc., made further remarks.]

*The President.* Yes. I want to repeat this, because you actually—he's talking about your money. [Laughter] And he said that we gave a grant—we, the taxpayers of the United States, gave a grant to the researchers of this company. See, if they could not reduce the cost of producing the enzymes that would be critical to making ethanol, and this company was able to do so—reduced the cost by a factor of 30, which, I think, is a justifiable use of taxpayers' money, to see those kinds of results.

*Mr. Nagy.* Thank you.

*The President.* Yes. You got a lot of Ph.D.s and advanced degrees here?

*Mr. Nagy.* Yes, we do. [Laughter] We have a few, yes.

*The President.* You do?

*Mr. Nagy.* Yes, we do.

*The President.* The reason I mention that is that part of remaining a competitive society is to make sure our children get a good education early, so that it is possible to get advanced degrees or high—at least a degree beyond high school. If you want a good job in America, you better go on after high school. I mean, the jobs in places like this are jobs that require brain power, as much as anything else. And therefore, the educational system of this State, for example, has been critical in attracting industries such as the company we're talking about here. I mean, I go walking through the halls and shaking hands with people—we got people on—doing sophisticated computer programming; we got lab technicians who have got advanced degrees in bioengineering. And my only point is, it reminds me of how important higher edu-

cation is for this country. And I applaud the folks of North Carolina about being on the leading edge of education, and that's why you got companies like here—like this company here paying pretty good money for jobs, I guess.

[Mr. Nagy made further remarks.]

*The President.* Good. Well, Thomas, thanks, buddy.

*Mr. Nagy.* You're welcome.

*The President.* I appreciate it. You handled it well. [Laughter]

Kevin Wenger.

*Kevin Wenger.* Yes.

*The President.* Yes, Kevin, how are you? What do you do?

*Mr. Wenger.* I'm great. I'm the manager of the R&D group that we have here in North Carolina for ethanol research.

*The President.* For this company.

*Mr. Wenger.* For this company, yes, yes. We, about 5 years ago, decided to invest in a dedicated R&D group for ethanol process development, and we decided to anchor that research group here in North Carolina, because the U.S. is really where the ethanol market has been very strong.

*The President.* And you've got a degree in what?

*Mr. Wenger.* I have a degree in chemical engineering, Ph.D. from Colorado State University.

*The President.* Good.

*Mr. Wenger.* And I've been here in Novozymes since I finished graduate school in 1994.

*The President.* And so in 1994, were you thinking switchgrass into—[laughter].

*Mr. Wenger.* I've always been interested in alternative energy and making ethanol. There wasn't so many jobs related to switchgrass in 1994. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, cellulosic.

*Mr. Wenger.* Yes. But I was always—I've always been interested in fermentation also, and so Novozymes is a fermentation company, and that's how I ended up here.

*The President.* Yes. Interesting.

Mr. Wenger. Yes.

*The President.* And so I'd like to quote what he said. Kevin said, "It's going to be a challenge"—talking about achieving what we're talking about here—"but if we look at how far we have come in the past 5 years, we have so much momentum, it shouldn't be that tough."

And the reason I quote a person who knows what he's talking about when it comes to developments necessary to bring the cellulosic ethanol to market, I quote it because I presume in that optimism, there's realism.

[Mr. Wenger, senior manager, Biofuels Research and Development, Novozymes North America, Inc., made further remarks.]

*The President.* What he referred to is something I should have talked about earlier, and that is, I set a goal of the United States reducing our gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years. That's the 20–10 goal. In other words, it is a goal. And I mandated a fuel standard that says, we'll be using 35 million gallons of ethanol or alternative fuel over the next 10 years.

Now, the reason I did that is because I think it's possible to do it. And the reason I think it's possible to do it is because of people like Kevin telling me it's possible. Remember, I'm the history major. [Laughter] And so the advances you've seen in 5 years—if you're able to take yourself back 5 years ago to today, it is a noticeable difference, a—obviously reduced the cost of enzyme, for example, which is an important development.

Mr. Wenger. Yes, absolutely, it's a very noticeable difference, and in terms of the number of industry players that are really interested in this technology and are also willing to invest in making this technology happen, including Novozymes as an industry player, it's really amazing what we've seen over the last 5 years.

*The President.* Yes, great.

Mr. Wenger. Yes.

*The President.* The high price of energy has caused private capital to say that it's going to be impossible for a society like the United States to sustain its use on gasoline. So whether it be Novozymes who is investing or private sector funds, that money is coming in. See, they're fueling new research and development. So we've got the Government helping, but also, you've just got to know that the private sector is very much involved with trying to invent the technologies necessary to take advantage of a society that recognizes it has to diversify away from energy.

And I repeat to you: We're all connected, and so when a Chinese economy grows and their demand for oil goes up, it affects the price that you pay for gasoline. People got to know that. And therefore, it's important for us to continue to advance these kinds of research projects.

I met Dr. Mike in Greeley, Colorado, a year ago.

Michael Pacheco. Golden, Colorado, Mr. President.

*The President.* Golden—exactly, Golden, Colorado. [Laughter] How quickly they forget, anyway—[laughter]. I am 60. [Laughter] Golden, Colorado. Michael, tell them who you work for.

[Mr. Pacheco, Director, National Bioenergy Center, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, made further remarks, concluding as follows.]

Mr. Pacheco. Two years ago, we issued a study with USDA, put two Agencies together, that showed that the U.S. could produce enough raw biomass that's equivalent to about 60 percent of all the oil that we use in the United States. The problem is, is most of that biomass is not an easy material to convert. It's not like corn grain. And so our research at NREL—

*The President.* Explain to people what you're talking about, like—

Mr. Pacheco. Things like forest residues, things like fast-growing trees and switchgrass—the major constituent in that

material is a cellulose fiber—usually accounts for more than half of the—

*The President.* Do you know what switchgrass is? Tell them what switchgrass is.

*Mr. Pacheco.* Switchgrass is a native grass that grew in the Midwest. It's a grass that grows in relatively poor conditions; it can survive droughts very well.

*The President.* Rocky soil and dry. Sounds kind of like parts of Texas, doesn't it? [*Laughter*] Imagine, however, if you're able to grow a grass, where it's rocky soil and dry, that you're able to convert into energy. You're talking about a major change in the lifestyle of your children and my children and their kids. I mean, this is—anyway, go ahead.

*Mr. Pacheco.* That's a—[*laughter*]—you're doing very well. [*Laughter*] That's a big part—

*The President.* I am passionate on the subject. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Pacheco, made further remarks.*]

*The President.* You know, it's interesting, you're probably wondering whether or not automobiles can be easily converted to use ethanol, and the answer is, absolutely. There's a lot of automobiles in the Midwest that are filling up with 85-percent ethanol, called E-85 pumps. It doesn't take much. So one of the barriers to the advent of a lot of ethanol use is not the automobile. It's easy to convert them. As a matter of fact, some of you out there probably have got a car that can use ethanol, and you just don't know it—flex-fuel automobiles, they're called.

Secondly, the production process—once we figure out what needs to take place internally—is not that expensive, relative to huge gasoline refineries. What will happen is, when you get a wood chip breakthrough, for example, where it becomes cost effective, you're going to have ethanol production plants all across North Carolina, where the wood chips can be gathered.

One of the reasons we keep talking about costs, it's just real practical. Somebody is not going to fill up their car with ethanol if it costs a lot more than gasoline. The consumer is pretty wise, and they care about the environment—no question about it. But if a person is having to drive back and forth to work, they're going to generally pick the most economically competitive fuel to do that. People want to keep money in their pocket, and therefore, if it costs less using gasoline, they'll use it. So therefore, that's why we're driving these research dollars, to get the cost of producing ethanol down so it can compete. And it's going to happen, because as that price of oil goes up, the price of gasoline goes up, which makes ethanol more competitive. And one reason—just so you know—one reason why there's been such a push is because when the price of oil went up from early 2001 to where it is today, about \$60 a barrel, people saying: "We may not be able to sustain this; we better get moving." And that's what's happening.

North Carolina State—Ratna, welcome. Thank you. You're a doctor of?

*Ratna Sharma.* Biological engineering.

*The President.* Biological engineering. Chemical engineering. Biological engineering. [*Laughter*] People should be getting the picture that we've got a lot of smart people working on this project. When you've got Ph.D.s surrounding the President talking about doing what's right, we've got a lot of brain power working on it. And that's where you're going to get your breakthroughs.

Anyway, so what are you working on?

[*Ms. Sharma, assistant professor, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, North Carolina State University, made brief remarks.*]

*The President.* So what do you think? I mean, how long have you been doing this for?

*Ms. Sharma.* I've been doing this for about 4 years.

*The President.* Really? So when you got your Ph.D., you never dreamt you'd be thinking about converting wood to oil or fuel. What did you feel?

*Ms. Sharma.* Well, I was trained as an agricultural engineer, and I grew up on—in our ag university campus with farms around me.

*The President.* Oh, I see.

*Ms. Sharma.* So I always saw residues lying around and plants and stuff. And I got my Ph.D. in food safety engineering, where I learned about microorganisms. So then I saw this opportunity—it was like putting together engineering and microbiology, to process something and get value from something that's typically not—

*The President.* And there are other people at North Carolina State working with you on this project?

*Ms. Sharma.* Yes, there are. There are people working on utilizing forest residues, wood chips for converting to ethanol. There are people working on different ag residues—sweet potatoes, which is a starch base; feedstock; people working on biodiesel, from—again, from agricultural resources.

So there are a lot of people working on overcoming the challenges of pretreatment and converting the carbohydrates into sugars and then eventually fermenting it into ethanol. And my focus has been more on ag residues like cotton stalks, hays, and straws, which would typically not be useful.

*The President.* Cotton stalks, pretty interesting, isn't it?

*Ms. Sharma.* They are.

*The President.* They now get plowed up into the ground. Your idea is to get them so they can end up in somebody's automobile, not in the ground.

*Ms. Sharma.* Exactly, because there is a lot of potential. And like switchgrass, which grows in marginal lands—and we have, like you mentioned, a big swine industry here in North Carolina. So the ad-

vantage is, we could possibly put the two together, use animal waste as a nutrient source to grow the switchgrass and then convert it into ethanol, so you're getting energy from waste.

*The President.* So are people pretty upbeat about it? People feel pretty upbeat?

*Ms. Sharma.* Well, people who are aware and looking forward to switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy, yes, they are.

*The President.* Feeling pretty good.

*Ms. Sharma.* And they feel it's achievable. We can do it. We just need to work a little harder on that.

*The President.* Yes. A little more money and a little harder. [Laughter] Talk to my man, Michael. He's the guy distributing some of the money. [Laughter] Well, good. Thanks, doc. Thanks for joining us.

*Ms. Sharma.* Thanks, Mr. President.

*The President.* I'm sure proud you're here. NC State is a fine, fine institution. I know you're proud to work there.

*Ms. Sharma.* Yes, I am, definitely.

*The President.* Ryan, where are you from?

*Ryan Adolphson.* I'm from the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia.

*The President.* It's a bold man to come here to North Carolina. [Laughter] A great school, by the way. What do you do?

*Mr. Adolphson.* I'm with the university's—I'm in charge of our bio—our pilot facilities that are looking into early transitioning some of this technology from the bench out to industry, looking at really the wide or broad spectrum of this concept of biomass to energy that includes fuels and includes electrical and different bio-products, and really running the gamut of this whole type of industry. And we have a pretty large research facility looking into this at all levels.

*The President.* In Athens?

*Mr. Adolphson.* In Athens, yes—bio-refining and carbon cycling center that we've recently started in the last 2 years.

*The President.* What is a bio—I mean, what is a carbon recycling center?

*Mr. Adolphson.* Carbon cycling.

*The President.* Carbon cycling.

*Mr. Adolphson.* Right. So we're looking into the concept of a biorefinery, which Mike mentioned, and really taking a little bit bigger picture view, stepping back, not looking only at ethanol but counting ethanol as a significant piece to the puzzle, but looking at all the other products that can be generated from biomass. You know, similar to a petroleum refinery that takes a barrel of crude and doesn't just make diesel and gasoline but 50, 60 other products out of that.

So we're looking at our wood chips as that barrel of crude, taking that, and turning it into a larger profit stream than just a single product. And we believe that's going to drive the economics—

*The President.* Like what other products?

*Mr. Adolphson.* Well, there's a whole host of products. You know, the char, the stuff that's in a thermochemical process, instead of a biological process, or the sugar platform. The Department of Energy really breaks up when they talk about our production of ethanol in two pathways: One is thermochemical, and the other is our fermentation—or our sugar platform that we've kind of been talking about now.

The thermochemical platform allows us to take all these different biomass streams, treat them with heat in a certain way, release all of the energy from those, and we can capture that, turn that into our product.

So one product we have left is the carbon that's left over, and we're able to look at that as a soil amendment and take that carbon, without releasing it into the atmosphere, and put it back into the ground. And then we have everything that comes out of that biomass that we can turn into ethanol and we can turn into specialty chemicals for our chemical industry as precursors to things like nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals. And then we have the gas that comes off that could be, maybe, cleaned up and used as a pipeline-quality gas, like natural gas, to heat homes.

*The President.* All from one big pile of wood chips?

*Mr. Adolphson.* All from one big pile of wood chips, right. You know, we're at a very unique place—

*The President.* You've got to dream big in order to be able to get it done. [Laughter] That's good.

*Mr. Adolphson.* We are at a unique place right now, and the technology is there.

*The President.* Pretty interesting, isn't it? It's—I'm not so sure if they'd believe me in the coffee shop in Crawford if I told them what he just told me. [Laughter] But it's possible.

*Mr. Adolphson.* It is, right. I like to say, we're not there yet, but we can see it from here.

*The President.* You can; yes.

*Mr. Adolphson.* We've got two—on the ground in the next 18 months in Georgia. We've got a biorefinery taking wood chips to ethanol. We've got a traditional corn ethanol plant going in. We've got two, what we call integrated biorefineries, that are going to be pulling mostly—we have 24 million acres of commercial forest in Georgia. So that's a big priority for us. And the pulp and paper industry has been going other places.

*The President.* Are they investing?

*Mr. Adolphson.* The industry itself?

*The President.* Yes.

[*Mr. Adolphson, director, Georgia Industrial Technology Partnership and the University of Georgia Biomass Processing Facilities, made further remarks.*]

*The President.* Yes, yes. Absolutely, yes. That's pretty interesting, isn't it? Thanks for coming. I'm glad you came over.

*Mr. Adolphson.* Thank you, Mr. President. We're excited to be here. Great opportunity.

*The President.* And then we're going to end up with Terry. Terry Ruse.

*Terry Ruse.* All of the Ph.D.s around the table—I don't have one of those, but I—



*The President.* I'm glad to join you.  
[Laughter]

*Mr. Ruse.* I'm happy to report to you that the ethanol industry is alive and well and up and taking nourishment.

*The President.* And so what do you do?

*Mr. Ruse.* I am the chief operating officer for Agri-Ethanol. That's a privately held ethanol company in Raleigh.

*The President.* And what do you—so what—

*Mr. Ruse.* We are developing—our strategic plan is to develop ten 108-million-gallon-a-year ethanol plants in the South—

*The President.* So you're going to be the manufacturer?

*Mr. Ruse.* We are going to be the manufacturer.

*The President.* Right.

*Mr. Ruse.* Thanks to the vision of Dave Brady and the guys that own Agri-Ethanol, I've been able to develop a really flexible project in that we have a design to start out as a corn plant to process corn. We were building 11,000 foot of track, big loop track to be able to bring corn in by rail and take ethanol back out.

In the center of that loop track, we've engineered the ability to handle wood chips.

*The President.* Interesting.

*Mr. Ruse.* But we've got all that in place. We have a CO<sub>2</sub> company that will process the CO<sub>2</sub>, anything—any of the CO<sub>2</sub> that doesn't go to that direction to make food-grade liquid carbon dioxide will be directed into hydroponic gardening or into growing algae to support an adjacent biodiesel plant, that we have the real estate to put one of those on.

*The President.* So you intend to buy the enzymes from this company to run in your plant—

*Mr. Ruse.* We have this—as a matter of fact, we have offered them the opportunity to establish a field research laboratory on our site so that they don't have to go long

distances to get their people and do really groundwork at our facility.

*The President.* And where is this thing?

*Mr. Ruse.* It's in Aurora, North Carolina. It's the first one. It's about 160 miles east of Raleigh.

*The President.* And when will you—are you building it now?

[*Mr. Ruse made further remarks.*]

*The President.* You see, you can't build a plant far away from the raw material. That's the interesting thing about this industry. What he's basically saying is, is that investors think you have to be in the middle of a corn field, really. And that's why there's a lot of plants being built in the Midwest, because there's a lot of corn in the Midwest.

*Mr. Ruse.* But because of the fact we're closer to the population density centers for the ethanol and the animals that we have in North Carolina, we can prove that our plant is as competitive as the plant in Iowa.

*The President.* You can't have a centralized plant and ship your ethanol long distances, either. The production needs to be close to the raw material and the users, is what you're saying. It's the economics.

*Mr. Ruse.* That's exactly correct. And this—each one of these plants will produce about 400,000 tons a year of highly digestible, high protein feed to help the hog farmers, that you alluded to, get over their heart pain of—

*The President.* High corn.

*Mr. Ruse.* —of high corn. And coming from the farm, the thing that I understand most is the resiliency of the American farmer.

*The President.* You bet.

*Mr. Ruse.* You give him a good price for the corn, and he will grow the corn. And I think that when the March planning report comes out, you'll see closer to—

*The President.* A lot of corn.

*Mr. Ruse.* —13- or 13½-billion-bushel corn market and 90 million acres planted than what we've seen in the past.



*The President.* That's right.

*Mr. Ruse.* And so all of the price concerns from the animal growers and from the Wall Streeters will be evaporated.

*The President.* Will be eased somewhat. That's right. He's right. It's amazing how the market responds.

*Mr. Ruse.* And the one last piece of our project is that we intend to build a "green" truckstop on each one of these sites that sells biodiesel, sell E-10 and E-85.

*The President.* That would be good. E-10 is ethanol, 10-percent ethanol.

*Mr. Ruse.* Ten-percent ethanol and 85-percent ethanol and then biodiesel.

*The President.* Yes. Well, the purpose was to give everybody a sense of where a lot of smart people and good capital are moving. And smart people are here working on some amazing technologies that—you know, that I believe 10 years from now, people will say: "Gosh, it's interesting that they were worried about this particular technology coming to fruition," because it's coming to fruition. And the role of the Government is to stimulate thought and investment and set goals. And we've set a

big goal, really have—reduction of gasoline by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

I wouldn't have done that if I didn't think it was achievable. Part of it is to change our CAFE standards on automobiles, which will encourage conservation. The other part is to change the fuel mix across America.

And this is a coming time; it really is. And I want to thank those of you who are on the frontline of changing it. It must be exciting for you to be able to work on something so novel and so encouraging and so important for our country.

I thank the good folks at this important company for letting me come by to say hello. I ask for God's blessings on the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at Novozymes North America, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Steen Riisgaard, president and chief executive officer, Novozymes; and Denmark's Ambassador to the U.S. Friis Arne Petersen. A participant referred to David L. Brady, chairman and chief executive officer, Agri-Ethanol Products, LLC.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Transportation Fuel Experts and Researchers

*February 23, 2007*

Listen, I just had a fascinating discussion. First, I'm dealing with some entrepreneurs, people who believe that there is a market developing for automobiles that will use high-technology batteries to—for people to be able to motor back and forth from work.

I also met with some of our scientists who are working on new battery technology. I also met with people that are working to help us develop a fuel industry that will be able to have ethanols derived from produce other than corn. In other words, I'm talking with people on the leading edge of change. And the reason why

I've asked them to come in to see me is because I want to make sure that the goal I set by reducing gasoline usage by 20 percent over a 10-year period is a realistic goal. I know it's a necessary goal. It's necessary for national security purposes; it's necessary for economic security purposes; and it's necessary in order to be good stewards of the environment.

My question is, is a practical goal—can we achieve that goal? And the answer is, absolutely. Now, it's going to require continued Federal research dollars, and I call upon the Congress to fully fund my request

for alternative sources of energy. It's going to require collaboration between the public sector and the private sector. It's going to require making sure our smartest scientists understand that this is a national priority. But I firmly believe that the goal I laid out, that Americans will use 20 percent less gasoline over the next 10 years, is going to be achieved. And here's living proof of how we're going to get there.

So I want to thank my fellow citizens for joining us. We've got a Nobel Prize winner; we've got all kinds of Ph.D.s, a couple of history majors. But what we're talking about is practical and necessary for the country. So thanks for coming. Americans ought to feel optimistic about our future. We're going to be driving our cars using all kinds of different fuels other than gasoline, and using batteries that will be able to be recharged in vehicles that don't have to look like golf carts.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Participating in the meeting were David Bransby, professor of agronomy and soils, College of Agriculture, Auburn University; Steven Chu, director, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and cowinner of the 1997 Nobel Prize for physics; Bruce E. Dale, professor of chemical engineering and materials science, Michigan State University; Daniel J. Elliott, president and chief executive officer, Phoenix Motorcars, Inc.; Lonnie O. Ingram, professor of microbiology and cell science, University of Florida; Stephen P. Long, professor of crop sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Alex Molinaroli, president, Power Solutions, Johnson Controls, Inc.; Michael M. Thackeray, senior scientist, Argonne National Laboratory; and David Vieau, president and chief executive officer, A123 Systems.

## The President's Radio Address *February 24, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I traveled to a hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where I visited with doctors and health care experts. We discussed an urgent priority for our Nation: how we can make health care coverage more affordable and accessible for all Americans.

This week, the Department of Health and Human Services released a study that showed why we must act now to reform our health care system. The study forecast that our Nation's health care spending will almost double by the year 2016. If this happens, health care spending will account for nearly one out of every \$5 spent in our economy. The study forecast that the Government's share of these costs will rise as well. Unless the system is reformed, within a decade taxpayers will be should-

ering nearly half of all health care spending in our Nation.

There's also some encouraging news in this study. It provides fresh evidence that the Medicare prescription drug benefit we enacted is working to help get seniors the drugs they need. Millions of seniors are filling more prescriptions because they now have coverage, yet overall national spending on prescription drugs is lower than it would have been without this program. This is because we set up a system where private drug plans must compete for the business of Medicare beneficiaries. This competition is delivering better prices for seniors and good results for taxpayers. We need to maintain the gains we made by keeping competition in Medicare and by opposing

any effort that would put the Federal Government in charge of negotiating and setting drug prices.

We should also apply the same market-based principles to other parts of our health system. Today, we have a big problem with our Tax Code: If you buy health insurance on your own, you do not get the same tax advantages as people who get their health insurance through their jobs. When it comes to health care, everyone should get the same tax breaks.

So I've proposed a standard tax deduction for health insurance that would be like the standard deduction for dependents. This commonsense solution will level the playing field for all Americans, whether you get your health insurance through your job or on your own.

One person who would benefit from this plan is Danny Jennings, a father of two who does not have health insurance for his family. I met Danny earlier this week. Under my plan, Danny would save about \$4,500 on his taxes, and these tax savings would put basic coverage within the reach of his family.

Now imagine if this standard tax deduction were already in place for people like Danny, and some politician suggested taking it away. Critics would say that the politician was giving an unfair advantage to people who work for big businesses that provide insurance and harming millions of working families who have to buy their own coverage. The critics would be right.

My proposal would provide the same deduction for all Americans who buy health insurance, whether they get it through their job or on their own. That is fair, and it's the right thing to do.

Another way we can reform our health care system is to support Governors who

are coming up with innovative plans to help their citizens get health coverage. These Governors know their people, and they know their needs. As a former Governor, I believe the Federal Government ought to help, not hinder our States, as they innovate. So I have proposed the Affordable Choices grants initiative. Under my proposal, States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens would receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. By taking existing Federal funds and turning them into Affordable Choices grants, we will give America's Governors more money and more flexibility, so they can help provide private health insurance for those who need it most.

America has the best health care system in the world, because it puts doctors and patients in charge, encourages new technologies, and finds new ways to improve quality. By giving our States more flexibility and making our Tax Code fairer, we can reform our health care system and restrain costs. And by implementing these reforms now, we can help ensure every American has a future with better choices, better care, and greater hope for a healthy tomorrow.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 23, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Danny Jennings, manager, Tennessee Valley Nursery. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at a Dinner for the National Governors Association Conference February 25, 2007

Laura and I are honored to have you here. Welcome. This is really one of the dinners that we look forward to the most. And we welcome the Governors and their spouses. We welcome Governors without their spouses. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate members of my Cabinet for joining us. I also thank very much Governor Napolitano, who is the chairman of the Governors Association—National Governors Association, and Tim Pawlenty, the vice chairman of the Governors Association, for joining us.

I thank the former Governors who are in my Cabinet who have joined us: Secretaries Kempthorne, Johanns, and Leavitt. There's life after being a Governor. [*Laughter*]

I'm looking forward to our meetings tomorrow. It's a really good chance to talk about important issues for the country. I'm—I believe that Governors add a lot to the worth of our Nation. And I believe

if we work together, we can do a lot of good things. I'm looking forward to talking about the issue of homeland security. We need to protect our country. I'm looking forward to talking about education and health care and good, sound immigration policy. I'm looking forward to reminding me and you that when we work together, we can do big things, that we have an obligation to serve all the people.

And so tonight is a night to—a festive night. Our friend, Ronan Tynan, is going to entertain you. I'm looking forward to it. I hope you are as well.

And before I call up Janet, I'd like to offer a toast to the Nation's Governors.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Janet A. Napolitano of Arizona and Gov. Timothy J. Pawlenty of Minnesota.

## Remarks During a Meeting With the National Governors Association Conference February 26, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. I'm looking for some of the crumbs that got dropped last night here. [*Laughter*] Glad you're here; thanks for coming. I hope you enjoyed the dinner as much as we did last night. It was a—[*applause*]. I thought it was a good, relaxing evening. And I thank you all for joining us today.

I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for talking to the Governors about how important it is for us to work together. I do want to spend some—a little time talking about some issues here, and then I'll answer questions from you.

First, obviously—well, I don't know if it's obvious to you or not, but my biggest concern is protecting this country. You got to know something; that a lot of my thinking was defined on September the 11th. I wake up every day thinking about another attack. And that's my job. It's what the people expect. I think about how to have the best intelligence possible to find out where the enemy is and what they're thinking so we can react.

I think about making sure that Homeland Security and our States work closely together. I wish that wasn't the way it was,

but it is. That's the reality of the world in which we live. It's easy to kind of hope that these radicals and extremists go away. We've got a two-pronged strategy in dealing with them: One is to stay on the offense and bring them to justice; and two, spread the conditions necessary to defeat an ideology of hatred. I like to say, "We're in an ideological war that's going to last awhile." That's what I believe. That's the basis on which I'm making decisions to protect the country.

We've got active fronts in this war on terror. One is Afghanistan; the other is Iraq. These are the most visible fronts—let me rephrase that—there are other active fronts; the most visible fronts are in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I thank you very much for going over to visit the Guard troops and Reserve troops from your States that are there. I appreciate it. It matters to those troops that you take time as a commander in chief to thank them. And it matters to their families that people are paying attention to them.

You've got two Governors who are active in the Guard and Reserve: Governor Blunt and Governor Sanford. He's not here because he's at a Air Force Reserve meeting, as I understand, and I appreciate very much the example you all are setting.

Obviously, there's concerns about the decisions I have made regarding Iraq, and I understand that. Look, I mean, there's a lot of debate here in Washington, DC. And if you want, we can spend some time during the question-and-answer talking about why I make the decisions I made. But you've just got to understand, the main reason why is because I understand the consequences of failure in Iraq. If we leave before that country can govern itself and sustain itself and defend itself, there will be chaos. And out of chaos will come vacuums; and out of vacuums will come an emboldened enemy that would like to do us harm. I like to remind people that if we leave Iraq before the job is done, the

enemy will follow us here. And if our job is to protect this country, it's important we get it right in Iraq.

And so I made a decision that I think is more likely to succeed than any of the alternatives that were presented to me. And I know you're concerned about the funding for your troops; so am I. I hope out of all this debate—and by the way, there is—you've just got to understand, here in Washington, I do not believe that someone is unpatriotic if they don't agree with my point of view. On the other hand, I think it's important for people to understand the consequences of not giving our troops the resources necessary to do the job.

So I'm looking forward to a healthy debate. I'm also looking forward to defending, strongly defending the budgets we send up to Congress to make sure those troops who are in harm's way have the resources and that we have the flexibility necessary to—and our commanders have the flexibility necessary to execute the plan we've laid out.

I understand Pete Pace was here and visited with you. I hope he was able to answer your questions about Guard funding. We submitted a strong budget for 2008, and we're going to need your help to make sure Congress keeps that budget intact. The temptation sometimes is, take a little bit from the defense and add it to here. And if you're concerned about making sure your troops get what they need, make sure you call your Congressman or your Senator.

The economy is good, and we intend to keep it that way. We're not going to raise taxes. We don't need to raise taxes to balance the budget. We can work with Congress on a lot of issues, and one issue we can work with them on is the budget. They want to balance the budget; the administration wants to balance the budget. And Director Portman submitted a plan that balances the budget within 5 years without raising taxes. The reason I think it's important to keep taxes low is because I think

that's important to sustain economic growth and vitality. I'm worried about running up taxes and slowing down the entrepreneurship that is alive and well here in America.

I wish I had the line-item veto like you all do—or some of you do. [Laughter] It makes it easier to deal with the issues like earmarks or these interests that get stuffed into these bills at the last minute without having been debated. And I'm going to keep working with Congress to try to get line-item vetoes. If you want to give the President a hand, you might suggest to Congress to let me have the tools that many of you have, in this room. You know it works; it makes sense. It helps keep those budgets lean and focused and having the priorities real clear.

I'm looking forward to working with Congress on health care. I know that Michael has been spending some time with you. I firmly believe, and I know Mike agrees, that the States are oftentimes the best place to reform systems and to work on programs that meet needs. We believe one of the biggest needs is to make sure private health insurance is available to a lot of folks in our country. And so the Affordable Choices program is a real program. And I thank Mike for spending time with you talking about it and wanting to work with you to get it designed properly so it works.

And I also strongly believe we need to change our Tax Code. It's a Tax Code that says, if you're single or you're working for a company that doesn't provide insurance, you're discriminated against, relative to the person working for a big corporation. And it doesn't make sense. If you want people to be able to have health insurance, to be able to afford private insurance, it makes sense to reform the Tax Code. And we look forward to working with you on that.

Look forward to working with you and Congress on reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. I know Margaret talked about it. The real challenge facing this country is whether or not we're going to be competi-

tive, whether or not we've got the skill set necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. If we don't, they'll go elsewhere. That's just what happens in a globalized world.

No Child Left Behind is the beginning of a comprehensive, competitive program, and we want to work with you to make sure it works properly, to make sure that accountability is used properly. The thing I like most about the law is that when we find a youngster who is struggling with reading, that we provide extra help to make sure he or she gets up to speed early, before it's too late. I also like the idea of us being able to say, "We're making progress toward high goals." And we know we are, or we know we aren't if we're not, because we measure. I don't see how you can fix a problem unless you measure the problem.

I look forward to working with you on immigration. It's a tough issue here in Washington. I strongly believe Congress needs to pass comprehensive immigration reform. I strongly believe that we need to uphold our laws, enforce our borders, and uphold our traditions in America. We need to treat people fairly.

I'm looking forward to working with Congress on energy policy. We've made some progress through comprehensive energy bills. There's more to be done. We've spent about \$12 billion since I've been the President on technologies that will enable us to become less dependent on oil. We're going to continue to invest, by the way, in clean coal technologies and solar technologies and wind technologies. But the area where we're pretty close to some amazing breakthroughs is on getting—changing our usage of gasoline. Some amazing battery technologies that are now heading toward the market, which will enable people in New York City, for example, to drive the first 20 to 40 miles on electricity. That will make us less dependent on oil from overseas.



Another exciting technological breakthrough is going to come with cellulosic ethanol. That's a long, fancy word for making gasoline—or making ethanol out of product other than sugar and corn, like switchgrass or wood chips. The ethanol production from corn is full-steam ahead, but it's beginning to squeeze some of the hog farmers and cattle raisers. And therefore, we're going to have to accelerate research into alternative feedstocks for ethanol to enable us to meet a goal I set, a mandatory goal of using 35 billion gallons of alternative sources of fuel by 2017. It reduces our gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

I wouldn't have put out the goal if I didn't think it was possible and achievable. I also know it's necessary. Becoming less dependent on oil is in our national security interests, it's in our national economic interests, and it will enable us to be better stewards of the environment.

I believe we can find a lot of common ground with the Congress on these issues. I've had some good meetings with the Democratic leadership. I appreciate the openness of our discussions. I'm—will continue to reach out to find common ground with them and, as well, with you. We owe it to the people to do so.

Anyway, thanks for giving me a chance to come by. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri; Gov. Mark C. Sanford, Jr., of South Carolina; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman; Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt; and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

## Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to Bruce P. Crandall

*February 26, 2007*

Welcome. I am pleased that you all are here on a very special day. Presenting the Medal of Honor is one of the great privileges for the President. The medal is the highest military decoration a President can confer. This medal is awarded for actions above and beyond the call of duty.

Today I am proud to bestow this medal on a daring pilot, a devoted soldier, and a selfless leader, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Crandall. I welcome Bruce and his wife Arlene back to the White House. I congratulate you on 50 years of marriage. She must be a patient woman. [*Laughter*] I also am glad that their three sons and three of their grandchildren are here. Welcome. I'm especially pleased that some of Bruce's comrades have joined us.

As an officer, Bruce always put his men before himself. Today his men are here for him. And this afternoon, 41 years after his heroic actions in Vietnam, America recognizes Bruce Crandall with our highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

I appreciate Secretary of Defense Bob Gates joining us today. Mr. Secretary, you're always welcome here at the White House. I appreciate the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson, welcome. I appreciate Members of the United States Congress who have joined us, starting with the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee—Subcommittee on Defense, Ted Stevens, the Senator from Alaska. Congressman Norm Dicks, who happens to be the U.S. Congressman from

Colonel Crandall's district. Congressman, welcome. Congressman Jim Marshall, Congressman Patrick Murphy, we are glad you're here. Thank you for coming.

I appreciate very much Dr. Fran Harvey, the Secretary of the Army; General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; General Pete Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the United States Army.

I thank all the other members of the military who joined us. I particularly want to say thanks and welcome to the Medal of Honor recipients who are with us today: Harvey "Barney" Barnum, Bob Foley, Jake Jacobs—Jack Jacobs, Joe Marm, Bob Patterson, Al Rascon, Gordon Roberts, and Brian Thacker. Welcome.

I appreciate the families, friends, and comrades of Bruce Crandall. David Hicks, thank you for your blessings.

The journey that brought Bruce Crandall to this day began 74 years ago in Olympia, Washington. Growing up, Bruce was a gifted athlete and a bit of a handful. [Laughter] A teacher once observed that he had, quote, "a unique ability to get into trouble and out of trouble without any trouble at all." [Laughter] At Olympia High School, Bruce was named an All-American in baseball. He batted .612 for the league champs; I think we better check the scorecards. [Laughter] His dream was to be drafted by the New York Yankees; instead, he got drafted by the U.S. Army. [Laughter]

He was commissioned as an officer, trained as an aviator. His early career took him on mapping missions over Alaska and North Africa and Latin America. In 1963, he reported to Fort Benning to help lead a new unit that would become known as the air cavalry. Two years later, he arrived in Vietnam as a major and as a commanding officer in the 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

As a leader, Major Crandall earned the respect of his men with his honesty and his humor. He earned their admiration with his remarkable control over a Huey. His radio call sign was "Ancient Serpent 6,"

which his men shortened to "Old Snake." [Laughter] Or sometimes, they used a more colorful nickname—[laughter]—which we better not pronounce. [Laughter]

On the morning of November 14th, 1965, Major Crandall's unit was transporting a battalion of soldiers to a remote spot in the Ia Drang Valley, to a landing zone called X-Ray. After several routine lifts into the area, the men on the ground came under a massive attack from the North Vietnamese Army. On Major Crandall's next flight, three soldiers on his helicopter were killed; three more were wounded. But instead of lifting off to safety, Major Crandall kept his chopper on the ground—in the direct line of enemy fire—so that four wounded soldiers could be loaded aboard.

Major Crandall flew the men back to base, where the injuries could be treated. At that point, he had fulfilled his mission. But he knew that soldiers on the ground were outnumbered and low on ammunition, so Major Crandall decided to fly back into X-Ray. He asked for a volunteer to join him. Captain Ed Freeman stepped forward. In their unarmed choppers, they flew through a cloud of smoke and a wave of bullets. They delivered desperately needed supplies. They carried out more of the wounded, even though medical evacuation was really not their mission.

If Major Crandall had stopped here, he would have been a hero, but he didn't stop. He flew back into X-Ray again and again. Fourteen times he flew into what they called the Valley of Death. He made those flights knowing that he faced what was later described as an "almost unbelievably extreme risk to his life." Over the course of the day, Major Crandall had to fly three different choppers; two were damaged so badly they could not stay in the air. Yet he kept flying until every wounded man had been evacuated and every need of the battalion had been met.

When they touched down on their last flight, Major Crandall and Captain

Freeman had spent more than 14 hours in the air. They had evacuated some 70 wounded men. They had provided a lifeline that allowed the battalion to survive the day.

To the men of Ia Drang, the image of Major Crandall's helicopter coming to their rescue is one they will never forget. One officer who witnessed the battle wrote: "Major Crandall's actions were without question the most valorous I've observed of any helicopter pilot in Vietnam." The battalion commander said, "Without Crandall, this battalion would almost have surely been overrun." Another officer said, "I will always be in awe of Major Bruce Crandall."

For his part, Bruce has never seen it that way. Here's what he said: "There was never a consideration that we would not go into those landing zones. They were my people down there, and they trusted in me to come and get them."

As the years have passed, Bruce Crandall's character and leadership have only grown clearer. He went on to make more rescue flights in Vietnam. He served a second tour, and he retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel. As a private citizen, he's continued to serve. He's worked in local government, and he speaks to students all across our country. One of his favorite stops is Midland, Texas. *[Laughter]* It happens—where Laura and I grew up. In fact, he's been to Midland so many times they gave him the key of the city. It's not exactly the Medal of Honor. *[Laughter]* It's not a bad thing to have. *[Laughter]* Maybe one day I'll get a key to the city. *[Laughter]*

A few years ago, Bruce learned he was being considered for our Nation's highest military distinction. When he found out that Captain Freeman had also been nominated, Bruce insisted that his own name

be withdrawn. If only one of them were to receive the Medal of Honor, he wanted it to be his wingman. So when I presented the medal to Captain Freeman in 2001, Bruce was here in the White House. Captain Freeman wished he were here today, but he got snowed in, in Iowa. But his spirit is with us. And today the story comes to its rightful conclusion: Bruce Crandall received the honor he always deserved.

In men like Bruce Crandall, we really see the best of America. He and his fellow soldiers were brave, brave folks. They were as noble and selfless as any who have ever worn our Nation's uniform. And on this day of pride, we remember their comrades who gave their lives and those who are still missing. We remember the terrible telegrams that arrived at Fort Benning, the families devastated, the children who traced their father's name on panel three-east of the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

Our sadness has not diminished with time. Yet we're also comforted by the knowledge that the suffering and grief could have been far worse. One of the reasons it was not is because the man we honor today. For the soldiers rescued, for the men who came home, for the children they had and the lives they made: America is in debt to Bruce Crandall. It's a debt our Nation can never really fully repay, but today we recognize it as best as we're able, and we bestow upon this good and gallant man the Medal of Honor.

Commander, please read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Cmdr. Geoffrey Gagnier, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National  
Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to  
the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels  
February 26, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr.  
President:)

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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, which states that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's

destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, as amended and expanded on February 26, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2007.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The related notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Republican Governors Association Gala  
February 26, 2007

Thanks for coming. Thank you all for being here tonight. I am honored to join you. You might remember, I am a former member of the Republican Governors Association. And now I am a proud brother of another former member. Now he's out of office, I understand Jeb is spending a lot of time on Florida's beaches. [Laughter] He says people still recognize him; when he's out there in his Speedo, they come up and say, "How you doing, Governor Schwarzenegger?" [Laughter]

He made a promise to me that when he left office, he'd make sure that he had a good man following him, and he kept his promise when Charlie Crist got elected Governor of the great State of Florida.

And I also want to welcome some of the newly elected Governors: Governor Jim Gibbons of Nevada; Butch Otter of Idaho—he's out there getting a hors

d'oeuvre—and Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. And I thank my friends, the Governors, who have joined us. I really enjoyed our visit today. I appreciate the kindness you have shown to me, and I appreciate your hard work.

I particularly want to pay tribute to the spouses of the Governors, the people who work hard to make sure the Governors are capable of doing their jobs. And speaking about spouses, Sonny took it a little far when he said Laura was a courageous person—I think he was referring to the fact that she was courageous when she said yes when I asked her to marry me. But I'm real proud of Laura. I love her dearly. I think she's a great First Lady for the country and I—[applause].

And I thank Sonny Perdue and Mary. I appreciate my friend Matt Blunt and Melanie. You know, this is a record-setting

evening, and it took an extraordinary leader from a great State to convince you to contribute. And so I want to thank—say thanks to my friend and my Governor, Rick Perry and the first lady of Texas, Anita. I want to thank the members of my administration who have joined us today, and I appreciate you coming.

I think the thing that's important for you all to realize is that we are the party of ideas. We're results-oriented people. That's how we got the majority, and that's what it's going to take to get the majority back—standing on principle, not worrying about polls and focus groups, but saying what you think is right and acting on it.

In the battle of ideas, we stand with the American people. We believe in a strong national defense. We believe in less government and lower taxes. And we believe that you've got to trust the values and the good judgment of the American people.

And I appreciate the innovative ideas that Governors—Republican Governors are pushing all around this country. And that's why, when I spoke to them today, I think I said, it's very important for this administration to work with our Governors. The States are laboratories for reform. The States are the place where some of the best innovation can take place to make sure the entire country benefits.

I've set a big agenda here in Washington, DC. I want to share some of that with you. But my political agenda is this: more Republican Governors, take back control of the House and the Senate, and make sure we keep the White House in 2008.

And I want to thank you all for helping make those goals become reality, and I appreciate you contributing of your hard-earned money. It means a lot to candidates who are running for office. It means a lot to the organizers, people like Sonny, who are going to recruit good people to run for office, to know that there's something besides the telephone call awaiting them; there's support. And you're making a big difference, and I appreciate it.

We've got a lot to do here in Washington. The most important job for the Federal Government is to protect the American people from harm. And the best way to do that is to stay on the offense against these terrorists, is to defeat them overseas so we don't have to face them again here in America.

And that's exactly what we're doing. Every single day, there are good and decent people in my administration and around the country who are securing this homeland. There are good, honorable people overseas chasing down these killers and bringing them to justice. Part of our strategy is to keep the pressure on them. The other part of our strategy is to defeat their hateful ideology by spreading freedom around the world. I believe that freedom is universal, and I believe it's in the interest of the United States to free people, so that the world will become a more peaceful place.

There are two major theaters in this global war against these extremists. One is Afghanistan, and the other is Iraq. I'd like to spend a little time on the subject of Iraq. As you know, I recently announced a plan for victory in Iraq. I was confronted with a serious decision to make. Did I accept the status quo and hope that the capital of that young democracy would somehow be able to regain its footing? Or did it make sense for the United States to gradually withdraw from that country, before democracy was able to take hold? Or did it make sense to reinforce our troops then in the theater to make sure the capital city of Baghdad became secure? And I chose the latter because I think it gives us the best chance to achieve our objective, which is a democracy that can defend itself, sustain itself, and govern itself and serve as an ally in this war against these extremists.

I made some changes, nominated a good man to lead the cause there in Baghdad: General David Petraeus. He recently went up for confirmation in the United States



Senate. He received a fair hearing and was approved unanimously by the Senators, and I appreciated them for their strong support. During his testimony, General Petraeus strongly supported the idea of sending reinforcements into Baghdad to help the capital city, to help this new Government find breathing space necessary to do the reconciliation necessary after years of tyranny. And yet, shortly after his unanimous confirmation, the House of Representatives passed a symbolic resolution that expressed disapproval of the very plan that he thought was necessary to accomplish our objective.

I have no problems with debate; as a matter of fact, one of the healthy things about our society is the right for people to express their opinion. I never question anybody's patriotism who disagrees with me. But soon the United States Congress will have to make a decision that will have real consequences: whether or not to fund the troops we have sent into harm's way. Our men and women in uniform risk their lives to carry out our plan to support this new democracy and to secure Baghdad. And wherever Members may stand on my decision, we have a solemn responsibility to give our troops the resources and the flexibility they need to prevail.

This is tough work, but it's necessary work. It's necessary to help this young Government survive, because, you see, if we were to leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy would follow us here. Failure in Iraq would invite chaos, would embolden those who would do us harm again, would enable them to recruit more of their fanatics that are willing to kill the innocent. Failure in the Iraq would cause the extremists to rejoice and those who hunger for a better way of life to wonder about the resolve of the United States of America. Failure in Iraq is unacceptable. It would affect generations of Americans to come. And that is why I made the decision I made, a decision that will help us secure the peace for our children and our grandchildren.

Our foreign policy is more than war and diplomacy. I believe to whom much is given, much is required. And we're a blessed nation. Therefore, it is in our national interests to defeat disease and hunger and poverty as best as we can. I will continue to call upon the United States Congress to fund the HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa, so we can save life. Do you realize as a result of your generosity and the support of the Congress, the PEPFAR initiative has now delivered antiretroviral drugs, lifesaving drugs, to more than 800,000 people in less than 5 years?

A robust foreign policy that reflects the heart of the American people is one that recognizes that we can eliminate malaria in countries around the world. And I thank Laura and others in this audience for leading the fight against malaria, and I call upon other free nations of the world to join the United States to do our duty, to save lives no matter where they may be. We will challenge corruption where we find it. We will insist for freedom where we can insist, in places like Cuba and Belarus and Burma. And we will always remember that this great Nation not only must take care of the unfortunate in our own land but help others realize the great blessings of freedom. I'm proud of our foreign policy, and for the next 2 years, I will conduct it with all the—with all my soul and with all my might, because I believe it is in the best interests of the United States of America.

Here at home the most important thing the Government can do is to create the conditions for the entrepreneurial spirit to flourish. Oh, I know they don't talk too much about it, but I am—and that's the economy. And it's cooking, and we intend to keep it that way. We believe government doesn't create wealth but the environment in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses, an environment where people can realize their dreams. And the best way for the Federal Government to create



that environment is to cut taxes and to keep them low, which is precisely what we did.

If the Congress wants to continue this economic vitality, the best gesture they can make is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. Oh, I know you'll hear them say up here in Washington, "Well, you cannot balance the budget unless you raises the taxes on the American people." We're proving them wrong. I set the goal of cutting the deficit in half in a 5-year period of time, and we exceeded that goal by 3 years. You know why? Because when the economy is strong, it yields more tax revenues for the U.S. Treasury. And so when you combine that with fiscal austerity, we're on our way to balancing the budget. And I just submitted a budget to the United States Congress that says, we'll balance the budget in 5 years, so long as they keep taxes low to keep the economy going and they're wise about how we spend your money.

We've got a slight problem up here, what's called earmarks. And I intend to do something about it, and I intend to work with Congress to do something about it. An earmark is a special-interest item. It gets stuck into one of these appropriations bills. A lot of times they never even see the light of day. In other words, they don't debate them; they don't vote on them; they just show up on my desk. Those days have got to end if we're going to make sure we're wise about how we spend your money. You know what Congress needs to do? They need to give me the same power these—many of these Governors have, and that's the line-item veto.

I'm looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats on doing something about Social Security and Medicare. It's tough political work up here to do that. A lot of people don't want to deal with that issue. My advice and my call is for people to bring their ideas to the table. Come to the table with how best to save a generation from high taxes or reduced benefits. You bring your ideas to the table,

and so will I, and we'll see if we can't do something good for the American people, set aside politics and solve the Social Security issue once and for all.

I'm looking to working with my friends, the Governors, on health care. I believe some of the most innovative ideas on health care are being proposed by our Governors. Michael Leavitt, who is head of HHS, is asking Congress to give affordable grants—in other words, the flexibility of that Federal money we're spending in the States so that these Governors can design programs all aimed at making sure our uninsured can afford private insurance. And I emphasize "private insurance." Some in Washington believe the best way to solve the health care issue is for the Federal Government to solve it. I don't believe that. I believe the best solution in health care is to empower consumers to make choices. The best way to do that at the State level is to have flexibility in Federal funding so they can design programs for basic health insurance, coupled with this reform: I believe that there ought to be a \$15,000 standard deduction—if you're married—off your income taxes and payroll taxes to help you afford insurance.

If you're working uninsured or if you're working for a small business who has no health insurance, you pay with after-tax dollars, and if you work for a corporation, you can get your insurance free, and that is unfair. The Tax Code needs to be reformed.

Congress needs to pass association health plans to let small businesses pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so our small-business owners can better afford health insurance. We need to continue to promote health savings accounts. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC, to keep good docs in the practice and keep the cost of medicine reasonable. We need information technology. In all I'm telling you, the best policy for health care is to make sure that it's doctors and patients making

the decisions, not bureaucrats and insurance companies.

I'm looking forward to working with our Governors on No Child Left Behind. That bill comes up for reauthorization in Congress, and Congress needs to reauthorize it. And here's why: I believe strongly States ought to have flexibility. I believe strongly in local control of schools. But I believe in setting high standards for children, and I believe it is important to measure to determine whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract early. And if they can't, there ought to be special help. And when they do, we ought to thank our teachers and thank our Governors and thank the legislature for adequately funding education. But one thing we can't do is, we can't leave children behind by just guessing whether or not they're learning. The best policies are to measure, and when we find schools that will not change, then we've got to give parents different choices so that no child is left behind in the United States of America.

We need an immigration policy that holds the values of the United States of America. We'll enforce our borders, but we need more than that. We need a temporary-worker program that will enable willing workers to do jobs Americans are not doing, so that we can get the pressure off the border and uphold the values of the United States of America.

I can keep going—[laughter]—but Laura is giving me the hook.

I do want to talk about one other subject, though, before I leave, and that is energy. This country—and that's going to sound odd for a Texan to say—this country is too dependent on oil, and we need to do something about it right now. You see, dependency on energy from foreign sources is a national security problem. Sometimes we get that oil from countries that don't like us. Dependency on oil is a economic problem. When a country like China demands more oil—relative supply—the price of crude oil goes up and so does the price

of gasoline at the pump. Dependency on oil means we're not being good stewards of the environment. And therefore, we have spent \$12 billion thus far in my Presidency to promote new technologies to enable us to say, we're becoming less dependent on oil.

And I want to share with you a novel idea I threw out for the Congress and asked for their passing. I believe that we can reduce the gasoline we use by 20 percent over the next 10 years. And I believe we can do so by promoting hybrid batteries and ethanol. And so I laid out a mandatory fuel standard of 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels by 2017. It is a bold initiative, it is a necessary initiative, and it's a practical initiative because of the technological advances this country is going to make.

We can only feed—we can only fuel our automobiles with so much ethanol from corn. After a while, the hog growers begin to get nervous when that price of corn gets up. And so therefore, we're spending a lot of your money, and so is the private sector, on developing ways to make ethanol out of wood chips or switchgrass or agricultural refuse. The whole purpose is for this Congress to work with this administration to make the difficult decisions now to fund technologies that will enable us to say that we're less dependent on oil, we're better stewards of the environment, and we're conscious about our national security. And that day is coming.

Good policy drives good politics. And the best policy is based upon solid principles: principles like the marketplace, principles like low taxes, principles like trusting people to spend their money, principles like a strong national defense is necessary to protect generations that are coming, principles like the power of freedom to make the world a better place. I'm looking forward to working with the United States Congress on principled policy.

I've got to tell you, I'm really optimistic about our country. I believe our future is a bright future. And the reason I do is

because I know the character and nature of our citizens. We're a decent land, a courageous land, and a compassionate land, and it is my honor to be the President of such a fine group of people.

Thanks for coming, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gov. Arnold A. Schwarzenegger of California; Gov. George E. "Sonny" Perdue of Georgia; Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador February 27, 2007

*President Bush. Puesta bienvenidos a mi amigo, el Presidente de nuestro amigo de El Salvador. Gracias.* Thanks for coming. We spent a lot of time talking together, because I value the advice of the President.

We talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about the fact that the first year of the trade agreement between the United States and El Salvador is coming up. And the President told me that a lot of people are benefiting—a lot of people in his country are benefiting from the opportunity presented by trade. And I told him that people in our country benefit from the relationship. Under his leadership, the economy of El Salvador is strong. And I congratulate you for your leadership.

We talked about interesting opportunities available. And one, of course, is biofuels. We both recognize that the development of biofuels is in our national interests. And I thank you for your vision.

We talked about the Millennium Challenge Account that the President has ably led. And it's going to enable people in the northern part of his country to realize the benefits of free trade and commercialism.

I expressed my concerns and our condolences about the three gentlemen who were recently assassinated, which led us into a broad discussion about security and my de-

sire to help the President deal with security issues.

And finally, the President reminded me that TPS expires next September. Every time he comes to the Oval Office, he's expressed his deep concern and strong support for his citizens that may be here in our country. And I assured him that I was openminded to his request, but more importantly, I'm working hard to get a comprehensive bill, immigration bill, passed out of the United States Congress.

And so, once again, we had a substantial and meaningful conversation. And that's what you expect when you have two friends together. *Gracias, señor.*

*President Saca Gonzalez.* Thank you very much, Mr. President.

We have talked extensively with the President on varied—array of issues. And I spoke to President Bush about how meaningful his trip to Latin America is going to be, because this is going to give a signal that the United States is interested in Latin America.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir.

*President Saca Gonzalez.* We have talked about free trade. On March 1st, the CAFTA agreement that is with El Salvador with the United States of America is going to be 1 year old. And during this year, we have increased, in 20 percent, all our

exports. And our economy has doubled its size. So there's no doubt that free trade has allowed this to become true.

We have also talked about the Millennium Account, and the project to develop the northern part of El Salvador is going to be a complete success, and very soon, we're going to have the first disbursements made. And we wanted that to be—the project of the development of the northern part of our country to become a success story for the Millennium Account.

We also talked about the TPS with President Bush today. And the President always has a very positive answer for El Salvador. But more importantly, today is the comprehensive immigration reform. And we will have to wait and see what happens between the Executive and the Congress of the United States. We have more than 2 million Salvadorans living here in the United States. The majority are legal citizens; many are already North Americans. And the President has always been very sensitive to this issue of the Salvadorans here, for which I feel very grateful.

*President Bush.* Thank you.

*President Saca Gonzalez.* We talked about regional security and its importance,

and also the combat to drug dealing and the combat to the gangs. And we have found many points of coincidence with the President.

And we also talked with the President about biofuels and the importance of biofuels, and how necessary it is, you know, to develop biofuels in the region so that we need less gas and less oil to have our cars run. And in El Salvador, we're about to pass a new law on biofuels, and it's almost ready. And we want to work hand in hand with President Bush for the development of these biofuels in the region.

And anyway, I always feel so comfortable, you know, sitting down and talking with my good friend every time that I come here. Thank you for receiving me.

*President Bush.* Gracias, señor. Gracias.

*President Saca Gonzalez.* Gracias.

*President Bush.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Saca Gonzalez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for John D. Negroponte as Deputy Secretary of State February 27, 2007

Thank you, Madam Secretary. Madam Secretary, thanks for the introduction. Thanks for the really fine job you're doing.

I'm pleased to be with you today, and I'm really honored to stand with a personal friend and a man I admire a lot, the new Deputy Secretary of State, John Negroponte.

I, too, welcome John's family—all five of them here, as well as his wife Diana. I appreciate all his friends who have shown

up. Thanks for coming to pay honor to this good man.

American diplomacy is really critical to ensuring the safety and the security of our citizens. Terrorist enemies follow an ideology of hatred and death. In the long run, the only way to defeat them is to offer a vision that is hopeful and positive and optimistic. Spreading that vision requires strong leadership here at the State Department, and John Negroponte has the talent and the experience our Nation needs in

a Deputy Secretary of State. He's going to do a superb job for the American people.

I appreciate very much Congresswoman Jane Harman for joining us. It's a great tribute to a good man. I appreciate the former Deputy Secretary of State, Rich Armitage, for being here. I'm honored that other members of my administration have come. I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps. I'm proud to see you all here. Thanks for coming, distinguished guests, the folks who serve our Nation here at the State Department.

As the Deputy Secretary of State, John Negroponte is going to play a key role, an important role, in shaping our foreign policy. He's going to help guide diplomats deployed around the globe. He will act as the chief operating officer of the State Department. He will work with Secretary Rice and the leaders of other Federal Agencies to ensure that America speaks with one voice.

John is uniquely qualified. As America's first Director of National Intelligence, John took on one of the most demanding assignments in Government. His work was to ensure that all our intelligence agencies function as a single, unified enterprise. He handled this vital task with skill and determination. His leadership of the intelligence community improved our ability to collect, analyze, and share intelligence. His vigilance has helped keep the American people safe from harm.

One of my regrets is that, in him coming back to the State Department, is, he won't be in the Oval Office every morning to share his wisdom with me. And he has plenty of wisdom to share. I strongly urge the young Foreign Service officers to get on his calendar so he can explain to you how best to do your job. *[Laughter]* I did the same thing. *[Laughter]*

As he moves over to the State Department, he knows this building really well. As Condi mentioned, he became a Foreign Service officer in the administration of Ike.

Like, some of you weren't even born then. *[Laughter]* Diana and I were barely born then. *[Laughter]*

Over the course of more than four decades, he's held eight Foreign Service posts, three different continents. He served as the Deputy National Security Adviser to President Ronald Reagan. He represented America at the United Nations during my administration. He was our first Ambassador to a free Iraq. In these and other posts, he has shown diplomatic skill and devotion to our country. He really has set a great example for the people who work here.

Over the past 6 years, I know him to be a man of vision and character. He understands the importance of fighting the extremists with all elements of national power. He is a good negotiator. It doesn't hurt that he can play a mean game of poker. *[Laughter]* As one of our Nation's—as our Nation's second-ranking diplomat, he's going to be a strong and confident advocate for our interests and, equally importantly, our ideals around the world.

John is going to build upon the work done by his predecessor, Bob Zoellick. Bob helped lead the State Department during a challenging time for our Nation. He upheld the high standards and the proud tradition of this Department. I appreciate his dedicated service.

As John takes up his duties, he's going to benefit from the talent and professionalism of the men and women in our foreign and civil service, folks who serve in this building and in our Embassies around the world. The work done here and the work done abroad helps sustain America's position; it fosters freedom and helps advance the cause of peace.

I want to thank you for your willingness to serve our country. I appreciate the sacrifices you make on behalf of the American people.

You're going to have a fine leader in John Negroponte. One thing is for certain: He knows we live in challenging times; we



live in dangerous times. He also knows that this is a moment of great hope and opportunity. John's broad experience and sound judgment and unquestioned integrity will make him an outstanding Deputy Secretary of State.

And so, John, I thank you once again for agreeing to serve our Nation. Congratulations.

And now Secretary Rice will administer the oath.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. at the U.S. Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to former Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Deputy Secretary Negroponte.

## Remarks Honoring the 2006 National Basketball Association Champion Miami Heat *February 27, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. It is such a joy to welcome the NBA champs, the Miami Heat, to the White House. Glad you all are here. This is the Miami Heat's first NBA championship. I congratulate you on a tremendous achievement, even though you beat a Texas team. *[Laughter]*

I can assure you, however, then-Governor Bush, the Governor of Florida, was thrilled, as were a lot of Florida fans. We've got a lot of members of the congressional delegation in the room. We got you a Senator here. We got Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, Alcee Hastings, Robert Wexler, Ander Crenshaw, Jeff Miller, Kendrick Meek, Ron Klein, and Tim Mahoney. Thank you all for coming.

Most importantly, we got members of the Miami Heat family with us today. I'm really proud of Micky Arison and Madeline, who is with us, as well as Nick. As you know, I used to be in pro sports. I never had the pleasure of winning anything. *[Laughter]* Must be pretty cool. *[Laughter]*

I welcome Pat Riley, the president and head coach of the Heat. I welcome Randy Pfund, the general manager. I want to thank all the folks who make the organization run: the equipment people, the people that figure out how to get you to the plane

on time, the folks who never really get much credit for making a franchise become a championship franchise. And we welcome you all here.

I want to say something to the spouses of the players: Welcome. You've got a tough life, in many ways, with your spouse on the road all the time, and you deserve as much of this championship as they do. And so we welcome you here to the White House as well.

All the fans who are here: Thanks for coming. These players did something that they weren't supposed to do. Remember, they went into the Eastern Conference championship as the underdog. Nobody thought they could win. And then they get against the Mavericks, and they're 2 down and 13 points behind with minutes remaining—7 minutes remaining in the third game. In other words, they lose that game; it's over. They weren't supposed to win. And they did something no team has done in nearly 30 years, which is win four straight and become the NBA champs. And your fans are really proud of you.

This is a team with some of the NBA's bright stars. Dwyane Wade led the team in scoring—most valuable player in the finals. He was on the—sportsman of the year for Sports Illustrated. All it said was,



Dwyane Wade plays to win. Unfortunately, he hurt his shoulder. I know a lot of NBA fans, whether they like the Heat or not, are pulling for Dwyane to get back into action. We wish you a speedy recovery.

Or take Alonzo Mourning. A lot of folks here in DC remember Alonzo Mourning. I don't know if the people understand it, but Alonzo had a kidney illness that a lot of folks said: "Well, he'll never get back on the court again." He not only got back on the court; he blocked a lot of shots—[laughter]—which helped this team become the NBA champ.

And then, of course, probably one the most well-known figures in the United States of America is a fellow that's hard to miss—[laughter]—a fellow Texan—[laughter]—big Shaq. He scored his 25,000th point in his career last night—or recently. And we congratulate you for that—last night, yes, last night. And—but he was an important figure in seeing to—seeing this team to the championship.

But as Coach Riley gave me—he said: "Just remember, the motto wasn't, 'Each star matters'; the motto was, '15 strong'." In other words, it was a team effort that got these men here to the White House. Yes, they had the stars; everybody knew who they—who the stars are, but it was the capacity to play together, to put the team ahead of themselves, that enabled them to be here at the White House, saying, "Congratulations, NBA champs."

And I appreciate very much—[applause]. So they asked Dwyane Wade—he was the fellow that was the Sports Illustrated man—he said, "We did this together." In other words, he recognized, in spite of the fact that he had a fine series, that he couldn't have done it without his teammates.

Pat Riley had a lot to do with this team playing as a team. A team requires a good, solid leader in convincing people to put the team ahead of themselves. And that's exactly what Pat Riley has done. I'd say he's accomplished. After all, he's won seven

NBA rings; that's all. [Laughter] They asked him about this ring, and I think it's interesting what he said. He said, "I would have traded them all for this one." He cares about this team. And obviously, the players responded to his leadership.

But what impresses me the most about the Miami Heat is their work in the community. That's what impresses me about them. I mean, I'm in awe of their athletic skills. Standing next to Shaq is an awe-inspiring experience. [Laughter] But I want to share some of the stories of these players and what they have done in their communities.

Alonzo Mourning dedicated his entire salary from the Heat to charities that help low-income kidney patients and underprivileged youth. It wasn't 10 percent—[applause]. I would suggest not popping up on every story—[laughter]—because you're going to be tired. [Laughter] This is a giving team. [Laughter]

Antoine Walker founded the Eight Foundation to provide education and sports opportunities for inner-city kids in his hometown of Chicago. He came from Chicago; he's putting something back in the community from whence he came.

Dwyane Wade has given a lot of his salary to his church. He donates basketball shoes to a youth sports program at his alma mater, which happens to be Marquette University. He founded Wade's World Foundation, which gives children educational and social opportunities, such as the chance to spend the day at Disney World.

And then, of course, you've got the big man, Shaq. He works as a reserve police officer with the Miami Beach Police Department. He gives new meaning to the phrase "the long arm of the law." [Laughter]

Heat players volunteer their time in all kinds of causes, ranging from reading to drug prevention to youth basketball. This is a championship team on the court, and this is a championship team off the court,

and it is my high honor to welcome to the White House as the NBA champs.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Micky Arison, owner, Nicholas Arison, limited partner, and Shaquille O'Neal, center, Miami Heat.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Service Organizations *February 28, 2007*

One of the most enjoyable things I do as the President is to hear stories of my fellow citizens, stories of compassion, stories of care. I just talked to social entrepreneurs who have decided to help improve the lives of our service men and women and their families. There are some remarkable acts of kindness by people who have taken it upon themselves to serve their country by helping a neighbor in need. And whether it be helping the chaplains help kids, or whether it be helping a family of the injured, whether it be working at Walter Reed, or supporting troops getting ready to go into combat, these good men and women really represent the very best of America.

I ask my fellow citizens to support our troops and their families. There are all

kinds of ways you can find out how to do so. AmericaSupportsYou.mil, for example, is a web site that if you really do want to participate like these citizens have, that you can find out a way to contribute your time, your money, your talents to really send a message that America supports these brave volunteers who are out defending our country in the war on terror.

And so I thank you all for joining us. It's been my great pleasure to hear from you. I'm proud to be the President of a country with so many decent citizens. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe *February 28, 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed no-

tice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2007.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to

undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

February 28, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1. The related notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Visit With Gulf Coast Grant Recipients in Long Beach, Mississippi *March 1, 2007*

You know, it's interesting to come back down here to the gulf coast. I tried to think back about what it was like the first time I came after the storm hit. And I guess the—my most vivid recollection is the piles of rubble, literally debris stacked upon debris. It was—it's hard to believe then that I would be—I had faith that I'd be able to come to a home, but I had trouble visualizing it. And then I kept coming down, and I watched the improvement, because of the hard work of the local citizens—people like the mayor here and the Governor, who set a vision that was a hopeful vision.

The Federal Government's role has been to write checks. The Governor's role and the mayor's role is help to expedite the Federal money to the local folks. And today we are able to sit in a homeowner—the Woodward's home. Again, one of the things I like to say is, when somebody walks in, "Welcome to my home." And it has a special ring to it here in the gulf coast, because there was a time when their home was totally destroyed.

Part of the reason I've come down is to tell the people here in the gulf coast that we still think about them in Washington, and that we listen to the Governor

when he speaks. The other reason I've come down is I want the taxpayers of the United States to see firsthand what their money has done to help revitalize a series of communities that were literally wiped out because of a major storm.

It's a—this is a hopeful day. There's obviously a lot more work to be done. You can see vacant lots where there's going to be new building. There's still work to be done here in Mississippi, and the Governor and I are going to go listen to some of the local officials describe to me what's on their mind and how we can continue to help. But times are changing for the better, and people's lives are improving, and there is hope. And I congratulate the good folks in this part of the country for their resiliency, their courage, and the fact that they never abandoned hope.

So thank you for giving us a chance to come by. We're proud to be with you. Love being with you. Thank you all for your hospitality. Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. at the home of Cheryl and Ernie Woodward. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor William Skellie, Jr., of Long Beach, MS; and Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Biloxi, Mississippi

March 1, 2007

Governor and first lady, thanks for your welcome. It's great to be back in the gulf coast of Mississippi.

I've had the privilege of coming down and meeting a lot of these folks before, so I really feel like it's, in many ways, a chance to reconnect with people who I admire. I can remember the looks on your faces when I first came down here during the incredible destruction—right after the destruction of Katrina. You know, there was something about the spirit of Mississippi, though, that made it clear to me that there was no doubt that progress was going to be made.

Mayor, I remember you and I walking through the streets of Biloxi and finding people that were literally stunned and were in shock and were wondering what life meant for them. And I remember the piles of debris, Mayor, in your city. Or, Rocky, I remember talking to you when you came, and you had the same set of clothes on for the last 4 days. You were trying to recover from a brutal devastation in your county.

And I've come back again because I'm inspired every time I come here to see progress and the spirit alive. In other words, people here said, "We refuse to be held down by the storm; we will overcome it."

The job of the Federal Government has been to help. And I made a pledge early on in the process that I would work with the United States Congress, members of both political parties, to get some healthy checks written. And it's important for the check writers, the taxpayers of the United States, to know that progress is being made with their money and that the people of Mississippi appreciate the fact that the country came to help when they needed help. It's a neighborly thing to do.

And secondly, I fully understand there's still work to be done, that even though progress has been made, this storm was so devastating that we have still got to stay focused on the task, and that we've got to work with the Governor and the local officials, the supervisors and the mayors, to continue to help address their needs.

And one of the things I've heard loud and clear is that there's a continued frustration with the slowness of Federal response at times. And therefore, it's important for me to hear that, and my friend Don Powell to hear that, so that we can come and do what the people expect us to do, which is to respond to the needs of people in Mississippi.

I'm very proud of the leadership your Governor has shown. He showed leadership during the storm, he showed leadership in the aftermath of the storm, and he continues to be deeply concerned about the people of Mississippi. And he, along with two fine United States Senators, are constantly talking to the White House in pretty plain language about what more needs to be done. And I hope he would say that we listen, and if possible, respond in a constructive way.

I'm proud to be back again. I intend to keep coming back so long as I'm the President and perhaps after the Presidency, A.J. Now, A.J. has given me a great gift. Instead of the key to the city, he gave me a Biloxi, Mississippi, license plate. It's got my name and my number on there. [Laughter] One of these days, I'll own a private vehicle, and I may just put this on my vehicle when I come back and see you. [Laughter]

Anyway, thank you all very much. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at Biloxi City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi and

his wife, Marsha; Mayor A.J. Holloway of Biloxi, MS; and Rodrick “Rocky” Pullman, supervisor, Hancock County, MS.

## Remarks Prior to a Lunch Meeting With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in New Orleans, Louisiana *March 1, 2007*

It is my pleasure to be back in New Orleans. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, the mayor, the head of the City Council, the parish presidents for joining me.

I’ve committed to stay involved in the rebuilding of—and the United States Senator, excuse me, Senator—and the Congressman, I beg your pardon. I committed to the people of this part of the world and the gulf coast that the Federal Government would fund recovery and stay committed to the recovery. And one of the reasons I have come down is to hear from you. I fully understand that there are frustrations, and I want to know the frustrations. And to the extent we can help, we’ll help. I told the people that I would work with the Congress to write a \$110 billion check to help the people of Louisiana and Mississippi, and that check has been written. And now it’s incumbent upon us to get the money into people’s hands.

Sometimes it’s hard to see progress when you’re living close to the scene. I guess the New Orleans Saints football team rep-

resents to me what’s happening in this part of the State. It is a resurgence; there’s a renewal. Even though there’s a lot of work done, the spirit of the people down here is strong.

And so I want to thank these leaders for joining me. It means a lot to me. It’s good to be with you. It’s also good to be in a place where you can buy some pretty good food. [*Laughter*] I’m looking forward to the visit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. at Lil’ Dizzy’s Cafe. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Mitchell J. Landrieu of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Oliver M. Thomas, Jr., president, New Orleans City Council; Aaron F. Broussard, president, Jefferson Parish, LA; Kevin Davis, president, St. Tammany Parish, LA; Billy Nungesser, president, Plaquemines Parish, LA; Henry Rodriguez, president, St. Bernard Parish, LA; M.E. Taylor, president, Washington Parish, LA; Sen. David Vitter; and Rep. William J. Jefferson.

## Remarks at Samuel J. Green Charter School in New Orleans *March 1, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Dr. Tony, thank you very much for your kind introduction. God, I love the smile on his face. [*Laughter*]

Think about this: You can play recess outside in a garden. So, like, those are the two things I was good at, at school—[*laughter*—eating and playing. [*Laughter*]

But I really appreciate you inviting me over. Somebody said, “Well, why did you come to Samuel J. Green Charter School in New Orleans, Louisiana, when there’s other places to go?” Well, the answer is, there’s nothing better than being in the middle of a bright spot, a place that just shines with optimism, in a part of the world that has gone through some really difficult times. And so I’m here to herald success: success for today and, equally important, success for the future of this important city.

And I thank you all for giving me a chance to come. I mean, there’s nothing more illustrative of the issues that this community faces than to think that that blue line represented water and destruction. And yet we’re now dry; we’re on dry land, recovering. And so I’ve come back to New Orleans, Louisiana, to remind people that the Federal Government still knows you exist, still knows you have issues, and wants to work with your leadership to address those issues.

I know the Picard family is here. Thank you for coming. Gaylen was the wife of Cecil, who helped guide Louisiana’s schools through the worst of the storms. He has passed away. I’m honored to be in your presence. I know that you miss your good man, as does the people of New Orleans. He was a person that served your community with a lot of class. And I know he would be proud of places like Green that are setting high standards, strong centers of excellence, making sure every single child gets an education. Thanks for being here today. It means a lot.

Sorry Laura is not here. She and I, by the way, spent some of our youth here in New Orleans. I really don’t want to go into all the details of what—[laughter]—but we know something about the town. And it’s a great place. And she loves New Orleans, as do I, and we’ve got a lot of friends here.

I want to thank Robin Jarvis, the superintendent of the Recovery School District, for joining us. I appreciate very much—

[applause]—thank you, Robin. I want to thank some of the elected officials who have joined us here at the school, with whom I had lunch earlier, starting with your mayor. It’s good to see you, Mr. Mayor. Appreciate your time. A pleasure to be here.

The mayor and I have gotten to know each other—[laughter]—in a positive way—[laughter]—in a positive way. It’s interesting, you know, we’re kind of two strong-willed people who got thrown into a deal we didn’t ask for. Tell you an interesting story about the mayor. The first time I ever met him, we came in Air Force One right after the storm hit—a couple of days after, I think it was, and the mayor was a little irritable. [Laughter] He hadn’t had a shower. [Laughter] So I came off the plane—I knew I was dealing with a good man when I looked in his eyes and he was able to maintain a certain sense of humor in the midst of all the trauma. And so I sent him up the stairs for him to take a shower on Air Force One. [Laughter]

Everybody—yes, I was about to say—[laughter]—the president of the New Orleans City Council, Oliver Thomas, thanked me then, and he thanks me now. Good to see you, Big O. I have spent enough time down here, where I call him “Big O.” [Laughter] He calls me “Little G.” [Laughter]

I’m proud to be with your Lieutenant Governor. Mitch, thanks for coming; appreciate you being here. I flew down today from Washington—am I flying back with you all too? Yes. Flew down today with the Senator, David Vitter, and Congressman Bill Jefferson. Andrea, good to see you. Thanks for coming. I think they want a ride back. [Laughter]

We had lunch today with a lot of the parish presidents—and Ray and Oliver and Mitch and David and Jeff—talking about the issues. Oh, by the way, my friend, Don Powell—he’s from Texas; I’m from Texas, and—[applause]. He made the mistake of



answering the phone call when I called him. [*Laughter*] I said, "I need somebody to come down here to help the good folks break through the logjams to make sure that that which we intend to do gets done." And the czar—we call him "Czar Don Powell"—and I can't thank my buddy enough for taking on a tough job. If you were to sit at the table with us, you'd see how tough it is—"so-and-so has the responsibility here, "no, you've got the responsibility"—it's a lot of this. And our job is to make it this: straightforward. That's what we're here to do.

You know, I came down here and spoke, and I said: "The Federal Government will be involved." And I said: "We're going to put money on the table to help follow that through." And I believe we have, with \$110 billion. That's not to say there may be more money needed for the gulf coast, but 110 billion is a lot. And now the question is, are we going to be able to spend it wisely? Can we get it done? Can we get it to the people that need help?

Just so you know, of the 110 billion, 86 billion of that has been obligated; in other words, it's out the door. But only 53 billion has been spent. And so part of the day today, we talked about if the money is out the door in Washington, where is it, and how come it hasn't been out farther? And that's one of the things that we're going to continue to work on, to make sure that obligated money ends up in somebody's pocket, so it helps.

I know housing is a big issue here. The mayor talks about it; Oliver talks about it a lot; the Lieutenant Governor is concerned about it. You know, I made a conscious decision when we began the rebuilding effort to say, "I want the local folks running the programs." I felt you would get a better response and a response more tailored to the needs of the local citizens if the local folks were in charge. That was the case in Mississippi and in Louisiana. And I felt like the housing program that was devised by the folks in both Mississippi and Lou-

isiana was a really interesting solution, a creative way of saying to people, we're going to help you rebuild your homes so that people will actually come back to New Orleans. And those who are here will have money to rebuild their homes, and those who are outside the State will receive incentives to come back.

And one of the issues we have to work on is to make sure that the money that has been sent from Washington to fund the road to recovery program, the home program, actually gets spent. I don't know if you know this or not, but there is \$6.2 billion that has been sent down; 50 million has been spent. And so we have an obligation, all of us involved with this process, to work to make sure that people begin getting that money so they can get back to living their lives.

One of the issues that we talked—spent a lot of time about is infrastructure. And Louisiana has had—now had \$4.6 billion sent from the Federal Government. And actually, it's your money, I mean, so we're sending your money back to you—4.6 billion, and about 2.5 billion has not yet been spent. I guess what I'm telling you is, is that first of all, there is money in the pipeline that I hope will help improve lives. And if it is stuck because of unnecessary bureaucracies, our responsibility at the Federal, State, and local level is to unstick it, is to make sure that it keeps moving.

The reason I herald this and the reason I want to come to a school like this: It's important for the taxpayers from around the country who paid the bill to understand where we are in the process and to realize there's some really positive things taking place with the money that I believe the country has been generous about. In other words, when you go to Congress and say, "We need \$110 billion to help the people in the gulf coast," somebody has got to pay. That's the taxpayer. And the taxpayers come from more places than just Louisiana and Mississippi. It is the collective effort of the country as a whole. And I'm proud

of the generosity of our citizens, and I want them to know that while it is still difficult work here, progress has been made. And there's more to be done.

The economic recovery here—I was talking to the mayor about Mardi Gras, a subject I know a little bit about—[*laughter*—I remember most of them. [*Laughter*] He said it was up to about 80-something percent capacity. In other words, it's not 100 percent, it's not as good as people would like it, but things are beginning to happen.

One of the things that you've got to continue to work on, and we want to help you at the local level, is in the criminal justice matters. It's important for the society to say loud and clear: There are consequences for crime. And there's got to be a—[*applause*—there can't be any doubt in somebody's mind that this is a consequential society if you want to be able to walk your streets safely.

And so I know the Attorney General was down here the other day. He briefed me personally on working with the local folks on—for the Federal Government helping, what really is a local responsibility. And yet we want to help. We want to make sure your criminal justice system does its job so that citizens feel safe and tourists feel safe to come. It's a big responsibility we have, and to the extent that we can help, we will.

One of the things that the mayor and I have talked about is extending tax relief to businesses doing jobs here in the New Orleans area. Why? Because we want the entrepreneurial spirit to remain strong in this part of the world. And one way to encourage strong entrepreneurship is to say, there's a tax benefit for investing in this part of the country. There's certain things you can look at to determine how well an economy is doing.

Take a look at your port. It's coming back; it's strong. Commerce is beginning, and this is—it doesn't seem like much to you all since you're so close to it, but for a fellow who was here and remembers the

port being completely shut down, it's pretty good progress.

Now, there's more to be done; I fully understand that. The Senator spent a little time up there on Air Force One, right up there in the Presidential cabin, talking about levees, making sure that the case is continually made about strengthening these levees. I hear him. I hear him. We have said, we're going to bring the levees up to—stronger than ever. We're making progress there. I told the Senator I understand there's still more work to be done. And I want to work with Congress to the best we can to get money to continue meeting the obligations we set.

I'm real proud of another thing that's happened as a result of Democrats and Republicans working together—it actually happens sometime in Washington, DC—and that is that bill I signed that will enable more Federal revenues to come down here to restore the wetlands. And the reason I bring that up, I'm a strong proponent of the restoration of the wetlands, for a lot of reasons. There's a practical reason, though, when it comes to hurricanes: The stronger the wetlands, the more likely the damage of the hurricane. And so we've been working together on behalf of the city.

I do want to spend a little time on education. I like a system that is willing to challenge the status quo when the status quo is failing. And one of the reasons I've come to this school is, it represents a group of citizens, including your principal and your parents and the teachers and the citizens, who said, "We're tired of mediocrity in the school system." It is not acceptable to have children trapped in schools that will not teach and will not change. It is not acceptable to the great city of New Orleans, Louisiana, to have a failing school system.

And so the storm came, and it did terrible devastation, but it gave a great chance for renewal. And one of the areas where renewal is most evident is in the school

system of New Orleans, Louisiana, in the charter system, like right here at Green, where people said—[*applause*].

There are now 31 charter schools in this city, as I understand it; that's up from 8. Charter schools, to me, say innovation, individuality. You know, the No Child Left Behind Act—and I am a very strong supporter of it; I look forward to the Congress reauthorizing the bill—believes in setting high standards, local control of schools, and accountability. And the reason accountability is important is, in order to solve problems, you have to measure the problem; you have to know what the problem is. You can't guess, particularly when it comes to the life of a child. You can't guess as to whether or not a child can read or write and add and subtract. You must measure to know.

And so we said, in return for Federal money, we expect local districts and States to measure, to have tests. The principal, the good doc asked me to go into the fourth grade class and say to the kids, "Good luck on the test tomorrow." That was music to my ears, because you don't know whether or not a child is reading unless you test.

And the interesting thing about No Child Left Behind which is vital is that when we find a child falling behind, there is extra Federal money for that child to get up to speed early, before it's too late. It's a good piece of legislation, and it fits in with the philosophy of this charter school.

If you're interested in changing a school system that hasn't worked, please insist upon a couple of things: high standards, for starters. If you demand low standards, you're going to get bad results. I call it the soft bigotry of low expectations. If you want to have a school system that works, insist upon measuring so that a parent will know whether or not the curriculum is meeting their child's needs. These parents, by the way, are satisfied parents. I don't expect the principal to have brought

unsatisfied parents, but nevertheless—[*applause*].

If you're interested in a school system that works, when you find excellence, herald it. That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to lend my voice to herald this school. By the way, a good school is one that generally has an educational entrepreneur as its head, somebody who is flexible—rigid enough on the standards, but flexible enough to meet the standards—somebody willing to say: "Well, we tried this curriculum, and it hasn't worked. Let's make sure that we focus on the children, not on the process, and get a curriculum that does work."

One of the things that—and by the way, New Orleans is blessed not only with a strong public school system, now that you've got charters in it, but you've got some great parochial schools too. And these schools, like this school, were quick to start up after the storm. They knew their mission, and they knew their charge.

I am very conscious that this community is going to require more schools. And the Government has a role to play. We're spending quite a bit of money, Federal money, to help you rebuild the schools. And Margaret Spellings—who's the Secretary of Education—I know has been down here, and I know she understands the responsibility we share. As a matter of fact, there's been about \$450 million allocated for the New Orleans school system. I would strongly—and by the way, some of that money is flexible in use. And what I would strongly urge you to do is to use some of the unspent money to recruit and attract teachers, because in order to make sure that the school system is full—you've got 40 teachers. Do you need more? Yes. He needs more.

The housing issue obviously is important. But it's also important to be able to use some of this money available to find educational pioneers that want to come down and lend their expertise to help rebuild a school system. There's no doubt in my

mind that the school system that you're going to rebuild is going to be a great school system, because you've given it such a great start. Charter schools work. It makes a lot of sense.

And so I've come to Green to say, thanks to the citizens of New Orleans who pay attention to the quality of education; thanks to the parents of this school who set an example by being involved; and thanks to the leadership. Doc, you're running a good show here. I'm proud of your job.

Thanks for letting me come by. I'm honored to be back down here. I'm reminded of the New Orleans Saints football team that—[applause]—here's a team that a lot of people didn't give much hope for—did they?—when the season started. And it rose; it became a national story. It was a

factor in the championship. The same thing is going to happen to the city. You got work to do. You got work to do. I'm going to keep coming down so long as I'm the President. And then after I'm the President, I'm going to slide in incognito. [Laughter]

God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony Recasner, principal, Samuel J. Green Charter School; Gaylen David Picard, wife of former Louisiana State Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Lt. Gov. Mitchell J. Landrieu of Louisiana; and Andrea Green-Jefferson, wife of Rep. William J. Jefferson.

## Statement on the Death of Mario Chanes de Armas *March 1, 2007*

Cuban patriot Mario Chanes de Armas was a political prisoner of the Castro regime for 30 years, one of the longest sentences of any political prisoner in the world. Like so many Cubans, he sought a democratic Cuban society only to see his quest betrayed by a Castro dictatorship. Mario Chanes was one of the original *plantados*, Cuban political prisoners who

were unyielding in their fervent desire for a free Cuba. His patriotism and strong sense of purpose are examples to all freedom-loving people. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to his family and friends.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba.

## Remarks on Departure for New Albany, Indiana *March 2, 2007*

### *March 1 Tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia*

Yesterday afternoon I spoke to Governor Riley of Alabama. This morning I spoke to Governor Perdue of Georgia, expressing my personal condolences as well as the condolences of the Nation for those who

lost their lives in the recent tragedies in those two States.

Tomorrow I'm going down to Georgia and Alabama. I go down with a heavy heart. I go down knowing full well that I'll be seeing people whose lives were turned upside down by the tornadoes. I'll do my very best to comfort them. I ask

our Nation, for those who are prayerful, to give a prayer for the victims of the storms, and ask for the blessings that can come upon people and the comfort nec-

essary to deal with the recent tragedy. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

## Remarks at Silver Street Elementary School in New Albany, Indiana March 2, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. A little bossy today, aren't I? Yes. *[Laughter]* Thrilled to be here in New Albany. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I want to talk about schools and the Federal role in schools relative to local governments—is what we're here to talk about.

I'm glad to be here in the home of the Stars, the Silver Street Stars. I brought a lot of cameras and limousines—*[laughter]*—kind of fits in with the theme, doesn't it—Silver Street Stars. I understand the school is 90 years old. You've seen a lot of decent people come here to teach, I'll bet you—a lot of people who said, "I want to put my community first," and became teachers and principals and caring citizens of the State. And so I'm real proud to be with you.

I'm here because I think it's important for a President to herald success and to talk about what's possible, particularly when it comes to schools. My only regret is that my wife hasn't joined me today. She's by far the best deal in our family, just like in Mitch's family, I want you to know. I know the Danielses well, and I can certify that the person from New Albany is, by far, the best part of his family too. *[Laughter]*

I'm real proud of Mitch. I know him; he worked in my administration. I hauled him out of the private sector when I first got sworn in. I said, "Would you come and work for the country?" And he did. He was the watchdog for the people's money; it's what's called the OMB. And

he did a fine job there, really, and I miss him a lot. I love his sense of humor. I knew he'd make a fine Governor. He asked me about Governor. I said, "Listen, it's the greatest job in America—next to President." But it's a great—*[laughter]*. And he's an innovative, smart, capable, honest guy, and I'm proud to be with him.

I know he cares a lot about schools too. And so when I talk about education, I can talk confidently about the schools here in Indiana, because you've got a Governor who will prioritize education. I used to say to people, "Public education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government." It ought to be the number-one priority, and I know Mitch is making it that way.

I want to thank Tony Duffy. Duffy has done a fine job of dealing with an impossibly large entourage. *[Laughter]* I really appreciate your spirit. It turns out that if you were to correlate education in a school with educational entrepreneurship at the principal level, the two go hand in hand. In other words, you have to have a good principal in order to be able to challenge failure when you find it, mediocrity when you see it, and praise excellence when it's evident. And you've got a good principal here, and I can't thank you enough, Tony.

I want to thank all the teachers, as well, who teach here. Teaching is a hard job. It's a really hard job, and it's never really appreciated enough in some circles. And I just want the teachers to understand full well that I know the community here

thanks you from the bottom of their heart, and the parents thank you.

And for the parents who are here, I appreciate you paying attention to your school. It turns out, parental involvement is an essential part of having excellence in the school system. So when parents pay attention, it not only gives confidence to the teachers, it also enables the school to listen to the needs of those who matter most, and those are the parents and the children.

I appreciate very much Congressman Baron Hill joining us today. The Congressman flew down on the airplane. As you know, we're not from the same political party, but we both care about education. And it's nice of you to come. You'll meet a friend of mine who is with us. Mike and Keta, appreciate you all coming.

Now is not the time to be involved with politics when we're talking about the education of our children. This is an issue that needs to rise above politics and needs to focus on what's right, because getting the schools right in America will make sure that this country remains competitive and hopeful and optimistic. So I'm proud you traveled with me, and it's good to see you both again. Thanks for coming.

Mayor Jim Garner and Debbie are with us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here, sir. Proud to be in your city. I appreciate the reception that we received from the citizens. People respect the Presidency, and sometimes they like the President. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the fact that people came out to wave.

I want to thank Dr. Reed, who is the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thank you for coming, Dr. Reed. There you are. I appreciate Mr. Don Sakel; he's the president of the School Board. Don, where are you? There you are, yes. I saw him coming in. I said, "You've probably got the toughest job in America, being on the school board." [*Laughter*] For those of you who know school politics, you know what I'm talking about. But I appreciate

the school board and the board of trustees, people who serve the local community by serving on the school board, making sure that local control of schools remains an essential part of the school system in this State and around the country. Dr. Dennis Brooks, who is the superintendent of the New Albany and Floyd County school system is with us. And community leaders, thanks.

So there is a bill coming up for reauthorization called the No Child Left Behind Act. I happen to think it's, if not the, one of the most substantial pieces of legislation I will have had the honor to sign—I've signed a lot. I want to describe to you the philosophy behind the act and why I strongly believe it needs to be reauthorized by the United States Congress.

I first became directly involved with public schools from a public policy perspective as the Governor of Texas, and I was deeply concerned about systems that quit early on a child and just moved them through. In other words, I was concerned about a system where people would walk in the classroom and say, "These children are hard to educate; therefore, let's just move them through the system." It may not have happened in Indiana, but it happened in Texas. And it was unacceptable, because guess who generally got shuffled through the system: the poor, the newly arrived, the minority student. And I knew that unless we confronted a system which gave up on children early, that my State would not be a hopeful place.

And so I decided to do something about it, and I took that spirit to Washington, DC. Now, look, I fully understand some are nervous when they hear a President talking about Federal education. You start thinking to yourself: The Government is going to tell you what to do here at the local level. Quite the contrary, in this piece of legislation. I strongly believe in local control of schools. I believe it's essential to align authority and responsibility. And by insisting upon local control of schools,



you put the power where it should be: closest to the people.

On the other hand, I know full well that to make sure a system doesn't lapse into kind of the safety of mediocrity that you've got to measure. See, in my State, we said, we want to know whether or not a child can read and write early, before that child gets moved through the system. And so I insisted upon accountability, and the spirit of the No Child Left Behind Act is the same.

It says, if you spend money, you should insist upon results. Now, I recognize the Federal Government only spends about 7 percent of the total education budgets around the country, and frankly, that's the way I think it should be. In other words, if local people are responsible or the State is responsible, that's where the primary funding ought to come. But I also strongly subscribe to the idea of the Federal Government providing extra money for what's called Title I students, for example, students who go to this school—money that I think bolsters education for students in the community.

But I also believe that in return for you spending that money—it's your money, after all—it makes sense for Government to say: "Is it working? Are we meeting objectives? Are we achieving the results necessary for all of us to say that the school systems are working nationwide?" And so step one of the No Child Left Behind Act was to say, "You've got to measure."

We didn't design a Federal test, because I believe a Federal test undermines local control of schools. As a matter of fact, Mitch and Baron and I were talking in the car about how Indiana has had a long-standing accountability system, and that's good. It ought to be your accountability system; after all, it's your schools. But I do believe you need to measure, and I know you need to set high standards and keep raising those standards.

In life, if you lower the bar, you get lousy results. If you keep raising that bar,

it's amazing what can happen. I call it challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And that's an important part of the No Child Left Behind Act. We expect people to set high standards and measure to determine whether or not those standards are being met.

Now, one of the interesting debates in the school systems is curriculum. I imagine you've had a few of those tussles here; we had a lot of them in the State of Texas. Reading curriculum, for example, there was a longstanding debate over which type of system works better. And it can get pretty heated. One way to cut through all the noise, however, is to measure. If the children are learning to read given a basic curriculum, then you know you picked the right way to teach, the right set of instructions. If your children are not meeting standards, then an accountability system gives you the opportunity to change. And school systems, in my judgment, need to be flexible. That's why local control of schools makes sense. When something isn't working, you need to correct. But what the accountability systems enable you to do is determine if it's working at all.

I think it's very important for there to be transparency. In other words, when you have scores—I don't know if you do this, Mitch, or not, but I would strongly suggest that you post them for everybody to see, across the State of Indiana. It's kind of hard to tell how you're doing relative to your neighbor unless there's full accountability—in other words, unless everybody can see the results. A lot of times people think their school is doing just great—the principal, in all due respect, says: "We're doing just fine; don't worry about it, community." But you may not be. And it's important for people to fully understand how your school is doing relative to other schools, so that if you need to correct, you're able to do so. See, if you have high standards, then you want to aim to those standards and make sure that you're doing

well relative to other schools that are setting high standards.

Finally, what we need is to make sure that we individualize, as best as possible, the school system. That's what happens here at Silver Street. In other words, when you use your accountability system properly, you can tailor it to each individual student. That's why the act is called the No Child Left Behind Act. It doesn't say "all children shouldn't be left behind," it says "no child." In other words, you can individualize curriculum based upon accountability, and this school does that.

Testing data has helped teachers tailor instruction. Here's what your principal said. He said, "We drill down in the data." In other words, they take the data and drill down; I presume you meant analyze a lot. Yes, that's good. I'm from Crawford, Texas, too, so I know. [*Laughter*] They analyze. They drill down in the data and figure out what the best practices are that we need to be using in the classroom. In other words, they use the data, not as a way to punish but as a way to improve.

The spirit of the No Child Left Behind Act says: We will spend money; we will use accountability to drill down to make sure no child gets left behind. You know, one way you can really use this, particularly in your early grades, is for literacy. Science doesn't matter if the child can't read. It's really hard to be good in math if you don't have the capacity to read the problems in the first place. And so I know this school is focused on literacy, as it should be, as a step toward educational excellence in all subjects.

I appreciate very much the fact that this school uses the accountability to focus on teaching techniques. Sometimes—probably not in this school, but sometimes—teachers have got the right heart, but they don't have the techniques necessary to deliver the results that are expected. And so you can use your accountability system, if you're wise, to make sure that the techniques are analyzed and the compassion in the class-

room is backed with the skills necessary to be able to achieve objectives.

Here's what the principal also says—and this is an important part of excellence—"We never give up. There are no excuses." Sometimes if you don't measure, you can find all kinds of excuses. And it's just not in schools; it's life. The easy position sometimes is the default, by saying, "Well, I just didn't have what was necessary to get the job done," or something like that. This is a no-excuses school; that means high standards. Low standards are a place where people find excuses; high standards—there is no excuse, and there's a focus on what's right for each child.

And that's why I'm here at Silver Street. I appreciate so very much that this school has met State standards for progress under No Child Left Behind every year since 2002. [*Applause*] Isn't that interesting? Isn't it interesting to be able to say that? You can't say something that draws applause unless you measure. Without a measurement system the president would be saying: "Well, we anticipate that we are doing well. We certainly hope that we're meeting State standards." Under this system you can say: "We know we're meeting State standards." And that should give the parents who pay attention to this school a great comfort and give the teachers who teach here great pride.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working across the country. So when Members of Congress think about reauthorization—by the way, I'm here to—I'm not only speaking to you, I'm lobbying. This is—I'm lobbying Congress. [*Laughter*] I'm setting the stage for Congress to join me in the reauthorization of this important piece of legislation.

The test scores across the country are heartening. Now, there's still a lot of work to be done—don't get me wrong—but there's improvement. One of my issues is that there's an achievement gap in America; certain students are doing better than other students. White students are doing better

than African American students or Latino students. And that's not—that's simply not acceptable. It's not acceptable to the country. It's not—it forebodes not a positive future, so long as that achievement gap exists. The gap is closing. It's heartening news.

Fourth graders are reading better. They've made more progress in 5 years than the previous 28 years combined. In other words, we're able to measure whether or not all children—and by the way, we disaggregate results. That is a fancy, sophisticated word meaning that we're able to focus on demographic groups. And the progress has been substantial. You just heard that it's easy to quantify how well we're doing because there's measurement.

In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test. I hear some people say, "Oh, we don't like tests." I didn't like them either. [Laughter] But it's really important to make sure that we're achieving standards, and so reauthorizing this good piece of legislation is one of my top priorities. And my claim is, it's working. Now, we can change parts of it for the better, but don't change the core of a piece of good legislation that's making a significant difference in the lives of a lot of children.

We're living in a competitive world. Whether people like it or not, the reality is, we live in a world where our students are going to have to compete for jobs with students in China or India or elsewhere. And if this country wants to remain the economic leader in the world, we've got to make sure we have a workforce capable of filling the jobs of the 21st century. And it's a real challenge for us. It's a challenge we're going to meet, by the way. There's no doubt in my mind we can meet it.

But it really starts with elementary school. It really starts here, in schools like this. And it's important to get it right early, to make sure that children have got that foundation necessary to become the scientists and the engineers and the leaders

for tomorrow. No Child Left Behind Act is a central part of the competitiveness initiative, to make sure that America remains on the leading edge of change and is the economic leader of the world.

We can do some other things around. One thing we need to do is to make sure that we align our high school graduation requirements with college readiness standards, which is precisely what the State of Indiana has done. We want to make sure that a high school diploma means something. I happen to believe that we ought to take the same accountability that we've got in elementaries and junior highs and get it to high school, just to make sure; to be able to say with certainty, the high school diploma that somebody gets really means something, that it's working.

I fully believe that we need to advance—that we need to spread Advanced Placement courses around the country. Advanced Placement is a fabulous program. It's a way to set high standards, isn't it? And we need to train teachers in AP and help students afford the AP exam. AP is a good way to—[applause]—we've got an AP teacher back there.

Math and science are really important subjects. I can remember—math and science probably doesn't, like, have cachet. It's not cool, but it's important to emphasize math and science. And one way to do that is to take math and science professionals and encourage them to go into classrooms. I went to a school with Margaret Spellings, who happens to be the Secretary of Education, a dear friend of mine, and doing a fine job. And we went to a school in Maryland, and there was a scientist from NASA explaining the beauties of science.

Parents sometimes have trouble explaining the beauties of science. I certainly did when I was trying to work on those science projects. [Laughter] But when you get a professional, somebody who knows what they're talking about, they can really enlighten a child to the benefits of math or

science focus. And so we've got a program to work with Congress to get more of those professionals in classrooms. We call them adjunct professors. I hope the Congress funds that program. So there's one way, for example, to build on the No Child Left Behind Act, focus on high schools and math and science.

Secondly, one of the things that we've got is—in our budget is to understand that when a school struggles, that there ought to be extra Federal money to help the struggling school. And I look forward to working with Congress to fully fund that. We've got incentive—a teacher incentive fund, grant programs to encourage teachers to go to schools that need extra help with the teachers. I think it makes sense to give school districts grant money—or States to give grant money—to say, here's a district that needs focus. Its test scores probably aren't as good as they should be. If there needs to be additional qualified teachers there, we'll provide incentives for the teachers to go.

Thirdly, I strongly believe that there needs to be consequences when there's failure. And oh, by the way, Baron and I talked about this, and Mitch and I talked about the accountability systems. They ought to be flexible; we understand that. Now, flexibility does not mean watering down standards. In other words, when we talk about accommodating special needs students in terms of the accountability system—which I understand is an issue, and so does Margaret Spellings, who is working with Congress on this issue—we cannot use that flexibility to water down accountability.

And so we—Margaret briefed the Governors and told Mitch and all the other Governors, we'll work with them, just so long as we maintain those high standards. And I believe we can make sure that we accommodate school needs without watering down this important piece of legislation. Watering down No Child Left Behind Act would be doing thousands of children a disservice, and we can't let it happen.

We've got a—one of the problems we have—well, one of the good things in the bill was that when a child is in a school and has fallen behind—a Title I child—there's going to be extra money for tutoring, which I think is a great idea. In other words, you find a young child early in his or her career, school career, and they can't read; there's extra money. Now, one of the problems we've had is for—is to make sure we get the test scores out in a timely basis to school districts who, therefore, can then get the information on a timely basis to their parents, to make sure that the extra tutorial money is available for their child.

Sometimes the best intentions get stuck in getting the information to students. And so Margaret is going to work hard with Congress to make sure that parents whose child is not meeting standards and who is eligible for this extra money gets notified early enough to be able to take that money wherever the parent may want their child to receive tutorial help. See, I'm a person who believes that parents know best when it comes to the interests of their child. And therefore, when we find a school that is persistently in failure, parents must be given different options. There has to be a consequence. Something has to happen if schools refuse to change and a child stays trapped in mediocrity. And one such consequence is to give parents the ability to send their child to a different school, public or private, as far as I'm concerned.

Another option, and something I strongly support, is for there to be competitive grant programs for opportunity scholarships. You know, in Washington, DC, we've got a terrible problem there in the public school system because it's not meeting standards. They're just simply not getting the job done in too many instances. And so I work with the mayor, a Democrat mayor—a Democratic mayor—who, by the way, believes what I believe, that when you find failure, you can't accept it. And so you know what

we did? We put forth what's called opportunity scholarships for families of the poorer students, so their family, if the school isn't meeting needs, can afford to go to a different kind of school. What matters is the child getting the education; that's what matters most. And my attitude is, if there's persistent failure, it makes sense to liberate the parents so their child can have a better chance.

So here's some reforms I look forward to working with Congress on. This is a piece of legislation that is—it's vital for the country, in my judgment. It's working, and I think we ought to make sure it stays in law. And I'm looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to get it done. I've reached out to the bill sponsors in 2001, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, Congressman Miller of California, Congressman Boehner of Ohio, and Senator Gregg of New Hampshire. These four gentlemen worked with the White

House the last time to get the bill done; we're in consultations now to get it reauthorized.

I'm pleased to report, we're all headed in the same direction. In Washington, when you get everybody like that headed in the same direction, sometimes you can get some things done. Believe it or not, it is possible to put aside the sharp elbows of partisan politics and focus on what's right for the country. And in my strong opinion, the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is right for the country, and that's what I've come to New Albany to tell you.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., of Indiana, and his wife Cheri Herman Daniels; former Rep. Michael E. Sodrel and his wife Keta; Mayor James E. Garner, Sr., of New Albany, IN; and Mayor Adrian M. Fenty of Washington, DC.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senatorial Candidate Addison M. "Mitch" McConnell and the National Republican Senatorial Committee in Louisville, Kentucky  
*March 2, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you. Okay, thank you; sit down, please. [*Laughter*] That Kentucky whiskey still works. [*Laughter*] How about being with the ultimate power couple—[*laughter*—a Secretary in my Cabinet and a powerful United States Senator. This has got to be good for the State of Kentucky.

I heard Elaine talk about Alben Barkley. In other words, Mitch is the second party leader in the United States Senate since—and the first was Alben Barkley. I don't know how good Alben Barkley was—this guy is really good for the people of this State. And he's very good for the country, and I'm proud to be with him. And I thank you for contributing to Mitch McConnell.

If you want to get something done in the United States Senate, you go to Mitch McConnell, whether you're from Kentucky or anywhere else. It seems like to me that if you're a citizen of this important State, whether you're Republican, Democrat, or independent, it makes sense to have somebody representing you in Washington, DC, who is full of integrity and decency and who can get the job done for the people. And that person is Mitch McConnell.

And I'm proud to call him friend. But I am tired of him constantly reminding me about the success of the Louisville Cardinal football team. I'm not begrudging the success; I'm just tired of hearing about it from Mitch McConnell. If he told me Orange



Bowl once, he told me Orange Bowl 10 times. [*Laughter*]

You know, it's interesting; I asked Mitch about what we could do here. I went to New Albany, across the line there, to go to a school—and I want to share some thoughts about public education in a minute—but I said, "What can we do that would be interesting?" And he said one thing; he said, "I want you to talk to McConnell scholars at the University of Louisville." Isn't that interesting? He said the one thing he would like his buddy, the President, to do, would be to spend time with the young scholars in a program that he helped start. I think that's insightful into the nature of the person. We could have been parading around in front of the TV cameras or doing this, that, and the other, but not—this Senator's idea of utilizing his friend's time was to sit down and talk to people who he's trying to inspire to serve.

In other words, he's a selfless person. He's a person who puts the State above his self-interests. And I'm really proud to know and to work with a man of his caliber. He's a really—look, when it comes to voting here in Kentucky, you've got to help make sure the people do the right thing, the right thing for the United States of America, and that's send Mitch McConnell back to the United States Senate.

You know, people oftentimes ask me what it's like to be President. I said, it is a decisionmaking experience, and in a complex organization like we have in Washington, you've got to learn to delegate. And I'm very comfortable delegating to members of my Cabinet, particularly since they are people of the caliber like Elaine Chao. And I thank Elaine for her service to our country, and I appreciate her being here.

Mitch married well, and so did I. If Mitch were smart, he would have invited the A-team to do the fundraiser, but she happens to be on the road today. But I do bring greetings from Laura. You know, it's a—I'm sure some of you are probably

wondering: Gosh, what's it like to be married to the President and everything? It can be awfully, I guess, difficult, unless you happen to be a person who is patient, calm, and loving. And that's my wife. And I'm really proud of her, and I happen to think she's a great First Lady for the country.

I want to recognize Mike Duncan, who is now the chairman of the Republican National Committee. So when we needed somebody to lead our party into an important year, 2008, we came to Kentucky. When we needed somebody to accomplish the objective to make sure that Mitch is majority leader and that we have a Republican Speaker of the House and we hold the White House, we asked Mike Duncan to lead the charge. And I appreciate you doing it, Mike, and I want to help you in any way I can over these next couple of years.

I welcome the Lieutenant Governor, Steve Pence. Thanks for coming, Governor. I appreciate you being here. I bet you 10 years ago, you would have been shocked if you heard somebody say this—the Kentucky State Senate President, David Williams. And Judge Robyn—thank you for coming, Judge Robyn; it's good to see you. Dave, it's good to see you again. I'm not shocked that you're the president, but shocked that a Republican is the president. [*Laughter*] Maybe some are shocked you're the president—[*laughter*]—I'm not going there, though. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. Rachel Schrepferman, who happens to be the chairman of this fantastic event, the mother of twins. We're all members of the, like, twins club.

I want to thank Gail Russell, who is the acting chairwoman and national committee-woman of the Republican Party. I want to thank the grassroots activists—that's what I'm doing; I'm thanking the grassroots activists for the work that you do and have done and will do. See, Mitch is going to win because the grassroots activists are going to man the phones and turn out the



vote. And this is a good start to what's going to be a successful campaign. It's a good sign when this many people show up in 2007 for a 2008 election. And I appreciate you all kicking off—helping kick off this good man's campaign. And I want to thank those of you who are going to help him get elected for what you're going to do when he's coming down the stretch in November of 2008.

He's going to win because he backs really solid ideas. Mitch believes in a strong national defense, and so do I. Mitch believes in less government and low taxes, and so do I. And Mitch believes in the values and the good judgments of the citizens of this Commonwealth of Kentucky. That's what he believes in. Those are values that Kentuckians from all walks of life can share.

We got a lot to do in Washington, DC, and I'm looking forward to working with Senator McConnell to achieve them. And I want to share some of the thoughts about what we've got to do. Mitch mentioned the war on terror. I wish I could report to you that it was over. It is not over. And the most important function of the Federal Government is to safeguard the American people. Our most important job—[*ap-  
plause*]. And the best way to do that in the short term is to stay on the offensive, bring the killers to justice, defeat them overseas so we don't have to face them here in the United States of America.

And Mitch McConnell understands it as well as anybody in Washington, DC. He's clear eyed about the realities of the world in which we live, and we need clear-eyed thinkers in the Nation's Capital. If the most important duty of our Government is to protect you, then we'd better have people in Washington who are steadfast in understanding the responsibilities that come with the offices we hold. And Mitch understands it.

In the long term, the best way to defeat these ideologues of hate is to offer a better ideology, one of hope. Remember, the killers are the people that advocated no rights

for women; that children—young girls shouldn't go to school; that there's no such thing as religious tolerance; that if you disagreed, you'd be taken into the public square and whipped. That's what they believe.

I know it's hard for some in Kentucky and the country to understand, but these folks are motivated by an ideology, and so are we. Ours is an ideology of human dignity and human rights and decency. Ours is an ideology based upon liberty and freedom. We believe there is universality when it comes to freedom. We believe all want to be free. And I believe it's in the interests of the United States of America to help promote liberty as the alternative to the hateful ideology of the extremists, so we can lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

This war against the extremists is being fought on a variety of fronts. The most notable front is Iraq. I was confronted with the decision on Iraq. I was unhappy with the conditions on the ground last fall. And as the Commander in Chief, I have an obligation, if dissatisfied with the status quo, to make decisions that would alter the status quo.

One decision I was confronted with was withdrawing and hoping for the best, as I knew the capital city of that young democracy was engaged in sectarian violence. In other words, one option was to kind of let the so-called fight burn out. My worry with that option was that the violence and the chaos in the capital city of a young democracy could spill out into the countryside and eventually spill out into the region. And I know that chaos is to the advantage of the extremists, and that chaos emboldens those who would do us harm. I also understand, and it's important for our citizens to understand, that if we were to fail in Iraq, the enemy would follow us here to the United States of America, and we cannot let that happen.

It's a new concept that we have to learn to deal with after the attacks of September

the 11th, 2001. What happens overseas matters to the security of the United States. And if our job is to secure this country, then we've got to make sure that we succeed in helping this young democracy flourish and survive and become an ally in the war on terror.

And so the option that I chose was one that recognizes the realities of the world in which we live, which said, as opposed to leaving, we're going to send more people in there to reinforce the troops that are on the ground. I understand it's a controversial decision for some. But the citizens of this State must understand I made the decision after thoughtful consideration and after consultations with people like Mitch McConnell and those who don't agree. I listened carefully. But most importantly, I listened to the United States military about what it takes to help this democracy defeat the ideology of terror, help this democracy not become a safe haven for those who would do us harm, help this young democracy survive. And their recommendation was, "Mr. President, we need more troops in the capital city."

And not only did I accept their suggestion, I nominated a new commander in General David Petraeus. And he went up in front of the United States Senate for a hearing, and he got a fair hearing. Senator, I think the Senate conducted themselves with dignity and gave him a chance to talk about what he thought was necessary to succeed in Iraq. And he was approved unanimously, not one negative vote against General David Petraeus. And shortly thereafter, the House of Representatives passed a resolution expressing disapproval for the very plan that the General suggested we do, the man who was unanimously confirmed. This may be the first time in the history of our country that the Senate has voted to send a new commander in battle, and then the House of Representatives immediately voted to oppose his plan.

I understand differences of opinion, and I expect that in the Nation's Capital. It's good for our country that there be differences of opinion. Everybody has the right to express their opinion. And nobody should say, "If you disagree or agree with the President, you're more patriotic, or not." But soon Congress is going to have to make a decision that's got real consequences, and that is whether to fund our troops and give us the flexibility necessary to achieve our mission. Our men and women in uniform risk their lives as they carry out this plan to secure Baghdad and to secure this country, and they need the support of the United States Congress.

No matter where Members stand on my decision, they have a solemn responsibility to support those who wear the uniform of the United States and to make sure that we have the flexibility necessary to protect this homeland.

I want to thank Mitch for his steadfast leadership on this issue. I appreciate his clarity of thought. The troops of the United States have no stronger friend than Senator Mitch McConnell from the State of Kentucky.

We also—let me say one other thing about foreign policy; it's important for me to share this with you. I believe to whom much is given, much is required. We've been given a lot in this country, and I'm going to continue to call upon Congress to fund initiatives like the HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa. I'll tell you why. It matters to me personally, and it matters to this country, when we see a pandemic like HIV/AIDS sweeping through a continent and we can do something about it. Thanks to the generosity of the American people—I want to share something with you—thanks to the generosity of the American people, in 3 short years, 800,000 people on the continent of Africa now receive antiretroviral drugs; 800,000 lives have been affected as a result of this initiative that's making the world a better place.

And now I'm going to look forward to working with Mitch on the next initiative, which is to free countries from malaria. It's an achievable goal, and it's a good goal, and it's good for the world to see the generosity and compassion of the United States of America. It's also in our interests that we help feed the hungry when we can, and to help deal with disease. What happens overseas matters to home. And so whether it be in fighting the extremists or battling disease, we'll have an aggressive, compassionate, decent foreign policy. And I'm glad to have Mitch McConnell by my side.

Here at home, Mitch talked about the economy. He says, "You should get credit for it, Mr. President." No, I don't deserve credit for the economy. It's the American people who deserve credit for the economy. The American people are working hard. It's the entrepreneurs who are taking risks. It's those small-business owners that have got their ideas, and they're working to make it work.

Listen, our economy is strong because America is strong. And the fundamental question is, will we keep policies in place to keep the economy growing? And I've got a good idea for the United States Congress. We passed tax relief. It's worked. They need to make the tax relief permanent.

Oh, you'll hear them saying, "We need to raise taxes to balance the budget." That's what you'll hear them say. Well, raising taxes hurts the economy, which means less tax revenues come in. And by the way, they'll figure out new ways to spend the money. That's the way Washington works, unless you have got people like Mitch McConnell, who is watching out for the taxpayers' interests. Washington says, "Give me a little bit more of your own money, just a little bit, and we'll figure out how to spend it better." What Mitch McConnell says and George Bush says: We're going to let you keep more of your own money so the economy continues to grow, and

we're going to balance the budget by being wise about the money, by setting priorities.

You might remember I said, we would cut the deficit in half in 5 years. And I'm sure the critics scoffed a little bit, but we did it 3 years in advance. And now we've sent a new budget up to Washington, DC, that says we'll balance the budget in 5 years. And we will, without raising one dime of taxes.

I appreciate Mitch's attitude about big issues. He knows what I know, that it's important to address problems and not pass them on. The temptation sometimes in life and in politics is to see a big problem and say: "We'll just let the next group deal with it. We'll kind of shuffle it on to the next Congress or the next President." We've got a big problem in entitlements; that's basically Social Security and Medicare.

And the reason it's a big problem is baby boomers like me and some of you are getting ready to retire. It turns out my retirement date, when I turn 62, is 2008, which is quite convenient in my case. [Laughter] And yet there's a lot of us retiring and fewer people paying for the benefits that we've been promised. And those benefits are going up faster than the previous generation's benefits are going up. So you begin to calculate it in your head, the math—a lot of people getting greater benefits, living longer, with fewer people paying—you can understand why we got a problem. And if you've got somebody fixing to get in the workforce, that person is going to be paying money into a system that's going broke. And a lot of us in Washington know it's going broke, including Senator Mitch McConnell. And he wants to work with me to convince people of both parties to come together and, in good will, sit down at the table. And my call to both Republicans and Democrats is: Put your best ideas out there, come to the table, think about how to solve it, and let's put your ideas out so we can show to the American people that we're capable of setting aside politics and focusing on solving

big problems for the United States of America.

Mitch thinks that way, and the Senate is better off to have somebody, a statesman like Mitch McConnell, who is willing to call people to sit down and solve these big problems now, before it's too late.

Now that I've got you here, I'd like to run a few other issues by you. *[Laughter]* No Child Left Behind is a really good piece of legislation. It has to do with public schools. Just quickly, I believe that unless you measure, you can't tell whether or not a child is getting a good education. And I don't like a system that says to—says, we're just going to move you through without knowing whether or not you can read and write and add and subtract. It doesn't do this country any good. As a matter of fact, we've got an issue when it comes to education, because if we don't get it right early, we're not going to get it right late. And if we don't get it right at all, jobs are going to go overseas. That's just the nature of the world in which we live.

So I went to New Albany today to talk about No Child Left Behind. It is a piece of legislation which says, we believe in local folks figuring out how to run their schools, but when we send you Federal money, you need to measure. And you need to measure whether or not a child can read. And if a child can't read, you better do something about it now, before it's too late. That's why it's called the No Child Left Behind. In other words, we're going to measure, we're going to correct, so we can say with certainty we've done our duty all across the country to make sure children have the basics necessary to be able to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

That bill needs to be reauthorized. I'm looking forward to working with Senator McConnell to get the Senate and the House to get the bill to my desk this year.

Health care costs are going up; businesses can't afford it; we need to do something about it. The big debate in Washington, DC, is who best to make health

care decisions. Mitch and I believe the best people to make the health care decisions are the doctors and the patients, not insurance companies and government officials. And therefore, I'm looking forward to working with him to do things such as change the Tax Code so that there is no disadvantage in the Tax Code for the individual and/or that person who is working for a small-business company that can't afford insurance relative to those who work for businesses.

I'm looking forward to working with Mitch to help deal with the cost of health care by the spread of information technology. I mean, for those of you in medicine, you kind of know what I mean when you say: You're a little lagging, relative to other fields. We've got doctors still writing things on paper. And the writing is illegible half the time—*[laughter]*—and therefore, there are medical errors and unnecessary expenses.

I'm looking forward to working with Mitch to enhance transparency in medicine. How many of you have ever asked, how much does it cost? Very rarely does anybody in health care ask, how much does it cost? And therefore, since the Federal Government is a big health care user, we're going to insist that those we work with let us know what it costs and what the quality is, so that as consumers become more involved in health care through plans like health savings accounts, there's actual consumerism in health care; there's something helpful when it comes to dealing with rising costs when somebody says: "I think I may try to find a better deal. If the cost is too high, I'm going to try an alternative."

I'll continue to work with Mitch to make sure that people in Congress don't undermine the Medicare reforms that we put in place. I believe we have an obligation to make sure Medicare works for our seniors. We put forth a prescription drug benefit for poor seniors, cheaper prescription drugs for all seniors. You know what happens; the marketplace actually works in

America. We believed in the marketplace, and, therefore, it's up to Congress to leave the marketplace alone when it comes to Medicare.

And I'm looking forward to working with Mitch to make sure that medicine is accessible and affordable by doing something about these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of your medicine.

One final point: This is an energy State. You produce a lot of coal, and that's good. We need to do something about coal emissions so that we can say that we're energy independent and good stewards of the environment. And that's why Mitch and I are going to work with the Congress to pass substantial monies on clean coal technologies. Listen, we've got 250 years of supply. People are concerned about the dependency on foreign sources of energy; you ought to be. Dependency upon energy from somewhere else is a national security risk, and it's an economic security risk. And we can do something about it through technologies.

I want to share with you right quick an interesting—some interesting breakthroughs that are coming along. One, we spent a lot of money on research, as is the private sector, on new battery technologies. I believe within a reasonable period of time, you'll be able to plug your battery in your car—a plug-in battery in your car, so that you can run your first 40 miles on electricity, and you'll be happy to hear that the car is not going to look like a golf cart. *[Laughter]*

I believe you're going to be running your automobiles on ethanol made from switchgrass or wood chips. I know that sounds science fiction to some of you, but that technology is coming. We're now using about 7 billion gallons of ethanol a year made from corn. I believe not only can we expand corn-based ethanol; I believe we're on the verge of technological breakthroughs to be able to make ethanol from things that—from refuse—as I said,

switchgrass. That's good for people like me who come from a State that's awfully dry.

But isn't it interesting, to be able to predict to the American people that our farmers are going to be vital producers of energy, that we'll be able to use our cars? And the more ethanol we use, obviously, the less gasoline you use. And the less gasoline you use, the less dependency on oil.

We're on the verge of some incredible—which leads me to conclude—oh, let me say one other thing about Mitch. Well, not one—it may not be the only thing I say about him. *[Laughter]* Mitch understands what I know, that we have a responsibility to fill our benches with judges who strictly interpret the law and not try to legislate from the bench. We've got plenty of legislators in Washington; we don't need them doing that from the third branch of our Government. I am very proud—when it came time for tough fights on our judges, judges like John Roberts and Sam Alito, there was no stronger advocate for a sound judiciary than Senator Mitch McConnell.

And so I'd like to conclude by telling you, we've got a big agenda. And I believe we're going to get a lot of it accomplished. And one of the main reasons we're going to get a lot of it accomplished is because you've sent a skillful legislator, a master of the United States Senate, to Washington, DC.

I'm here to ask the people of this State, when it comes time to vote, to think very carefully about your Senator. I know that some of them say, "Well, I can't vote for somebody who is a Republican, or somebody"—you know, based upon party. I ask the people to vote for a man who is competent, who is accomplished, who is good for the United States.

I want to thank you all for supporting this good man. I appreciate you coming out tonight. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. at the Seelbach Hilton Louisville. In his remarks,



he referred to Robyn Williams, district judge, Kentucky's 40th Judicial District; and Gen.

David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Remarks Following a Briefing on Tornado Damage in Enterprise, Alabama *March 3, 2007*

You know, Mayor, I told the people yesterday that I come down with a heavy heart, and I will try, to the best of my ability, to comfort those who lost life and property. I know you and your council and the citizens here have done that as well.

I hope it helps for the citizens here to hear that we declared your county a major disaster area, which will provide some relief. You can never heal a heart, but you can provide comfort, knowing that the Federal Government will provide help for those whose houses were destroyed or automobiles were destroyed. And I would strongly urge the citizens here to—if you've got a question, to call 1-800-621-FEMA, and there will be somebody answering your call and will give you a chance to find out whether or not you will qualify for the relief under the major disaster declaration.

Secondly, I was talking to the Governor, and he has said that there have been some funds set up to help the people who suffered. And my call to people here in Alabama and around the United States is, if

you feel the generosity in your heart to help people affected by this terrible tornado, I would ask you to contribute. One such fund is the Red Cross. There will be others. We will make sure that USA Freedom Corps will have posted on it a place where people can contribute money. Some people are going to need your help. There have been some poor citizens who may or may not qualify for Federal help, but are going to need the help of our fellow citizens. And I would ask you to, out of the generosity of your heart, to help the folks down here.

This storm is a tough storm. It went 8 miles and affected a lot of lives. And this country is a prayerful country. There are a lot of people praying for you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. at Enterprise Municipal Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Kenneth W. Boswell of Enterprise, AL; and Gov. Robert R. Riley of Alabama.

## The President's Radio Address *March 3, 2007*

Good morning. One of my most solemn experiences as President is visiting men and women recovering from wounds they suffered in defense of our country. Spending time with these wounded warriors is also inspiring, because so many of them bring the same courage they showed on the battlefield to their battle for recovery.

These service men and women deserve the thanks of our country, and they deserve the best care our Nation can provide. That is why I was deeply troubled by recent reports of substandard conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Most of the people working at Walter Reed are dedicated professionals. These fine doctors, nurses, and therapists care deeply about



our wounded troops, and they work day and night to help them. Yet some of our troops at Walter Reed have experienced bureaucratic delays and living conditions that are less than they deserve. This is unacceptable to me; it is unacceptable to our country; and it's not going to continue.

On hearing the reports about Walter Reed, I asked Secretary of Defense Bob Gates to assess the situation firsthand and report back to me. He confirmed that there are real problems at Walter Reed, and he's taken action to hold people accountable, including relieving the general in charge of the facility. Secretary Gates has also formed an independent review group that will investigate how this situation was allowed to happen, how it can be fixed, and how we can prevent it from happening again. Walter Reed has a long tradition of outstanding medical service, and my administration will ensure that the soldiers recovering there are treated with the dignity and respect they have earned.

As we work to improve conditions at Walter Reed, we're also taking steps to find out whether similar problems have occurred at other military and veterans hospitals. So I'm announcing that my administration is creating a bipartisan Presidential commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the care America is providing our wounded service men and women. This review will examine their treatment from the time they leave the battlefield through their return to civilian life as veterans, so we can ensure that we are meeting their physical and mental health needs. In the coming days, I will announce the members of this commission and set a firm deadline for them to report back to me with their recommendations.

We will use the commission's recommendations as part of our ongoing effort to improve our service to our Nation's veterans. Since 2001, we've helped over one million more veterans take advantage of the VA health care system, and with my 2008 budget proposal, we will have increased the

VA's health care budget by 83 percent over the past 6 years, from about \$20 billion to more than \$36 billion. Overall, I'm asking Congress for more than \$86 billion for veterans' services this year. If Congress approves my request, this would amount to a 77-percent increase since I took office and the highest level of support for veterans in American history.

The men and women recovering at Walter Reed and our other military hospitals are remarkable individuals. Many have suffered wounds that even time will never fully heal. Yet they're facing the future with optimism and a determination to move forward with their lives.

One of these brave warriors is Army Specialist Eduardo Leal-Cardenas. He was injured when an improvised explosive device blew up his vehicle in Iraq. The blast shattered bones in both legs, broke his ribs, and broke his back and neck. Some questioned whether he would ever regain the ability to walk. There was no doubt in Eduardo's mind, and he began his rehab while still bedridden. Today, he's left Walter Reed, he's walking again, and he has something else he is proud of: During his recovery, Eduardo became a U.S. citizen. I was proud to be with him at Walter Reed when he took his citizenship oath. If you ask Eduardo what American citizenship means to him, he answers with just one word: "Freedom."

Our Nation is blessed to have so many fine Americans who are willing to serve. We're blessed to have so many compassionate volunteers who give their time to care for our injured soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. We're blessed to have so many fine medical professionals who dedicate their lives to healing our troops. This country has a moral obligation to provide our service men and women with the best possible care and treatment. They deserve it, and they will get it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:25 a.m. on March 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on

March 2, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 1-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast between the President's remarks in Enterprise, Alabama.

## Remarks Following a Tour of Enterprise High School and an Exchange With Reporters in Enterprise March 3, 2007

The heart of a community like Enterprise, Alabama, is the schools. And today I have walked through devastation that's hard to describe. Our thoughts, of course, go out to the students who perished. We thank God for the hundreds who lived. I want the folks of Enterprise to know that to the extent the Government can, our Federal Government can, in working with the State, we'll help rebuild the school system—this high school. We can never replace lives, and we can't heal hearts, except through prayer. And I know—I want the students to know and the families to know that there's a lot of people praying for them.

I met with the president of the student body, who recognizes that the end of her senior year is going to be difficult. But as a student leader, she will have the opportunity to help people rebuild, and that she will learn that out of the devastation—and her classmates will learn that out of the devastation can come hope and a better tomorrow.

And so we ask for the blessings on the students and their families. We ask for the blessings on the principal and the administrator. We thank this good community for rallying strongly by the side of those who have been affected. And I thank the people of Enterprise for the warm welcome I have received here.

The people of America have got to know that the citizens here, even though affected by devastation, have shown great courage

and compassion for their citizens in need. And it's really part of the strength of the United States to know that there's such decent folks.

God bless everybody. Thank you all.

### *Aerial Tour of Areas Damaged by Tornadoes/Recovery*

*Q.* How did it look from the air, sir?

*The President.* It looks as bad from the air as it looks from the ground. And you can see right here the effects of the storm. But the biggest effect of the storm is the shattered lives. We can rebuild buildings, and the fundamental question is, will the spirit stay strong in Enterprise, Alabama? And I predict that it not only will stay strong, it will be strengthened. That's my prediction. And it's easy to tell when you talk to the people, whether it's young or old, this town refuses to be devastated. This town is a town full of people that will not be—will not succumb to the effects of the storm. The mayor is strong, the principal of the school is strong, the Lieutenant, and the children, the high school seniors.

And so it's a—these are very tough times for the people here, and there are going to be tough times for the people in Georgia that were affected. And I just hope they know that a lot of people are praying for them, that a lot of strangers that they'll never have met care for them, and that out of this rubble will emerge a better tomorrow, and that's the commitment that I hear here in Enterprise. And the role

of the Government is going to help, to the extent that we can.

All right, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:24 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Megan Parks, stu-

dent government association president, and Rick Rainer, principal, Enterprise High School; and Mayor Kenneth W. Boswell of Enterprise, AL.

## Remarks to the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Legislative Conference

March 5, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated—*sientese. Buenas tardes*. [Laughter] *Gracias por la bienvenida*. For those of you not from Texas, that means “good afternoon”—[laughter]—and thank you for the welcome. I’m honored to be back again with the men and women of the Hispanic Chamber. I appreciate your hospitality.

I’m pleased to report, the economy of the United States is strong, and one of the reasons why is because the entrepreneurial spirit of America is strong. And the entrepreneurial spirit of America is represented in this room.

I thank you for the role of the chamber. I appreciate so very much the work you do with our banks to help move capital. I appreciate so very much the fact that you recognize outstanding Latina businesswomen through your Anna Maria Arias Fund. I appreciate the fact that you say loud and clear, *el Sueno Americano es para todos*.

I strongly believe that the role of government is to make it clear that America is the land of opportunity. I think the best way to do that is to encourage business formation, encourage ownership; is to say, if you work hard and dream big, you can realize your dreams here in America. I also believe it’s essential to make sure that when people take risk, that they’re able to keep more of their own taxes. Congress needs to make the tax cuts we passed a permanent part of the Tax Code.

I know that in order for us to make sure *el Sueno Americano es para todos*, that we have an education system that sets high standards for all children, demands accountability in our schools, so that we can say with certainty, children from all backgrounds are able to read and write and add and subtract. That is why I believe it is essential that Congress reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act.

I think it’s very important for us to continue to expand Federal contracting opportunities for small businesses and to make sure that America is a place of promise and hope. It is important and essential that Congress pass comprehensive immigration reform that I can sign into law.

I want to talk about another important priority for our country, and that is helping our neighbors to the south of us build a better and productive life. Thursday, Laura and I are going to leave on a trip that will take us to Brazil and Uruguay and Colombia *y Guatemala y por fin, Mexico*. [Laughter] These are countries that are part of a region that has made great strides toward freedom and prosperity. They’ve raised up new democracies. They’ve enhanced and undertaken fiscal policies that bring stability.

Yet despite the advances, tens of millions in our hemisphere remain stuck in poverty and shut off from the promises of the new century. My message to those *trabajadores y campesinos* is: You have a friend in the

United States of America; we care about your plight.

David, thank you very much for being the chairman of this important organization and for the invitation. I want to thank Michael Barrera, who is the president and CEO of the Hispanic Chamber. I thank my friend *y Tejano* Massey Villarreal, who is with us today. Massey, it's good to see you again. You've got a *barba crecida*. [Laughter] Looking good, though, man. I thank Frank Lopez, who is the president and CEO of Chamber Foundation.

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who have come. I think it's a good sign that this administration recognizes the importance of having a neighborhood that is peaceful and flourishing—that we have so many members of the Cabinet who have joined us today. I want to thank Carlos Gutierrez, who's living the—[applause]—Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao—Madam Secretary; Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt; Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings—Madam Secretary. Thank you all for coming.

Tom Shannon, representing the State Department; Ambassador Randy Tobias, who runs USAID, who, by the way, prior to this assignment, led one of the most important initiatives in my administration that has helped to fight the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. I appreciate your service there, and I now appreciate your service at USAID, Randy. I want to thank John Veroneau, who is with us today, who is the Deputy U.S. Trade Representative.

We've got Members of the United States Congress with us today, powerful Members of the Senate and the House. I am so grateful they are here, starting with Senator Dick Lugar of the great State of Indiana. Appreciate you coming. Norm Coleman from Minnesota—Senator, thank you for being here. A buddy of mine, Jerry Weller, Congressman Weller from Illinois, proud you're here; thanks for coming.

*Los Embajadores que estan aqui*—the Ambassadors. Thank you all for being here.

I see some of the Ambassadors for the countries to which I'll be going. I'm sure all of them are here, and I appreciate you coming. Thanks for your time.

This is an important speech for me today. It's a speech that sets out a direction for this country in regards to our neighborhood. A former President gave such a speech 46 years ago this month. President John Kennedy spoke to ambassadors from across the Americas, this time in the East Room of the White House. He began by citing the early movements of independence in the Latin American Republics. He invoked the dream of a hemisphere growing in liberty and prosperity. That's what he talked about 46 years ago. He proposed a bold new Alliance for Progress to help the countries of this hemisphere meet the basic needs of their people: safe homes and decent jobs and good schools, access to health care.

In the years since President Kennedy spoke, we have witnessed great achievements for freedom in this neighborhood. As recently as a generation ago, this region was plagued by military dictatorship and consumed by civil strife. Today, 34 members of the OAS have democratic constitutions, and only one member country lives under a leader not of its people's choosing.

From New York to Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Aires and Montreal, we speak different languages, but our democracies all derive their legitimacy from the same source: the consent of the governed. The expansion of freedom has brought our societies much closer. Today, the most important ties between North and South America are not government to government; they are people to people. And those ties are growing.

These ties are growing because of our churches and faith-based institutions, which understand that the call to love our neighbors as ourselves does not stop at our borders. These ties are growing because of our businesses, which trade and invest billions in each other's countries. These ties

are growing because of the outreach of our universities, which brings thousands of exchange students and teachers to their campuses. These ties are growing because of the estimated \$45 billion that workers in the United States send back to their families in Latin America and the Caribbean each year, one of the largest private economic initiatives in the world.

In all these ways, our two continents are becoming more than neighbors united by the accident of geography; we're becoming a community linked by common values and shared interests in the close bonds of family and friendship. These growing ties have helped advance peace and prosperity on both continents. Yet amid the progress, we also see terrible want. Nearly one out of four people in Latin America lives on less than \$2 a day. Many children never finish grade school. Many mothers never see a doctor. In an age of growing prosperity and abundance, this is a scandal—and it's a challenge. The fact is that tens of millions of our brothers and sisters to the south have seen little improvement in their daily lives, and this has led some to question the value of democracy.

The working poor of Latin America need change, and the United States of America is committed to that change. It is in our national interests; it is in the interest of the United States of America to help the people in democracies in our neighborhood succeed. When our neighbors are prosperous and peaceful, it means better opportunities and more security for our own people. When there are jobs in our neighborhood, people are able to find work at home and not have to migrate to our country. When millions are free from poverty, societies are stronger and more hopeful.

So we're helping to increase opportunity by relieving debt and opening up trade, encouraging reform and delivering aid that empowers the poor and the marginalized. And the record of this administration in promoting social justice is a strong record and an important record. Social justice be-

gins with building government institutions that are fair and effective and free of corruption.

In too many places in the Americas, a government official is seen as someone who serves himself at the expense of the public good or serves only the rich and the well-connected. No free society can function this way. Social justice begins with social trust. So we're working with our partners to change old patterns and ensure that government serves all its citizens.

One of the most important changes we're making is the way we deliver aid. We launched a new program called the Millennium Challenge Account, which provides increased aid to nations that govern justly, invest in the education and health of their people, and promote economic freedom. So far, we've signed Millennium Challenge compacts with three Latin American nations. We've also signed an agreement with a fourth country that is working to meet the standards to qualify for a compact on its own. In the coming years, these agreements will provide a total of \$885 million in new aid, so long as these countries continue to meet the standards of the Millennium Challenge program. We'll send more as we reach more agreements with other nations.

By the way, this aid comes on top of the standard bilateral assistance that we provide. When I came into office, the United States was sending about \$860 million a year in foreign aid to Latin America and the Caribbean. Last year, we nearly doubled that amount, to a total of \$1.6 billion. Altogether, thanks to the good work of Members of the United States Congress, we have sent a total of \$8.5 billion to the region, with a special focus on helping the poor.

Let me share with you one example of how our aid is working for people in the region. Oh, it's a small example, but it had profound impact. A few years ago, we funded a project to help a town in Paraguay,



set up a web site that makes all local government transactions public, from budget spending to employee salaries. The purpose was to help the people of Villarrica improve their local governance through greater transparency. It was a small gesture at first. But when they brought transparency into their government, they discovered that some government employees had used fake receipts to embezzle thousands of dollars from the city government. The mayor informed the public, and the employees who had stolen the money were tried and convicted, and they paid it back. For the people of Paraguay, this was an historic achievement. The local government had called its own officials to account at a public and transparent trial.

The United States can help bring trust to their governments by instilling transparency in our neighborhood. It didn't take much of a gesture, but it had a profound impact.

We're working for similar results in other nations. In El Salvador, we opened one of our international law enforcement academies. The new academy is helping governments in the region build effective criminal justice systems by training law enforcement officers to combat the drug lords and the terrorists and the criminal gangs and the human traffickers. Our efforts to strengthen these civic institutions are also supported by more than government, but by private programs run by U.S. law schools and professional associations and in volunteer organizations.

In the coming months, this administration will convene a White House conference on the Western Hemisphere that will bring together representatives from the private sector and nongovernmental organizations and faith-based groups and volunteer associations. The purpose is to share experiences and discuss effective ways to deliver aid and build the institutions necessary for strong civil society. Is it in our interest we do so? Absolutely, it's in our interests. A transparent neighborhood will

yield to a peaceful neighborhood, and that's in the interests of all citizens of our country.

Social justice means meeting basic needs. The most precious resource of any country is its people, and in the Americas, we are blessed with an abundance of talented and hard-working citizens, decent, honorable people who work hard to make a living for their families. But without basic necessities like education and health care and housing, it is impossible for people to realize their full potential, their God-given potential.

Helping people reach their potential begins with good education. That's why the Secretary of Education is here. Many people across the Americas either have no access to education for their children or they cannot afford it. If children don't learn how to read, write, and add and subtract, they're going to be shut off for the jobs of the 21st century. They'll be condemned to a life on the margins, and that's not acceptable.

The United States is working for an Americas where every child has access to a decent school. It is a big goal, but it is a necessary goal, as far as we're concerned. When people in our neighborhood reach their full potential, it benefits the people of the United States. Over the past 3 years, we've provided more than \$150 million—in 3 years' time, we spent \$150 million for education programs throughout the region, with a special focus on rural and indigenous areas.

Today I announce a new partnership for Latin American youth that's going to build on these efforts. This partnership will devote an additional \$75 million over the next years—3 years to help thousands more young people improve their English and have the opportunity to study here in the United States. I think it's good policy when people from our neighborhood come to our country to study.

I hope this warms the heart of our fellow citizens when I share this story. In the



mountains of Guatemala, we established a project that helped raise the number of children who complete first grade from 51 percent to 71 percent. In Peru, we helped create the Opening Doors Program to help girls get through grade school. That program is succeeding, and it is self-sustaining. Across Latin America and the Caribbean, our centers of excellence for teacher training—in other words, we've set up these centers, and we've trained 15,000 teachers; nearly 15,000 people have benefited. Does that matter? Of course it matters. When you train a teacher, you're really helping provide literacy for a child.

These teachers have helped improve the literacy skills for nearly 425,000 poor and disadvantaged students. It's important for our fellow citizens and the citizens in our neighborhood to understand that the United States of America is committed to helping people rise out of poverty, to be able to realize their full potential, and that starts with good education. By 2009, we expect to have trained a total of 20,000 teachers through these centers, and reach 650,000 students.

One person who has benefited is a young girl in the Dominican Republic named Lorennny. By the time she was 10, she had been in first grade three times, and she had never passed. When her mother enrolled her in school again, Lorennny said, "Teacher, teach me to read, because I have learning problems." With patience and hard work, this good woman taught Lorennny to read and write. The teacher says that she had watched Lorennny blossom, and that she never would have been able to reach this girl without the know-how acquired through our teacher training program. Societies can change one heart at a time. Here is an example of the good work of the American people taking place in our neighborhood.

Another person who felt the impact of U.S. education assistance is a 25-year-old Mexican named Victor Lopez Ruiz. Victor's family lives in Chiapas, where opportunity

is in short supply, and the people tend to speak only the languages of the local communities. Victor's family sold their only real asset, their cattle, to pay for him to learn Spanish and finish high school.

In 2004, Victor won a USAID scholarship, which he used to learn English and study business in international trade at Scott Community College in Bettendorf, Iowa. It must have been quite an experience for a man from Chiapas to head into the heartland. [Laughter] But he did so with help from the taxpayers of the United States, for this reason: He goes back to Chiapas, he's working for his bachelor's degree in accounting, and then he's going to start a bakery that will support his family. Where the path for this man once looked grim, education has opened a new door. And as Victor said, "It changed my life."

There are countless of people like Victor and Lorennny across our hemisphere, young people filled with talent and ambition, only needing the chance of an education to unlock their full potential.

Helping people reach their potential includes providing access to decent health care. In many of the same areas where families have no schools, they have no access to medical care. Since I took office, we've spent nearly \$1 billion on health care programs in the region, all aimed at sending a message to the people of Latin America: We care for you. *Los corazones de las personas aqui in America son grandes*. It's in our interests that we get good health care to citizens in our neighborhood.

Today I'm going to announce a new initiative called the Health Care Professional Training Center in Panama that will serve all of Central America. I remember when Secretary Leavitt briefed me on this vital program. The center is going to teach students how to be good nurses and technicians and health care workers. We'll also train people so they can go back to their home countries and teach others these same skill sets.

In all these efforts, it's important for you to understand the role our United States military plays. In June, I'm going to send one of our Navy's medical ships, the *Comfort*, to the region. The *Comfort* will make port calls in Belize and Guatemala and Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador and Peru and Ecuador and Colombia, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname. It's going to be busy. Altogether, the *Comfort's* doctors and nurses and health care professionals expect to treat 85,000 patients and conduct up to 1,500 surgeries. These are people who need help. These are people who might not otherwise get the basic health care they need to realize a better tomorrow.

The *Comfort* was also going to partner with the Department of Health and Human Services on a new initiative to provide oral care to the region's poor. Dentists and hygienists will fill cavities and treat infections and provide treatment for the young children.

At the same time, military medical teams will be operating inland to help bring treatment and care to other communities. These teams do everything from vaccinating people against disease to building new medical clinics. The United States military is a symbol of strength for this Nation, but it's also a symbol of the great compassion of the American people and our desire to help those in our neighborhood who need help.

With the deployment of the *Comfort* and the work of the military teams, we're making it absolutely clear to people that we care. One good example is an area of Nicaragua. Santa Teresa is a rural area where 250 U.S. airmen, soldiers, and marines are now working with 30 members of the Nicaraguan Army to build a medical clinic. Many families in the area live in homes built of scrap wood with dirt floors and doorless entryways. For most of them, a doctor is too far away or too expensive. One man in Santa Teresa says, "The impact of this clinic is going to be tremendous."

I want you to hear the words of a fellow from Nicaragua. He said, "We're so glad you're here. People around here are noticing that the United States is doing something for them." And my message to the man is, we're proud to do so, and we do so because we believe in peace and the dignity of every human being on the face of the Earth.

Helping people reach their potential requires a commitment to improving housing. A strong housing industry can be an engine of economic growth and social stability and poverty reduction. Most Latin American capitals' high prices and high interest rates make good housing hard to afford. So the United States is launching a new effort to help build a market for affordable housing. Through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, we've provided more than \$100 million that is being used to help underwrite mortgages to working families in Mexico and Brazil and Chile and the countries of Central America. Now we're going to provide another \$385 million to expand these programs and help put the dream of homeownership within the reach of thousands of more people in our neighborhood.

On these three vital social issues—education and health care and housing—we're making a difference across the Americas. You see, by investing in programs and empower people, we will help the working families of our hemisphere build a more hopeful future for themselves.

Finally, social justice requires economies that make it possible for workers to provide for their families and to rise in society. For too long and in too many places, opportunity in Latin America has been determined by the accident of birth rather than by the application of talents and initiative. In his many writings, Pope John Paul II spoke eloquently about creating systems that respect the dignity of work and the right to private initiative. Latin America needs capitalism for the *campesino*, a true capitalism that allows people who start from

nothing to rise as far as their skills and their hard work can take them. So the United States is helping these nations build growing economies that are open to the world, economies that will provide opportunity to their people.

One of the most important ways is by helping to relieve the burden of debt. In the past, many nations in this region piled up debt that they simply cannot repay. Every year, their governments have to spend huge amounts of money just to make interest payments on the debt. So under my administration, we worked with the Group of Eight industrialized nations to reduce the debt of Latin America and Caribbean nations by \$4.8 billion. The members of the Inter-American Development Bank are close to an agreement on another debt relief initiative, and we look forward to helping them complete it. This agreement will cancel 3.4 billion owned by some of the poorest countries in our hemisphere: Bolivia and Guyana and Haiti and Honduras and Nicaragua. That works out to about \$110 for every man, woman, and child in these countries, monies that their government should use to invest in the education and health of their citizens.

People of this region have the talent and drive they need to succeed. These are hard-working folks. I used to remind people in Texas, family values didn't stop at the Rio Grande River. There's a lot of mothers and dads in our neighborhood who care deeply about whether or not their children can grow up in a hopeful society. What they need is—in order to be able to realize that hope—is better access to capital. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong, strong in this room, and it's strong throughout the region. But what we need is capital.

And so over the past 5 years, the United States has devoted more than \$250 million to help the entrepreneurial spirit flourish in our region. This funding includes micro-credit loans for people starting small businesses. And these loans have been very suc-

cessful, and I appreciate the Congress appropriating money for these microloans.

I'm also directing Secretary Rice and Secretary Paulson to develop a new initiative that will help U.S. and local banks improve their ability to extend good loans to small businesses. It's in our interest that businesses flourish in our own neighborhood. Flourishing businesses provide jobs for people at home. They provide customers for U.S. products.

As we help local entrepreneurs get the capital they need, we're also going to open up new opportunities through trade and investment. If you're a rural farmer scratching out a subsistence living, wouldn't you want to be able to sell your goods to new markets overseas? I think so. You're trying to make a living, and the market is closed—it seems to make sense that you should want to be able to sell into a larger universe.

If you're a worker looking for a job, wouldn't you want more employers competing for your labor? The more employers there are in your neighborhood, the more likely it is you're going to find a better job. That's not really sophisticated math or economics, it just happens to be the truth, *la verdad*.

When I took office, the United States had trade agreements with only two nations in our hemisphere. We've now negotiated agreements with 10 more. We're working for a strong agreement of the Doha round of global trade talks that will level the playing field for farmers and workers and small businesses in our country and throughout the hemisphere.

Entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the markets we've helped open. Here's an interesting story for you. Mariano Canu, he was an indigenous farmer in Guatemala whose land provided barely enough corn and beans to feed his family. He was scratching to get ahead. No one in his family had ever been to college. Most of the people in his village never got past the sixth grade. Mariano began tilling the fields

at age 7. He had spent his life in grinding poverty, and it looked as though his children would suffer the same fate.

Trade helped him a lot, and here's how. To take advantage of new market opportunities, he organized an association of small farmers called *Labradores Mayas*. These farmers began growing vegetables that they could sell overseas, high-valued crops like lettuce and carrots and celery. They took out a loan. Capital matters. It's important to have capital available if we want our neighbors to be able to realize a better tomorrow. And they built an irrigation system with that loan. And soon they were selling their crops to large companies like Wal-Mart Central America. With the money Mariano has earned, he was able to send his son to college. Today, *Labradores* is thriving business that supports more than 1,000 jobs in production and transportation and the marketing of internationally sold vegetables.

One of the stops on my trip is going to be to see Mariano. I can't wait to congratulate him on not losing hope and faith. I also look forward to seeing a thriving enterprise that began with one dream, and it's in the interests of the United States to promote those dreams. People like Mariano are showing what the people of this region can accomplish when given a chance. By helping our neighbors build strong and vibrant economies, we increase the standard of living for all of us.

You know, not far from the White House is a statue of the great liberator, Simon Bolivar. He's often compared to George Washington—"Jorge" W. [*Laughter*] Like Washington, he was a general who fought for the right of his people to govern them-

selves. Like Washington, he succeeded in defeating a much stronger colonial power. And like Washington, he belongs to all of us who love liberty. One Latin American diplomat put it this way: "Neither Washington nor Bolivar was destined to have children of their own, so that we Americans might call ourselves their children."

We are the sons and daughters of this struggle, and it is our mission to complete the revolution they began on our two continents. The millions across our hemisphere who, every day, suffer the degradations of poverty and hunger have a right to be impatient. And I'm going to make them this pledge: The goal of this great country, the goal of a country full of generous people, is an Americas where the dignity of every person is respected, where all find room at the table, and where opportunity reaches into every village and every home. By extending the blessings of liberty to the least among us, we will fulfill the destiny of this new world and set a shining example for others.

*Que Dios les bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:13 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to David C. Lizarraga, chairman of the board of directors, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Massey Villarreal, chairman of the board of directors, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation; and Juana Brunilda Rodriguez, teacher, Jose Armando Bermudez School in Santiago, Dominican Republic. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks to the American Legion March 6, 2007

Thank you very much, Paul, for that warm welcome. I appreciate the fact that you've given me a chance to come and address you. I welcome you to our Nation's Capital. I offer a special greeting to members of Post 77 from Houston, Texas. *[Laughter]* If you're here, my advice is, behave yourself. *[Laughter]* What happens in Washington stays in Washington. *[Laughter]*

People who know something about the Legion understand firsthand how much this organization does for our men and women in uniform, for those who have been wounded on the field of battle, and for their remarkable families. Our Nation has been able to call upon the Legion in times of promise and peril, and our Nation is grateful for your service.

I thank—not only do I thank your commander, I thank Earl Ruttkofsky. I appreciate Beverly, his wife, and JoAnn Cronin, who happens to be the president of the American Legion Auxiliary. She gets her hair done at the same place my mother does. *[Laughter]* Like, if you're listening, Mom, that's a compliment. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate so very much Secretary Jim Nicholson, who's in my Cabinet, Department of Veterans Affairs—Mr. Secretary. I want to thank the Members of the Congress who have joined us, starting with Senator Jim Bunning, Senator Orrin Hatch, and Senator Lindsey Graham. I'm honored you three men are here. Thanks for your time. And I thank you for your articulate defense for the support of our troops. I appreciate so very much Congressman Jim Saxton from New Jersey, Mike Pence from Indiana, and Joe Wilson from South Carolina. Welcome, and thank you for coming.

Since its founding in the aftermath of World War I, the American Legion has assumed a sacred obligation: to preserve the traditions of our great democracy and to

watch over those charged with its defense. In every war and in every era, our country's veterans have kept faith with the American people. And it's the obligation of the Government to keep faith with our veterans.

The support of our veterans has been a high priority in my administration. This year I've asked Congress for more than \$86 billion for veterans' services. And if Congress approves my request, this would amount to a 77-percent increase of the budget since I took office; it would be the highest level of support for our veterans in American history.

We share with your concern about making sure our vets have good health care. I've talked to your commanders past, and suspect I'll be talking to your commanders future—*[laughter]*—about making sure that our veterans have got good, decent, quality health care. Since 2001, we've helped over 1 million more veterans—we've added a million veterans—take advantage of the VA health care system.

The 2008 budget proposal will increase the VA health care budget by 83 percent since I took office. The Department of Defense's health care budget has grown from 19 billion to 38 billion. And that's an important commitment, and I look forward to working with Congress to say to our veterans: We care about you.

Money is one thing, delivery of services is another. I know I share—*[applause]*—listen, I am as concerned as you are about the conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. My decisions have put our kids in harm's way, and I'm concerned about the fact that when they come back, they don't get the full treatment they deserve. Many people working at Walter Reed are fine people. If you've been out there, you know what I'm talking about. They're dedicated, honorable healers who care deeply about our soldiers. Fine doctors, nurses,



and therapists work day and night to help the wounded. Yet some of our troops at Walter Reed have experienced bureaucratic delays and living conditions that are less than they deserve. It's unacceptable to me, it's unacceptable to you, it's unacceptable to our country, and it's not going to continue.

I recently asked Secretary of Defense Bob Gates to assess the situation at Walter Reed firsthand and report back to me. He confirmed that there are problems, real problems. He has taken action to address those problems and hold people to account, including relieving the general in charge of the facility and accepting the resignation of the Secretary of the Army.

As we work to improve conditions at Walter Reed, we are also taking steps to find out whether similar problems exist at other military and veterans hospitals. The best way to do so in a constructive way, in a way that will bring forth the truth, is to create a bipartisan Presidential Commission. I've asked two distinguished public servants to lead the Commission, and they have accepted: Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala.

The Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the care America is providing our wounded service men and women returning from the battlefield. This review will examine their treatment from the time they leave the battlefield through their return to civilian life as veterans, so we can ensure that we're meeting the physical and mental health needs of all. As this Commission begins its work and considers its recommendations, I have also directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to lead a Task Force composed of seven members of my Cabinet to focus and respond to immediate needs.

We have an obligation—we have a moral obligation to provide the best possible care and treatment to the men and women who have served our country. They deserve it, and they're going to get it.

My administration appreciates your strong support of the flag. The flag is emblazoned on the uniforms of brave men and women who serve our country. It is draped on the coffins of those who fall on the field of battle. It is a symbol of a noble nation and of a higher calling. I join with you and the elected legislatures of all 50 States in urging Congress to provide the flag with the constitutional protection it deserves.

My administration also shares your determination to keep faith with our prisoners of war and those missing in action. We cannot rest and must not rest until we have accounted for every member of our Armed Forces, from every war and every corner of the globe.

American Legion halls have been mainstays of our communities and neighborhoods for generations. You have taught millions of young people the importance of good citizenship and the values of "God and country." And I appreciate these valuable lessons in America. I saw them firsthand when I was the Governor of Texas. After all, you sponsor Boys State and Girls State. They're great programs. I found it very interesting how the executive director describes the programs. He says, quote, "The programs don't"—the programs, quote—the program, quote, "does not emphasize"—he has a little trouble with the English—[laughter]—and so do I—[laughter]—describes this as an initiative that, quote, "does not emphasize classroom and textbook learning." That's my kind of program. [Laughter]

Your example of service offers invaluable lessons for future generations. In times of peace, you counsel vigilance. In times of war, you counsel resolve. More than 5 years have passed since the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, and we find ourselves debating the causes of this conflict and the course we have followed. Yet even among our differences, there are a few questions that surely have been settled. One is that September the 11th was not only a crime



but an act of war—a war waged by fanatics who believe it is their duty to kill Americans and impose their hateful ideology as far as they can spread it.

Since 9/11, they have continued to try to attack us here at home. They're relentless, and they're determined. We stopped an Al Qaida plot to fly a hijacked airplane into the tallest building on the west coast. We stopped a Southeast Asian terror cell grooming operatives for attacks inside the United States. We stopped an Al Qaida cell developing anthrax to be used in attacks against America. For each life saved, we owe a debt of gratitude to our military and intelligence and law enforcement personnel who devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping and protect—stopping them and protecting the American people.

Our most solemn duty is to protect you. The most solemn duty of this Government is to protect the American people from further harm, and the best way to do so is to stay on the offense. So we pursued the enemy aggressively around the world—degrading their ability to organize and coordinate new attacks here at home. In the wake of 9/11, Americans made a choice: Instead of waiting for the enemy to strike on their terms, we would fight the enemy on our terms.

And we fight this war on many fronts. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we removed two of the world's most brutal regimes. And now we are undertaking the complex work of helping the people of these two countries establish functioning democracies that can protect their own people and be allies in this global war on terror. Sometimes we lose sight of the importance of this work in the midst of heated debates, and this is especially true when it comes to Iraq. The fight in Iraq is more than a conflict in one country, it is part of a larger struggle against extremism that is unfolding across the broader Middle East. The extremists are fighting to take control of Iraq so they can establish it as a base from which to overthrow moderate governments in the re-

gion and plan new attacks on the American people. If we fail in Iraq, the enemy will follow us home. Their success in Iraq would bring danger to America, and that is why America must prevail in Iraq.

I appreciate your strong support for those who have volunteered to wear our uniform. Thousands of courageous men and women have stepped forward to protect us. And they're not alone. Since this war began, nearly 120,000 Iraqis have volunteered to serve in their army. More than 8,000 Iraqis in uniform have died in the defense of their new nation. Recently in Anbar Province, where Al Qaida terrorists have gathered, 1,000 Sunnis volunteered for the police force in a period of 2 weeks. Last month in Hillah, an Iraqi police officer threw himself onto a suicide bomber, a final, heroic act that saved an untold number of Iraqis gathered outside a local mosque.

Every month, Iraqis risk reprisals from the terrorists and extremists to provide thousands of tips to coalition and Iraqi authorities. One recent tip from an Iraqi led to the discovery of a factory where insurgents developed sophisticated roadside bombs to kill our troops. With these acts of bravery, the Iraqis are standing up for the democratic future that 12 million of them voted for. The vast majority of Iraq's citizens want to live in peace, and they're showing their courage every day. And the United States of America will not abandon them in their hour of need.

To reach our goals and to prevail, we must recognize that the nature of the war in Iraq has changed. In 2005, the terrorists tried and failed to stop the Iraqi people as they held three national elections. They chose a transitional government, as they adopted the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world, and then they elected a Government under that Constitution.

So a thinking enemy adjusted their tactics, and in 2006, they struck. Last February, Al Qaida and other Sunni extremists

blew up the Golden Mosque of Samarra. This atrocity was designed to provoke retaliation from the Iraqi Shi'a, and it succeeded. Radical Shi'a elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads. And the result was a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal.

This changed the nature of the conflict in Iraq. We still faced the threat from Al Qaida, but the sectarian violence was getting out of hand and threatened to destroy this young democracy before it had a chance to succeed. So last fall, I ordered my national security team to conduct a comprehensive review of our strategy in Iraq. We devised an approach that is markedly different from previous efforts. This approach demands more from Iraq's elected Government, makes bringing security to Baghdad our top priority, and gives our troops the reinforcements they need to carry out their missions. And to carry out this strategy, I put in place a highly regarded commander, an expert on counter-insurgency, General David Petraeus.

General Petraeus's mission is to help Iraq's leaders implement the plan that they developed to secure Baghdad. Today, they can't do this on their own, so I have ordered reinforcements of more than 20,000 additional combat soldiers and marines to Iraq. The majority will go to Baghdad, where they will help Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighborhoods, and where they will partner with Iraqi units. The Iraqis in the lead, our forces will help secure the city by chasing down the terrorists and insurgents and murderers and roaming death squads.

We're fixing one of the major problems with our previous approach in Baghdad. In the past, our forces would help Iraqis clear out neighborhoods during the day and then go back to their bases at night, and often the enemy returned as soon as American forces left. This time, we will hold the neighborhoods we have cleared by establishing over 30 joint security stations throughout Baghdad. These will be neigh-

borhood outposts where Iraqi forces, with U.S. help, will be deployed 24 hours a day to secure the population, provide emergency aid to the communities, and gather information to rout out extremist networks throughout the capital. At the same time, our forces will continue to train Iraqi Army and Police, so that we can help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing security that Baghdad needs.

It's too early to judge the success of this operation. General Petraeus recently arrived in the Iraqi capital. The plan he is executing is in its early stages. This strategy is going to take time, and we can expect Al Qaida and other extremists to try to derail the strategy by launching spectacular attacks.

Yet even at this early hour, there are some encouraging signs. The Iraqi Government has completed the deployment of three additional Iraqi Army brigades to the capital. They said they were going to employ three brigades, and they did. Iraq's leaders have lifted restrictions on Iraqi and coalition forces that prevented them from going into certain areas. Already, about half of the joint security stations have been established in neighborhoods across Baghdad. Iraqi and U.S. forces have rounded up more than 700 people affiliated with Shi'a extremists. They have recovered large weapons caches, including mortar weapons systems and rocket-propelled grenades.

Iraqi and American forces have also launched successful operations against the Sunni extremists. U.S. and Iraqi forces recently killed Al Qaida terrorists in Baghdad who were responsible for some of those bomb attacks that you're seeing on your TV screens. And in the past 2 weeks, U.S. and Iraqi forces have also uncovered large stockpiles of explosively formed projectiles, or EFPs, which are used by extremist groups to attack our troops. Iraqi and U.S. forces are making gradual but important progress almost every day, and we will remain steadfast until our objectives are achieved.

In addition to the steps they are taking to secure their capital, Iraq's leaders are also taking steps to achieve political reconciliation, reconciliation that is necessary after years of brutal tyranny. They have committed themselves to a series of benchmarks to advance this reconciliation: to share oil revenues amongst all Iraq's citizens, to put the wealth of Iraq into rebuilding of Iraq, to allow more Iraqis to reenter their nation's civic life, to hold local elections, and to take responsibility for security in every Iraqi Province.

Iraqis have already begun to deliver on some of these promises. For example, Iraq's Council of Ministers recently agreed on legislation they will submit to their Parliament on the development of Iraq's oil resources and the sharing of revenues. Last month, the Iraqi Government approved a budget that includes \$10 billion for reconstruction and capital investment. These are encouraging signs, and now Iraq's leaders must meet the other pledges they have made.

To succeed, Iraq's leaders also need the help of the international community. So the United States supports the Iraqi Government as it pursues an international initiative to build diplomatic, economic, and security support for its young democracy. Last week, the Iraqis announced that they will hold a conference in Baghdad that will include officials from Iraq's neighboring countries, as well as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

It's going to be followed next month by a second conference that includes Secretary Rice and her counterparts from around the world. These meetings will be an important test. They'll be a test of whether Iran and Syria are truly interested in being constructive forces in Iraq. It will be a test for the international community to express its support for this young democracy, to support a nation that will be at peace with its neighbors.

Diplomacy is going to play an important part of securing Iraq's future. Yet diplomacy will fail without a robust military strategy. The goal of the enemies in Iraq is power, and they're willing to kill themselves and innocent men, women, and children to achieve that goal. People like these can't be satisfied by negotiations or diplomatic concessions. Our strategy recognizes the hard truth. So we're going to continue to pursue our enemies in Iraq relentlessly, and at the same time, we'll work with moderate forces to achieve reconciliation between sectarian factions.

Here in Washington, we have important decisions on Iraq ahead of us. And the most pivotal question is whether the United States Congress will stand behind General Petraeus and our troops as they work to secure Baghdad. General Petraeus has my confidence, and he also has the confidence of the United States Senate. In fact, he was recently confirmed to his post without one single vote against him. Yet almost immediately, the House passed a resolution that disapproved of his strategy for success in Iraq. I know you find that puzzling—*[laughter]*—you're not the only one. *[Laughter]* This may be the first time in the history of the United States Congress that voted to send a new commander into battle and then voted to oppose the plan he said was critical in winning that battle. *[Laughter]*

Members of Congress have every right to express their opinion. They have every right. They also have a responsibility to fund our war fighters. Some in Congress have called for cutting off funds for our troops, only to find opposition from their colleagues on Capitol Hill. Now others in Congress are planning to use an emergency war spending bill that will provide funds for the war on terror as an opportunity to add on billions of dollars for unrelated domestic programs. Tacking extra domestic spending to an emergency war spending bill only will complicate Congress's ability

to provide the support that our troops urgently need. I ask the Congress to approve the funds we requested, and our troops are counting on, without strings and without delay.

Equally important to funding our troops is giving our commanders the flexibility to carry out their missions without undue interference from politicians in Washington. Some Members of Congress say that we can succeed in Iraq without providing the reinforcements that our forces have been promised and are expecting. I disagree. More importantly, our commanders disagree. Other Members of Congress seem to believe that we can have it all, that we can fight Al Qaida, pursue national reconciliation, initiate aggressive diplomacy, and deter Iran's ambitions in Iraq, all while withdrawing from Baghdad and reducing our force levels. That sounds good in theory, but doing so at this moment would undermine everything our troops have worked for.

There are no shortcuts in Iraq. Our intelligence and military experts agree that given the current situation, Iraq will not be a stable nation until its capital is more secure. Political reconciliation is difficult when a country's seat of government is under constant siege. Economic improvements cannot take root when Baghdad's neighborhoods are the scene of daily sectarian violence and reprisals. And you cannot effectively battle Al Qaida by ignoring the sectarian violence they are inciting, especially in the capital.

If American forces were to step back from Baghdad now, before it is more secure, the scale and scope of attacks would increase and the intensity would increase. A contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country and, in time, the entire region. The enemy would emerge from the chaos emboldened, with new safe havens and new recruits and new resources and an even greater determination to harm America.

For our country, this is a nightmare scenario. For the enemy, it's their plan. They're not debating whether the war in Iraq is worth it. Hear the words of bin Laden in a message to the American people just last year. He says of Iraq: "The war is for you or for us to win. If we win it, it means your defeat and disgrace forever." In the face of such a determined enemy, the idea of pulling back from the fight and hoping for the best is not a reasonable position. America did not drive Al Qaida out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a shop in a free Iraq.

Now that the battle for Baghdad is underway, our country is best served by standing behind our troops and doing everything we can to aid in their success. The outcome of this conflict involves more than the fortunes of any one President or any political party. Our mission is America's mission, and our failure would be America's failure.

Our country is fortunate that our mission is in the hands of America's finest citizens, the men and women who wear our uniform. They've been on the battlefield. They have seen this war up close. They know the consequences of failure. And they appreciate something larger: the consequences of success. We know what a free Iraq could mean for the region and the world, because we know how your sacrifices half a century ago helped create a free Germany that transformed Europe and a free Japan that sparked a wave of democracy and prosperity throughout much of Asia. We know that a free Iraq has the potential to spark a similar transformation in the Middle East and bring us closer to the day when moms and dads in the Arab world see a future of hope for their children. And we know that the sacrifices that our troops are making in Iraq today will lay the foundation of peace for generations of Americans to come.

Last year, I received a letter from a Navy Seabee named Andy Clements. He was

serving in Iraq. He says he worked alongside Iraqis on a daily basis and that they appreciate what America is doing for their country. He told me this story: "I was at Baghdad International Airport several weeks ago and had a small Iraqi boy, near the same age as my own son, run up to me and salute. He kept repeating 'thank you' in broken English and wanted to shake my hand. I will remember that chance meeting forever. And that, to me, is what being done—here is all about."

In the brief history of our Nation, we've seen freedom remake the world many times, and yet we always seem surprised by the quiet power of our ideals. It's in our power to show those who hunger for liberty the path away from tyranny and terror. Throughout our history, we have gone through tough moments, and we have come out stronger on the other side. We've been guided by our belief that freedom is not an American privilege but a value that belongs to all mankind.

The struggle in Iraq may be hard, but this should not be a time for despair. We can have confidence in the final outcome of this struggle, because we have men on our side like Tommy Tardif. The 25-year-old marine was in an Iraqi town when his squad came under heavy fire. He was engaged in combat so intense that Marine Corps Commandant General Mike Hagee described it as a "hand grenade-throwing contest." In that combat, Sergeant Tardif was seriously wounded by grenade fragments, yet he refused medical attention until the battle had been won. Later, when he was evacuated, he called his wife from the transit hospital in Germany, and he said this: "Honey, I could come home right

now, but I feel I have responsibilities, and I'm going back to Iraq." He borrowed a uniform; he convinced his doctor to let him out of the hospital; and the man returned to his squad.

A lot of you can tell stories like this. Each of you knows a fellow patriot whose name is carried in your heart or who sits proudly beside you in this hall today. I want to thank you for the sacrifices you have made. I thank you for the example you have set. And I thank you for the steadfast support of the men and women who wear our uniform.

You know that America can overcome any challenge or any difficulty. You know America's brightest days are still ahead. And you know that nothing we say here—no speech or vote or resolution in the United States Congress—means more to the future of our country than the men and women who wake up every morning and put on the uniform of our country and defend the United States of America.

I thank you for your time. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Renaissance Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Paul A. Morin, national commander, American Legion; Earl Ruttkofsky, national commander, Sons of the American Legion; Maj. Gen. George W. Weightman, USA, former commander, Walter Reed Army Medical Center; former Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Sgt. Timothy C. Tardif, USMC, who was awarded the Silver Star on May 3, 2004.



## Interview With Foreign Print Journalists March 6, 2007

*The President.* Thanks for coming. I'm very much looking forward to my trip. I believe that a peaceful neighborhood and a prosperous neighborhood is in the interest of the United States of America. My trip is an opportunity to remind the folks in our neighborhood that the United States has a robust policy toward empowering individuals to realize their full potential.

I gave a speech yesterday that I outlined a vision of a nation that cares about the human condition. I spoke in terms of dollars being spent, but more significantly, I spoke in terms of programs that are actually empowering and helping people improve their lives. And that's my message. My message is that the United States is a—should be viewed as a constructive partner in helping deal with significant issues, whether they be the issues of prosperity or education or health.

I'm really looking forward to going down and visiting with the respective leaders with whom I'll be meeting. These are men I respect. These are people whose opinions matter. And I'm confident we'll have a good trip.

And with that, we'll go around the room and answer questions, and then I've got to go give a speech to the American Legion, and you're welcome to come and listen to it if you'd like to. Are you going to listen to it, Holland [Steve Holland, Reuters]?

Q. Yes, sir.

*The President.* That's good.

Q. Absolutely.

*The President.* Will you cover it objectively? Of course you will; what am I thinking. [Laughter]

Do you want to start? Jose, where are you from?

Q. Mexico.

*The President.* So are you from Brazil?

Q. Yes.

*The President.* We'll go this way—this is the order of the trip: Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, y Mexico. Thank you, Patricia.

Q. So I start, right?

*The President.* Please.

### *Brazil-U.S. Relations/Alternative Fuel Sources*

Q. Mr. President, my first question is, I would like to know, what is the importance of the development of this new ethanol market, regional market, in political and economical terms? And how is that going to strengthen U.S.-Brazil relations?

*The President.* First, U.S.-Brazilian relations are strong. I can remember my first visit with President Lula. He wasn't sure what to expect when he came to the Oval Office, and frankly, I wasn't sure what to expect when he came. You know, people have reputations that precede them in life. And yet, after we spent a brief period of time, we both came to realize, we share the same concerns, particularly for the poor, and we both represent big, influential nations; and that we can work together to achieve common objectives.

And one such objective is human rights and rule of law, a civil society that empowers individuals; that we believe government ought to respond to people and that people ought to have the ultimate say in the fate of government. And those were common principles. We came from different political directions—I readily concede—but nevertheless, when we listened carefully, we found common ground. And that puts us in a position where we can work in practical ways to address significant problems.

One such problem is trade, and President Lula and I will spend time on the Doha round to determine whether or not we're able to advance Doha in a constructive way that benefits our nations and, equally importantly, the world's poor. The



best way to alleviate poverty is for there to be prosperity, and one way to enhance prosperity is through a world that trades freely and fairly.

The other area—another area of common ground is changing our energy uses. My last trip to Brazil, I was briefed extensively on Brazil's capacity to use its raw materials to develop a vast ethanol industry. And I was impressed by the progress Brazil has made. It reminded me of—the progress Brazil has made has reminded me of the vast potential that agricultural can make on the energy front.

So I now return to Brazil with a robust domestic agenda on ethanol. We had already had an agenda on ethanol, but it's now even more robust as a result of a mandatory fuel standard I laid out that said, the United States will be consuming about 35 billion gallons of ethanol.

The political implications of that, at least for the United States, are profound, in that we become less dependent on oil, which is good for our national security, as well as it helps us be good stewards of the environment. I happen to believe that the United States and Brazil can work together to, for example, share technologies with others in the region, which will help them become less dependent on oil. And that's important, because dependency on oil exposes economies to the whims of the marketplace.

As China's demand for oil continues, if there's not a corresponding increase in international supply, what happens in China affects the ability of someone in Latin America to be able to keep more money—in other words, the gas prices go up. There is a direct correlation. And we live in a global economy, in which global economics—I mean, live in a global world in which global economics affects the lives of a lot of people in our neighborhood. And so becoming less dependent on oil will enhance the economic security of the region, and that's important because prosperity in the region is important for the United States.

We want our friends and neighbors to be prosperous.

Anyway, thank you. Daniel.

#### *Uruguay-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

*Q.* Recently, Uruguay and the United States signed a framework agreement on trade and investments. Now, how far do you think the United States and Uruguay can advance towards a free trade agreement? And taking into account that in the Uruguayan Government there are differing opinions on this subject and our President, a few days ago in a speech in reference to your trip, he said—he defined his Government as antiimperialist—

*The President.* As antiimperialist? Fine, that's—I would hope he would define my Government as profreedom. But back to the free trade issue. I think that—first of all, there are countervailing pressures in my own Government. People shouldn't take for granted that the United States wants to have trade agreements. As a matter of fact, there's a strong protectionist sentiment in America. I strongly resist those temptations. It's in our interests to be a nation which treats others the same way we want to be treated in the marketplace. Again, I repeat: I know it's in the interest of the poor to have markets open for their products.

And so I will go to Uruguay as a strong defender of trade. I fully understand there are local sensitivities. I fully understand that there are pressures on leaders regarding trade and that sometimes, it takes a period of time for people to get comfortable with different types of trading agreements. And therefore, I will make my case about why I hope we can continue what has been a constructive relationship with Uruguay without pressing the case beyond that, which is politically possible.

And again, I will assure the President that I will be—we want to listen to concerns, we will work closely as friends. And I will remind him that here at home, it's not an easy sell, necessarily, and that if he believes trade is in the interests of his

country and I believe it's in mine, we've both got to work constructively to achieve common objectives.

As to characterizations of the United States, I will remind him that we are a generous, compassionate nation that believes in peace. And that on the one hand, we'll protect ourselves from attacks that I'm convinced the enemy wants to launch on America again. It's my most solemn duty. But at the same time, I'll remind him that the advance of liberty, the advance of human rights and human dignity is in our national interests.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to the trip. It's going to be—I'm told it's a beautiful country. I've never been to Uruguay, and I'm looking forward to it.

Carlos.

#### *Colombian Government/Plan Colombia II*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation.

*The President.* Por nada.

Q. Por la invitacion.

*The President.* Si. Por nada.

Q. Thank you. In the last few months, Colombia has been shocked by scandal of possible links between paramilitary groups, which are terrorist organizations, and members of Congress as well as public officials. Given the fact that until now only close allies and collaborators of President Alvaro Uribe have been involved in this scandal, can this scandal affect the support that your Government is giving to the Government of Colombia?

*The President.* President Uribe has made it very clear that he is going to—he promotes and expects there to be a full investigation of any allegations. And as a result of strengthening the prosecutorial offices, he has sent a signal that if, in fact, there are allegations that are worthy of further investigation and the facts lead to prosecution, he will fully prosecute. And to me, that gives me great comfort in seeing his strong leadership. And I believe that that

leadership will stand him in good stead with our Congress.

The budget I've submitted is one that's a little less than last year but, nevertheless, is a strong commitment to a Plan Colombia II. One of the reasons why the budget is a little less than last year is, it goes to show the progress that Colombia is making. In my judgment, President Uribe has done a fabulous job for leading that country. He's been very strong and very resolute, and it's an impressive record. Secondly, the economy is improving, as you know, and therefore, Colombia can carry more of the load of II. But nevertheless, the commitment is a significant commitment, and I will work very hard with Congress to get that commitment passed in the budget.

Eduardo.

#### *Narcotics and Drug Trafficking/Crime Prevention*

Q. Hi, Mr. President, thank you very much.

*The President.* How are you? Thanks for coming.

Q. Mr. President, a lot of people in Guatemala and in Central America is worried about the violence that might be generated by organized crime, gangs, and drug trafficking. How severe would you say this problem is? And how the Government of the United States can work together with Guatemala and the other Central American countries to fight this problem?

*The President.* Well, that's a common issue that we have with our very important friend to the south. It is an issue that concerns both Mexico and the United States. The issue of crime in Central America concerns both Mexico and the United States because, oftentimes, that crime can be exported into either country.

My attitude is that the United States can help provide Justice Department and information sharing—Justice Department collaboration with their respective people in government.

In terms of narcotrafficking, the first thing the United States can do is convince our people to stop using drugs. If there's a demand, inevitably there will be a supply, so we have an obligation here at home to work to reduce drug usage. If people don't find a better market, if people don't find a healthy market, there will be less pressure to produce drugs.

Secondly, we can enforce our borders and make it harder for drug dealers to be able to get their drugs to market. One way to better enforce our borders, besides stepping up presence on our border, is to pass a comprehensive immigration bill in the Congress, one that says that the person coming to do work that Americans aren't doing doesn't have to sneak across the border, thereby enabling our Border Patrol to be able to focus on narcotrafficking. In other words, you can raise the cost of getting drugs into our country by making it harder for them to penetrate our borders.

Thirdly, we can work internally with governments, and do. We do a lot of bilateral work. I don't want to jump to—I'm not going to jump to the next country, but one perfect example is the cooperation and collaboration between Mexico and the United States on helping each other with information sharing.

Fourthly, we have got Central American gangs in the United States, that as we find and arrest, we can share information we learn from them with the host government. So there's a lot of collaboration efforts.

The best way, however, to ultimately deal with crime, besides reducing the demand for their product, is to enhance prosperity. And that's why CAFTA is an important agreement. We would rather people try to make a living honestly. And therefore, there needs to be hope; there needs to be the possibility of that honest living to be able to be made so that youngsters don't turn—feel they have to turn to crime.

And finally, a social program, social justice programs, like education; the United States spends a lot of money in Latin

America on education programs, programs aimed at either training teachers to teach and/or direct aid to education programs throughout our hemisphere. An educated child is one that will have a hopeful future, and therefore, less likely to be recruited into a criminal gang.

*Hombre.*

#### *Mexico-U.S. Border Issues/Immigration Reform*

*Q. Gracias.*

*The President. Si.*

*Q. Thank you, Mr. President.*

*The President. Si.*

*Q. Again, thank you for the invitation. And my question goes in the same sense as my friend Eduardo.*

*The President. I thought so. I thought it might. [Laughter]*

*Q. Yes, as you know, President Calderon has positioned himself at the forefront in the war against drugs, and especially on violence that derives from drug trafficking. What do you think should be Mr. Calderon's next step? And would his efforts now motivate the U.S. to be more conscious in stopping illegal weapons crossing the border, north to south?*

*The President. It's a very interesting question. Mexico is rightly concerned that there are traffickers taking contraband from our country into Mexico. Just like we're concerned that there are traffickers bringing humans and/or drugs from south to north, which means that we have got to commit ourselves to rational border policy that will work.*

*I'll repeat what I said earlier about comprehensive immigration reform: I'm a strong supporter of comprehensive immigration reform. I believe strongly that a comprehensive bill will make it easier to focus on drugs and guns if people don't feel like they've got to sneak into the United States.*

*Secondly, such a bill will enable us to—it will help us dismantle an industry that has sprung up that uses human beings as*

product, as chattel. And that's unacceptable to this country. Now the incentive is for people who want to do work that Americans aren't doing, is to pay money to be stuffed in the back of an 18-wheeler, for example, and driven across and ducked out in the desert, where they hope somebody will come and rescue them and take them to a motel or a house where they have to rent, and then they finally work their way toward work. The industry that has sprung up as a result of the current immigration law is inhumane, and it doesn't reflect the values of the United States.

So to answer your question about drugs moving one way and guns moving the other, immigration reform will help. It will mean that the people and assets we have on the border can be focused on precisely that which you're concerned about.

Now, as to President Calderon's next steps, that's up to him, and one purpose of my visit is to listen to his strategy. It's a Mexican strategy. I have confidence that this man, elected by the people, will devise a strategy that is best for Mexico. And the role of the United States is not to devise a strategy but is to listen very carefully as to how we can help implement that strategy, and part of my visit is to be a listener and a partner.

And I appreciate the strong stance that President Calderon has taken. He has shown courage because he is committing the stake to take on some very powerful, very rich, and very lethal people. And that takes courage, and I admire courage when it comes to leaders in public office.

Patricia.

We'll go one more round, then I've got to go give a speech, which Holland says he's going to go listen to. [Laughter]

*President's Upcoming Visit to Central and South America/U.S. Foreign Aid*

Q. There's a perception that one of the objectives of your trip is to strengthen relations with the countries that are U.S. friends. So my question is, what do you

think of the rise of this so-called alternative development model, championed by President Chavez, that calls for nationalization, greater government intervention? And what is Brazil's role in the region, taking that new development model into account?

*The President.* Each leader is going to have to adopt a governing style and an economic model that they believe yields to prosperity for their people. I strongly believe that government-run industry is inefficient and will lead to more poverty. I believe if the state tries to run the economy, it will enhance poverty and reduce opportunity. So the United States brings a message of open markets and open government to the region.

My trip is to remind the people of Central and South America that we live in the same neighborhood and that the United States is committed to empowering individuals to realize their God-given potential.

I would like to cite some statistics for you, just to help prove my case. Since I have been the President, the line item for traditional bilateral aid has doubled, from about \$800 million a year to \$1.6 billion for the region. And that's a total, when you total all up the money that is spent, because of the generosity of our taxpayers, that's \$8.5 billion to programs that promote social justice, for example, promote education and health.

The reason I bring that up, it's very important for me to remind our own people as to why it's important to continue to be generous in our neighborhood. If you're interested in peace, then you've got to be interested in prosperity and hope. Our programs are aimed at encouraging hope.

Secondly, there's about—make sure I get this right, here—there's about \$350 billion of direct foreign investment in the region. Now that's important because investment yields jobs. And wise economic policy recognizes that investment can help improve the lives of the worker or the person who's anxious to make a living.

In my speech yesterday, I pointed out the fact that, by far, the vast majority of people in our neighborhood are really hard-working, decent, family-oriented people who just need a chance. And a direct foreign investment—that means somebody believing that the investment climate is worthy of investment—helps that working person, that hard-working person find employment.

And so our presence in the region is sometimes very quiet, but very effective. And one part of—main purpose of the trip is to tell people that we take the region and its problems very seriously and have got a good record.

And we'll let others make their case as to how best to proceed. We'll let others come and explain why their point of view makes sense. All I can tell you is that I believe that the system of government and the system of economies that we promote is fair.

Now, I fully recognize that until people actually feel progress in their pocketbook, that there's going to be frustrations with forms of government. But that doesn't mean you kind of revert to something that I don't believe will work. It does mean you've got to make sure that the aid and the progress that you're making actually helps.

Daniel.

#### *Central and South America-U.S. Relations*

Q. I'm going to do a followup on that question——

*The President.* Okay. Sure.

Q. For example, we, in Uruguay, we are seeing President Chavez's policy of financial agreements and commercial agreements on investments. And he's also going to Argentina on the same day that you are going to Uruguay, and he's even holding a street rally in Buenos Aires on that same day. I want to know how you view this——

*The President.* Look, I dare—I go a lot of places, and there are street rallies. And my attitude is, I love freedom and the right

for people to express themselves. I bring a message of good will to Uruguay and to the region. My trip is one that says, let's find ways to work together for the common good. And the United States has got a strong record of helping people, and I'm really proud of it.

And it is very important for the American people to hear firsthand our concerns about our neighborhood in order for them to continue to support programs, such as the Millennium Challenge Account, which is an \$855 million program, and encouraging good governance in the region or the education for the—we've got a new teacher initiative we've laid out, and we believe by, I think it's 2008, we'll have trained 20,000 teachers.

There are a lot of—you've got to understand that in a country where there are isolationist tendencies, where people sometimes say, "It's not our problem," that the President has got to be constantly reminding people that poverty in our neighborhood is our problem. So the trip gives me an opportunity to highlight successes and to point out challenges so that the American people stay engaged.

One of the great assets in our country is the fact that there are compassionate people that are willing to go into parts of the world where there's desperation and poverty, you know, our faith-based programs, for example. I'm not sure to the extent to which they've gone to Uruguay, but I know in Guatemala, there is an extensive program to help poor workers find market access so they can make a living. I'm going to visit one such program.

Our military—people think of the United States military as war fighters, and they are when the Commander in Chief puts them in such a situation, but our military is building health clinics throughout Central America, for example, in a very quiet way. And my trip will help herald some of the programs we're doing. One, we're trying to convince the American people it's worth



it; and secondly, reminding our neighbors that we care.

Carlos.

*Colombia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Q. Mr. President, in Colombia, there are growing concerns about two initiatives that the U.S. Congress is now considering. One is the free trade agreement with Colombia, and the aid package for 2008. Democrats in Congress have already raised some objections about labor, ecological, and human rights issues concerning the FTA. In the case of the aid package, some people in your administration have said that Colombia should assume more costs of Plan Colombia in the future. Also, Democrats are already talking about reducing the aid.

What will your administration do to increase the possibility for the approval of the FTA? And should Colombia expect to have a reduction in the aid it receives in the years to come?

*The President.* First, I will defend our budget strongly, that we've submitted to Congress, which, as I described earlier, does have a reduction, but only because we think Colombia is more capable of funding certain aspects of the program. But nevertheless, it is a robust program. And I look forward to telling President Uribe that he can count on the United States defending that which we sent up to Congress. That's what we believe is the right number, and we will vigorously defend the number.

Free trade with Colombia and Peru are coming up for votes. And like all free trade agreements, we will battle for their passage. Now, obviously, to the extent that we could—and by the way, the President has been here working hard, been making phone calls. But these are tough votes. And the reason I mention these tough votes, again, is that people shouldn't take access to the U.S. market for granted. I mean, the CAFTA vote was a tough vote, and we worked hard, along with the leaders. And this will be a tough vote; I don't want

to send any other signal but that. On the other hand, it's an important vote. And we want to—and I call upon Democrats to understand the consequences of this vote—and Republicans. Members of Congress have got to understand that when we negotiate in good faith a free trade agreement that the—they need to understand the consequences of not supporting it.

And so I'm—this will not be my first trade battle, nor will it be my last, hopefully—but it's going to be a battle. And we look forward to working with the Government to get it passed.

Eduardo.

*Trade/Prosperity in the Americas*

Q. Mr. President, so far, what's your evaluation of the impact of the free trade with Central America? And what do you expect in the medium and long term to be delivered by the CAFTA? And how the countries of Central America and the United States can work together to improve or to make it better, the trade between countries?

*The President.* There are great expectations when trade agreements get signed that all of the sudden, there's going to be instant prosperity. But that's not the way it works. Economies develop. And I fully understand that in parts of Central America, when people heard that U.S. markets were open and the CAFTA markets were open that there would be—people say, well, we've done this to increase prosperity. And so there's—I'm sure there's some expectations that have not been met.

Part of my messaging in Central America will be that opening markets is the first step toward more prosperity. Now, I'm going to go to a program, Labradores Mayas, that is a great example of what is possible for an indigenous farmer that was scratching out a living, ends up kind of establishing a co-op, goes and gets a loan, which, by the way, is an essential part of our program, and that is to provide microloans to people to be able to begin



to realize dreams. And it works. It's actually a very effective program.

This was one such program. It was what, a micro thing, but nevertheless, the co-op was able to then develop an irrigation system, which then made their production of high-specialty crops more efficient. I can't wait to see this. The one reason I go is to herald what is possible. It is a reminder that the United States approach to the region is not a political approach, but it is a human approach. It is one that emphasizes that human potential exists and that the best programs are those that elevate the potential.

So I will try to help deal with expectations, Eduardo, about how markets evolve. And one way for me to do so is to remind people about the effects of NAFTA with our important neighbor to the south, Mexico.

When I grew up in Texas, the border, *la frontera*, was like a third world on both sides of the border. And then in the early nineties, NAFTA was passed. But there wasn't instant successes. It took awhile for people to realize how the inevitable adjustments that will come when people start accessing market. And if you were to go down to the border today, you'd be stunned at the prosperity on both sides of the border because of trade.

And yet today, obviously, it's 2007, and this is 16 years later. Now, when I was the Governor of Texas—I was elected—I was sworn-in in '95—we were beginning to see the benefits of the NAFTA trade on the border. But it took awhile. And I understand if you're poor, it's hard to be patient. I fully understand that. And so there's a natural tension between the expectations of prosperity and the need to scratch out a living.

To answer your question, in the long run, what ends up happening is, again, I think the Mexican model is good to look at, because we're constantly dealing with trade disputes. There will be the argument over the—whatever. Since I've been President,

we've dealt with Mexico on a variety of fronts, like, I think tomatoes or corn, whatever—avocados, exactly, *por cierto*—cement. There's a constant need to evaluate the trade agreements and to deal with the natural tensions that grow up. It's not easy to have a trading relationship, but it's a lot more hopeful than not having a trading relationship, is my view.

And that's why my discussions with President Lula on the Doha round are going to be very important. Brazil is a major player in the international community. And the Doha round, in my judgment, is a vital round that we would like to see progress, because I'd repeat to you that a system that trades fairly and a system with more open markets is one that allows people to more likely rise out of poverty. A successful round of Doha is by far the most effective poverty-alleviating program in the world.

Anyway. The final question. Jose.

#### Energy

Q. Mr. President, from your past experience—

*The President.* Joe.

Q. *Gracias.*

*The President.* Jorge. Jorge W. [Laughter]

Q. From your past experience in the energy sector, you know that Mexico and Canada are strategic partners for the U.S.—through the subject of energy. And what benefits do you think that Mexico will get, and also its neighbors, from a position of opening its energy sector to private investment?

*The President.* Jose was right that our biggest suppliers of energy are Canada and Mexico, and that's good. I'd much rather be getting energy from stable sources that are friendly than from sources that are unstable and not friendly. And since we import about 60 percent of our crude oil from overseas, we are obviously dependent upon stability, one reason why, Jose, that it's important for us to work with countries to help develop a more robust ethanol and

biofuels industry. And I believe it's coming. However, having said that, we're still going to require oil. And to the extent that Mexico makes the decision internally to be able to attract enough capital to expand to keep up with world demand, that would be positive. But most of all, it would be positive for Mexico.

Mexico has got a valuable asset in its energy sector. The demand for that energy is significant; however, the exploitation of that energy requires significant investment. It requires investment to keep their sector—the current sector modernized, and as you all know, that as Mexico continues to expand its production in deeper waters in the Gulf of Mexico, that requires even more capital investment. So to the extent that the Government feels comfortable being able to track sources of capital outside of the Government cashflow, to me that would be something that certainly ought to be considered by President Calderon.

And we're fortunate that Canada and Mexico are vibrant energy producers.

Okay? Looking forward to the trip.

#### Cuba

Q. A final one on Castro?

*The President.* On Castro? Sure. Sure. The universal Castro question? [*Laughter*] Can you come up with a unified question?

Q. What role can the countries of Latin America, like Brazil, like other partners in Latin America, can play in the Cuban transition to democracy?

*The President.* The message, in my judgment, to the world during a transition period, is freedom—that we ought to expect that the Cuban people have the right to express themselves openly without fear of reprisal, to be able to express themselves at the ballot box, and to be able to realize potential as a result of an open economy.

What I hope happens is that we together insist that transition doesn't mean transition from one figure to another, but transition means from one type of government to a different type of government, based upon the will of the people. That will certainly be the position of the United States. We believe the Cuban people ought to make the decision for the future. We believe it ought to be up to the people, the long-suffering people of that island to decide their fate, not the fate—not to be decided because somebody is somebody's brother; the fate ought to be decided because that's what the people want.

And I would hope those who have lived under the blessings of liberty have the same message. *Vamos a ver, cuando*—how long he stays on Earth, that's a decision that will be made by the Almighty. But once that happens, once—you know, Fidel Castro may live—I don't know; I don't know how long he's going to live—but nevertheless, I do believe that the system of government that he's imposed upon the people ought not live, if that's what the people decide.

Okay. *Gracias.*

NOTE: The interview was taped at 9:03 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; President Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay; President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia; President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; and President Fidel Castro Ruz and First Vice President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba. A reporter referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 7. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this interview. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Cochairs of the President's  
Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors  
*March 7, 2007*

I am concerned that our soldiers and their families are not getting the treatment that they deserve, having volunteered to defend our country. Any report of medical neglect will be taken seriously by this administration, and I'm confident by the Congress, and we will address problems quickly.

I've asked two of America's fine public servants, Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala, to chair a Commission that will analyze our health care both at the Defense Department and at the Veterans Department, to ensure that not only our soldiers but their families have got complete confidence in the Government's upholding its responsibility to treat those who have been wounded.

I am concerned that there may be flaws in the system between when a soldier is on the battlefield, through the Defense Department, through the Veterans Administration, and finally to the community. I can't think of two better people to analyze the situation and to make recommendations—

two people to lead a Commission of probably nine people—and that would be Senator Dole, who is himself a veteran, and a wounded veteran at that, a former distinguished Senator, a man who knows Washington well. But more importantly, he knows the kind of questions to ask. And Secretary Shalala, who is an expert on health. She lived after 8 years in President Clinton's administration; she knows what to look for; she knows the questions to ask.

And I'm confident that this Commission will bring forth the truth. And as I assured the Chairmen, I am confident that there will be a quick response to any problems that you may find. So I can't thank you enough for taking time and to serve your nation once again. God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. Robert J. Dole; and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala.

Interview With Natalia Orozco of RCN TV of Colombia  
*March 7, 2007*

*President's Upcoming Visit to Central and South America*

*Ms. Orozco.* Thank you, Mr. President, for this time with RCN TV Colombia.

*The President.* Thank you. I'm really looking forward to going to Bogota.

*Ms. Orozco.* Thank you, Mr. President. I have to start by asking you this. You're arriving to Bogota when President Bush—President Uribe is facing a deep crisis because of—we've got a political scandal.

Does this affect the support, the confidence that you have always expressed to him?

*The President.* No. As a matter of fact, I've been very impressed by how he's handled this latest issue. President Uribe is a very strong leader; he's committed to justice; he believes in fairness; and he's a man who has proven he can get things done. And so my confidence in the President is very high. And I'm looking forward to expressing that confidence about—to not only

the people of Colombia but also to the people in my Congress.

#### *Plan Colombia*

*Ms. Orozco.* Mr. President, \$4 billion invested in Plan Colombia, but the drug keeps coming to the United States, and the leader of the guerrillas remains at large. Why do you support a second phase of the same Plan Colombia?

*The President.* Well, thank you for that question. First of all, we've had a lot of successes in working together. I recognize there's still a lot of *drogas* coming here. Part of that has to do with, we still use drugs, and we've got to do a better job of convincing people to stop using drugs. But we've also stopped a lot of drugs from coming. And therefore, I can argue to the Congress and the people that there has been a lot of notable successes. And the truth of the matter is, Colombia has changed to the better as a result of the Plan Colombia. There's still bad activities going on, but it's a lot less than it was before.

#### *Colombia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

*Ms. Orozco.* Mr. President, public opinion in Colombia, as well as in the U.S. Congress, is divided about the free trade agreement. Will you be ready to reopen those negotiations in order to make it pass?

*The President.* No, I don't think we want to reopen the negotiations. We've had good, strong negotiations between our respective parties. Obviously, if there's some fine-tuning necessary—but we've negotiated good agreements, and I'm going to have to work hard with our Congress, and the President is going to have to work hard to convince the people of Colombia that trade is fair. And if I were a farmer in Colombia or a small-business person in Colombia, I'd want to be in a position to be able to sell my products into a large market like the United States.

And these trade fights are always tough, and I want to make sure, though, that we

work to have a world that trades freely and fairly, because it's the best way to eliminate poverty.

#### *President's Upcoming Visit to Central and South America*

*Ms. Orozco.* Are you concerned about the influence that President Chavez is gaining in the region? As many experts have said, is your trip also an answer to that?

*The President.* No, my trip is a chance to tell the people of Colombia and Uruguay and Brazil and Guatemala and Mexico that the United States cares deeply about the human condition. My budget this year has got—or last year has \$1.6 billion of bilateral assistance. Much of that money is spent on social justice programs, programs like education and health care.

You know, oftentimes, people really don't understand the United States, and my trip is to really explain to people that we believe in education for all; we believe in human rights and human dignity; we believe in prosperity. And the people of this country have been very generous in their help and support to people.

*Ms. Orozco.* But are you concerned about the influence of Mr. Chavez in the region?

*The President.* Each country is going to have to make up their own mind about the systems of government. To the extent that people feel like they can nationalize companies, I think is a mistake. I'm very much in favor of open systems, free press, the right for people to assemble and express their mind.

My trip, however, is all aimed at explaining to the people of South and Latin America that good foreign policy for the United States is to promote a prosperous and peaceful neighborhood.

#### *Cuba*

*Ms. Orozco.* Mr. President, today, have you the feeling that the policy applies to Cuba has done any good for the Cubans in the island?

*The President.* I think the worse thing that's happened for the Cuban people on the island is the fact that they're not free. And my position is, it is important for people to be free, and that if there is a transition to a new way in Cuba, it's got to be decided by the Cuban people. They should be allowed to freely assemble; they should be allowed to speak their minds; there ought to be strong rule of law. My position has been, and will continue to be, that a free Cuba is what is necessary for the people of Cuba.

*Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)/American Hostages*

*Ms. Orozco.* Thank you, Mr. President. There are three Americans held by the FARC now. Do you think President Uribe should achieve the humanitarian exchange, or should he insist in the military rescue?

*The President.* I trust President Uribe's judgment. And my message isn't to President Uribe; my message is to the FARC, and that is to give up these hostages. You're making it clear to the world the kind of people you are when you take innocent life and hold them hostage. And it's very sad for the families here in America. I'm deeply concerned about their fate.

*War on Terror*

*Ms. Orozco.* Mr. President, how long is the United States willing for the extradition of the narco-paramilitary terrorists that remains in Colombia, because they are part of the peace process?

*The President.* How long will we wait for the extradition process?

*Ms. Orozco.* Right.

*The President.* I'll work with the President on that. That will be a subject matter in my private discussions with President Uribe.

*Ms. Orozco.* Mr. President, do you think that with the military aid, President Uribe, with the help of United States, is going to be able to win the war against terrorism in Colombia?

*The President.* I think that a war against terror can be won by firm resolve, plus a alternative to repression, kidnaping, murder, and drugs. And one thing that President Uribe has done is laid out a vision. A lot of people have come in from the jungles, as you know, because they realize there's a better way of life.

We all have a lot of work to do in our respective countries to make sure every person has a good education and good, decent health care. But when people realize there is a better tomorrow, it's much easier for a man of peace, like Uribe, to deal with a difficult problem that he inherited.

*Colombia-U.S. Relations*

*Ms. Orozco.* President Bush, what is the best memory that you have of all this time working with Colombia, so close, having Colombia as one of your main allies?

*The President.* You know, I think it's the fact that I have a very honest relationship with President Uribe. He loves his country. He is a very strong proponent of Colombia and the people of Colombia. We don't agree on every single issue, of course, but I do respect his courage, and I respect the fact that he's done a good job in office. And I'm really looking forward to going back to Colombia. I've been, as President, once before. I can't wait to come back, this time, to your beautiful capital city.

*Ms. Orozco.* Thank you, Mr. President, for your time. We wish you a wonderful and successful trip.

*The President.* Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:45 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia. Ms. Orozco referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.



## Interview With Enrique Gratas of Univision March 7, 2007

### *Verdict in the Trial of I. Lewis Libby*

*Mr. Gratas.* Thank you very much, Mr. President, for this opportunity to talk about the trip and other issues. Yesterday somebody very familiar to the administration, Lewis “Scooter” Libby, was found guilty of the charges of perjury, lying, obstruction of justice. What is the impact of your administration of this verdict, or your personal feelings?

*The President.* First, this was a very serious matter. A jury of his peers analyzed the data very seriously and rendered a verdict that must be respected. Secondly, I personally am sad. I’m sad for Mr. Libby and his family. There was a sense of sadness to hear the verdict read for me. And finally, this is an ongoing legal matter, there is more to be done in the courts, and therefore, at this time, it’s inappropriate for the administration to be commenting beyond just what you asked me.

*Mr. Gratas.* Thank you. Some Senators, one in particular, Mr. Kennedy, is suggesting that you would pardon him. What’s your idea?

*The President.* Oh, I think—as I say, there’s an ongoing legal matter. There’s a lot of—if you listen carefully, the lawyers are talking about different avenues to approach this particular case. And so I’m pretty much going to stay out of it until the course—the case has finally run its final—the course it’s going to take.

### *President’s Upcoming Visit to Central and South America*

*Mr. Gratas.* Thank you. About your trip to Latin America: Some critics think that the administration, your administration has neglected—or prior administrations have neglected our Latin American neighbors. This is your fourth trip to Latin America.

*The President.* Yes, sir.

*Mr. Gratas.* What do you plan to accomplish?

*The President.* Well, first of all, I think I plan to accomplish, one—the main thing is to kind of disabuse people of the notion that America doesn’t care about the neighborhood. And it troubles me to think that some people in our neighborhood believe we don’t care. We do—I care deeply, personally, about Latin America, and our country does. And what I’m going to do is remind people, when I go down, that the American people have been very generous on bilateral aid. We’ve increased the aid since I’ve been President from \$800 million a year to \$1.6 billion. And there’s ongoing projects. And the important thing for people to understand is that the aid primarily goes for social justice programs—for education programs or health programs.

And the second thing I want to talk to people about is that—the importance of trade. The United States is a big market, and if you’re a poor farmer in parts of Central or South America, it seems like it makes sense to be able to sell your product into this market. Why? Because you may get a better price, and it means you can make a better living. And so trade, in my judgment, is positive, and it’s a way to help people be lifted out of poverty.

To summarize, a prosperous and peaceful Latin America is in the interest of the United States.

### *War Protests*

*Mr. Gratas.* Thank you. I’m sure you’re aware of some protests in the countries that you will visit, mainly because of the war in Iraq. Are you concerned about those demonstrations?

*The President.* I am proud to be going to a part of the world where people can demonstrate, where people can express their minds. It happens quite frequently



when I travel around the world. I understand people's concern about war. Nobody likes war. But I've had to make the decisions I made in order to not only secure our people but to deal with threats and to help people be free.

And so I'm not surprised; nor am I angry. It's a part of life when you're the President of the United States.

#### *Democracy in the Americas*

*Mr. Gratas.* Mr. President, in the last 15 months, leftist governments have been elected in many countries—I'll mention three, for example—last ones, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua. Are you worried about this tendency in Latin America?

*The President.* You know, the thing—first of all, I like the fact that the countries in our neighborhood are free and people get to decide who the governments—who is in the government. I like that. I think it's great. I would be worried if there are policies which ruin economies. That would worry me—in other words, if these governments make decisions that end up making it very difficult for people to make a living and/or for there to be more wealth throughout the society. I would be worried if there's no free press—in other words, if institutions that are necessary for a free society were undermined. I would be worried, of course, if just the basic needs of the people weren't met.

And so I applaud elections. I look forward to these governments responding to the real needs of the people.

#### *U.S. Foreign Policy*

*Mr. Gratas.* President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela has—on many occasions, has called you names; for example, liar, devil, terrorist—things like that. What is your opinion about him? And how do you respond to those insults?

*The President.* Well, I think it's really important for the people who are observing U.S. reactions and U.S. policy to understand that our policies are not aimed at

creating tensions, but our policies are aimed at improving people's lives. And that's really my message down there. There is a lot of anticipation about what my trip means, and it's nothing more than to say, we want to be your friends, and we've got a very strong policy of improving the lives of others.

I've been in politics a long time; there's a lot of name calling in politics. I've always found the best thing to do is to do what you think is right and move beyond the name calling.

#### *Immigration Reform*

*Mr. Gratas.* Mr. President, the United States—and this concerns Latin America in general, because most immigrants come from that continent—never before in this country have so many raids against immigrants. Are you planning before you leave office support a plan to legalize so many millions of undocumented workers?

*The President.* A better way to describe this is—in the Oval Office, I gave a speech about comprehensive immigration reform. And comprehensive immigration reform says that we ought to have a temporary-worker program that recognizes the fact that people are coming to do jobs that Americans aren't doing so they can do so on a legal basis, but not forever.

Secondly, we got an issue with 12 million people that are here—that are here illegally. Now, we are a country of law, and we should expect people to recognize our laws. But I do not think there ought to be instant legalization—that's called amnesty. I think that would be a mistake. But I also recognize, we can't kick people out of the country. And so I'm going to work with Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, and devise a way that is rational and fair.

The current immigration system is not working. It needs to be changed. It needs to be changed for the good of our country, and it needs to be changed for the good of the people that are in our country.

*Border Security/Mexico-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Gratas.* Mr. President, I have to ask this question. You're going to meet with President Calderon of Mexico. How are you going to resolve the difference between the construction of the wall on the border?

*The President.* Yes. I will explain to him that our Congress was very worried that not enough was being done on both sides of the border about preventing people from sneaking in. I will explain to him that the border is going to be secured two ways—one, by modernization—but it's more than fence. This is a long border. We're going to have Border Patrol agents, but instead of having a system that encourages people to sneak in, we ought to have a system that says, you're welcome to come in on a legal basis to do work America is not doing. I mean, it makes no sense to have a system that doesn't recognize reality.

Now, that doesn't mean automatic citizenship. There ought to be a different way to become a citizen. But it does say, there are people who are hungry in our neighbor-

hood who want to do work that Americans aren't doing, and there ought to be a legal process to do it so they don't have to sneak across the border. So the best way to secure the border is to have a comprehensive immigration plan.

And it's controversial here in America. But I firmly believe my position is a rational position and the right position, and I'm going to work hard with both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to get the bill this year.

*Mr. Gratas.* I have 14 more questions in Spanish, but I have no time. [Laughter] Thank you very much.

*The President.* Gracias, señor. [Laughter]

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:55 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President. Mr. Gratas referred to President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Juan Carlos Lopez of CNN En Espanol  
March 7, 2007

*President's Upcoming Visit to Central and South America*

*Mr. Lopez.* Thank you for speaking with us. And my first question is about your trip. You're going to Latin America, the longest trip an American President has taken to the region. Why now? Why at this moment when Democrats control the Congress and there are issues that might be in their hands?

*The President.* Well, thank you for asking that question. This is not my first trip since I've been the President. I have been in—traveling the neighborhood, I think, maybe three other times. But this is a long trip, and the reason why is, I want to remind

people throughout our neighborhood that America cares about them. And I bring a message of hope, a message that says, we care about the human condition and a message of accomplishment.

I don't know if you know this or not, but since I've been the President, our bilateral aid to Latin America has increased from 800 million to 1.6 billion. And the reason I say that is, the American taxpayer has been very generous about providing aid in our neighborhood, and most of that aid is social justice money; in other words, it's money for education and health.

And yet we don't get much credit for it. And I want the taxpayers—I want the

American people to get credit for their generosity in Central and South America.

*Jenna Bush*

*Mr. Lopez.* Your daughter Jenna is writing a book about her experiences in Central America. She will be focusing on a single mother with HIV. Has she been part of your eyes and ears in the region now that she's been there for quite a while?

*The President.* Well, she is. First of all, I'm very proud of her. She is an accomplished woman. She came back—I haven't seen a lot of her because she's been spending a lot of time in Central America as a UNICEF volunteer—but she came back and talked to me about this young girl that she has befriended. And she's deeply concerned about alienationists in our world, and is going to try to raise some money to help the education programs there.

To me, her book and her example is what America is all about. We've got compassionate people, and when we find suffering and see income disparity or see poverty, we'd like to help people lift themselves up.

*Trade*

*Mr. Lopez.* You've talked about the importance of free trade. Opponents of free trade in Latin America say it's one-sided and favors the U.S. Opponents of free trade in the U.S.—

*The President.* That's right.

*Mr. Lopez.* —say it's one-sided and favors those countries. So who's right, and what are you trying to do with this right now?

*The President.* They're both wrong. The opponents of free trade are wrong, in my judgment, because free trade—a good free trade agreement—and those agreements are signed by administrations and ratified by their elected assemblies—fair trade agreements are beneficial to both, and that's what we want.

All you've got to do is look at the trade between the United States and Mexico

after the free trade agreement we signed between Mexico, the United States, and Canada. And the amount of trade has gone up appreciably, significantly.

And I truly believe that one of the most effective ways to eliminate poverty is through free and fair trade. But there's no question, there's protectionist sentiments in the neighborhood and in our own Congress. And I—we got the CAFTA vote by one vote in the House of Representatives, and I'm going to have to work hard to get more free trade agreements through. But the fact that it's hard won't deter me from doing what I think is right.

*Mr. Lopez.* They say you're exporting American jobs.

*The President.* Well, that's what Americans say. I look at it differently. I think what we're doing is, we are creating opportunities for business people, small-business people, to be able to sell products in other markets, whether it be U.S. products into Central America or South America and vice versa.

I also know that trade enhances the wealth of all people. I mean, it is in our interests that Mexico generate wealth so that people can make a living. If you're a person deeply concerned about immigration—and as you know, this is a hot issue here in the United States—doesn't it make sense to encourage trade so that people can find a job at home rather than feel compelled to try to find work elsewhere?

And trade is—you can track the success of a trade agreement—and I repeat again, the success of the trade agreement with Mexico.

*Alternative Fuel Sources/Brazil*

*Mr. Lopez.* Brazil, you're going. Ethanol seems to be at the top of the agenda. How important is this ethanol? Some analysts say that you will bring Brazil closer to the U.S.; you will develop ethanol plants in Central America and have ethanol for U.S. consumption.

*The President.* First of all, the alternative fuel issue is a huge issue for the United States. I mean, we're too dependent on oil. It's in our national security interests and our economic security interests and for environmental concerns to develop alternatives to gasoline. Ethanol is the—is what we're investing a lot in here in the United States to do that. Brazil has been very successful, so it gives us common ground to talk.

I like the idea of helping Central America, by the way, develop an ethanol industry. I think it would be good for their national security and economic security interests. But my discussion with Brazil is more than just ethanol. Brazil is a very important country in South America. We will be talking about the Doha round of global trade. I'll be talking with my friend President Lula about international matters. Brazil is an international player, and the United States looks forward to working with Brazil to promote peace.

*President's Upcoming Visit to Central and South America*

*Mr. Lopez.* Are you—is free trade—is this trip a way to show what the U.S. is doing and counter what other leaders might be doing? For example, Hugo Chavez, who called you the devil and says many things, said he will be in Argentina on Friday.

*The President.* The trip really is to remind people that we care. I do worry about the fact that some say: "Well, the United States hasn't paid enough attention to us"; or, "The United States really isn't anything more than worried about terrorism." And when, in fact, the record has been a strong record.

And I will be going to promote—to look at programs that are—have benefited from the generosity of the American people. And so it's—I say, our country is a compassionate country. And there's significant connections between people inside America and people outside America. And it's in our interest that we promote those ties,

and we promote—and I remind people about the generosity of our country.

It's not a given, by the way, that people will continue to spend—that the Congress will spend money. And therefore, it's important for me to show that we're not only spending money but the effects of spending money, the positive things that are happening as we help elevate people's lives.

*Verdict in the Trial of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby*

*Mr. Lopez.* Mr. President, I want to ask you about the conviction of Lewis "Scooter" Libby. Your critics are saying that his conviction makes the promise that you made to bring honor and dignity back to the White House, that this promise will go unmet.

*The President.* Yes, first of all, this was a lengthy trial on a serious matter, and a jury of his peers convicted him. And we've got to respect that conviction.

Secondly, this is an ongoing legal matter. In other words, there's more legal procedures to take place, and, at this time, it's inappropriate for me or the administration to be issuing comments about this serious matter.

On a personal note, I was sad. I was sad for a man who had worked in my administration, and particularly sad for his family.

*Situation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center*

*Mr. Lopez.* As Commander in Chief, what do you say to the veterans who have gone through a very hard time at Walter Reed and other hospitals? There are commissions; there are solutions that are being proposed. But, what do you, as Commander in Chief, say to those veterans in—

*The President.* I say, anything other than excellent care is unacceptable. And I've been to Walter Reed a lot. There's some fantastic doctors and nurses and healers. And yet we found that there was some

substandard care in part of that organization, and we're going to correct it.

And I put the Commission together—a series of commissions, to make sure that there—that we fully understand the truth, fully elevate the problems, so we can solve them.

I had Bob Dole and Donna Shalala in today. They're chairmen of this very important commission I put together that will analyze the care our soldiers get from the battlefield into the Defense Department, then into the Veterans, and then into community. And I want to make sure there is—that is a seamless transition of excellent care.

*Mr. Lopez. Muchas gracias, Senor Presidente.*

*The President. Por nada.*

NOTE: The interview was taped at 12:06 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President; and former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Coauthors, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. Mr. Lopez referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran

*March 8, 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the Iran emergency declared on March 15, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2007.

The crisis between the United States and Iran constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Iran that led to the declaration of a national emergency on March 15, 1995, has not been resolved.

The actions and policies of the Government of Iran are contrary to the interests of the United States in the region and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Iran and maintain in force comprehensive sanctions against Iran to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
March 8, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 9. The related notice of March 8 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.



Remarks at Petrobras Transporte S.A. Facility in Sao Paulo, Brazil  
March 9, 2007

*Bom dia.* Thank you for your hospitality, Mr. President. It's good to be back in your beautiful country. Laura and I really have been looking forward to the trip to Sao Paulo. It's one of the world's great cities. And I have been looking forward to our conversations. You know, Brazil and the United States are the two largest democracies in our hemisphere, and we've got a lot in common, and we've got a lot to do together to improve the lives of millions in our respective countries and, hopefully, in neighboring countries as well.

I find it really interesting that much of our talks on this visit are going to be centered on energy. It's a new kind of energy. I don't think 20 years ago, an American President or a Brazilian President would have thought: Let's see; see if we can find common ground on energy production. And yet, as the President noted, that we had a long discussion in Brasilia about alternative fuels. And now we're at a plant that's actually manufacturing alternative fuels on an economic basis that has got the capacity to change our respective countries in the world. And I, like the President, am very upbeat about the potential of ethanol and biodiesel. And that's why we're here.

I do want to thank Sergio Gabrielli, who is the president of Petrobras, for his hospitality. I appreciate very much your briefing. And I want to thank all the workers here for greeting us. I want to thank the folks from Ford and General Motors who are here. It's nice of them to show up to see the American President. I appreciate your willingness to be innovative and to meet market demands with products that actually matter, and in this case, flex-fuel vehicles.

People have wondered why the President of the United States would be so interested in diversification of our energy supply, and here are the reasons. One, if you're dependent upon oil from overseas, you have

a national security issue. In other words, dependency upon energy from somewhere else means that you're dependent upon the decisions from somewhere else. And so as we diversify away from the use of gasoline by using ethanol, we're really diversifying away from oil.

Secondly, dependency upon oil creates an economic problem for not only the United States but anybody else who imports oil. In a globalized world, if the demand for oil goes up in China or India, it runs up the price of gasoline in our respective countries. And therefore, diversification away from oil product is in the economic interests of our respective countries.

And finally, as the President noted, it is—we all feel incumbent to be good stewards of the environment. And it just so happens that ethanol and biodiesel will help improve the quality of the environment in our respective countries.

And so I'm very much in favor of promoting the technologies that will enable ethanol and biodiesel to remain competitive and, therefore, affordable to the people in our respective countries and around our neighborhoods.

One of the things I like, as the President noted, is that a good ethanol policy and good alternative fuel policy actually leads to more jobs, not less. In other words, at this plant, there are jobs. But as the President noted, when you're growing your way out of dependence on oil, you're dependent upon people who work the land. And the distribution of wealth, the distribution of opportunity to farmers, particularly the smaller farmers in our respective countries, will enable the economy to be more on firm foundation.

And so, Mr. President, your vision is absolutely correct. I appreciate so very much



the fact that here you—much of your energy is driven by sugarcane. It frankly gives Brazil a tremendous advantage in the world markets. Sugarcane is by far the most efficient raw material for the production of ethanol. The President has wisely invested in technologies that will increase your yields per acre, and that makes a lot of sense. In America, we've got a little different issue: we don't have a lot of sugarcane. And so our stock material, our base material for ethanol thus far, has been corn.

I appreciate very much the innovation that's taking place here in Brazil. I mean, if you're the leader in ethanol, I believe you'll continue to come up with technologies that should be available for others. Your H-BIO process for refining biodiesel from soy and other agricultural products is such an example. In other words, you'll be able to use regular refinery as a result of the technological developments that you've done here. And that makes a lot of sense. And I congratulate you, Mr. President, and, Petrobras, for staying on the leading edge of technological change.

A lot of people wonder whether or not it makes sense to develop an alternative-fuel infrastructure if the automobile doesn't stay up with it. Well, most people in America don't know that there are millions of flex-fuel vehicles on our street today; just people don't know it. In other words, we have now got the capacity to manufacture automobiles in a way that meets the demands for ethanol. Flex-fuel means you can either use gasoline or alternative fuels—your choice. And in America, we are—that technology is available. So my fellow citizens shouldn't fear the development of an alternative source of energy industry because the consumer has got the capacity to buy an automobile that will meet those new productions.

I'm very optimistic that America can benefit from alternative energy sources, so optimistic that I laid out an ambitious goal for our country, and that is to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent over 10

years. In other words, we have a mandated fuel standard of 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels to be used by 2017. That is now seven times more the amount of alternative fuels we're using. Right now we're using about 5 billion gallons of ethanol. I believe that the technologies will be such that America will be consuming 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels. And that's important for our country. It is a commitment to becoming less dependent on oil, and it's a commitment to be better stewards of the environment.

In my budget, Mr. President, I proposed to Congress that we invest \$1.6 billion over 10 years on additional research to make sure that we can have alternative fuel stocks to make ethanol. Just so you know, in the last years—so long as I've been the President—we spent about \$12 billion on new technologies that will enable us to achieve economic independence, as well as be better stewards of the environment.

There's a lot we can do together. I appreciate so very much the idea of Brazil and America sharing research and development opportunities. You've got great scientists; we've got great scientists. It makes sense for us to collaborate for the good of mankind. And part of our initiative is that we are going to work together efficiently and to cooperate on research and development.

I also think the President's idea of helping others realize the benefits of alternative fuels makes a lot of sense. And so we applaud the Inter-America Development Bank, its efforts to try to get loans and capital into countries that could benefit from alternative sources of energy. I'm particularly anxious to work with the President on helping Central America become less dependent on oil, become energy self-sufficient. It's in the interest of the United States that there be a prosperous neighborhood. And one way to help spread prosperity in Central America is for them to become energy producers, not become—

not remain dependent on others for their energy sources.

And finally, the President mentioned the fact that at the United Nations, there was a International Biofuels Forum. What he didn't tell you: it was his idea. And I applaud the fact, Mr. President, that you put that idea out. It makes a lot of sense for countries like China and India to understand the potentials of alternative sources of energy. And I believe that Brazil and the United States has got the capacity to help lead the way toward that better day.

So, Mr. President, it has been a great first meeting here. I appreciate the fact that you're about to buy me lunch. I'm kind of hungry. [*Laughter*] Looking forward to eating some of that good Brazilian food.

But in the meantime, I hope the citizens of Brazil, like the citizens of the United States, are as optimistic about the future as these two Presidents are. And one reason we're optimistic is because we see the bright and real potential for our citizens being able to use alternative sources of energy that will promote the common good.

So, Mr. President, thank you for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's News Conference With President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil in Sao Paulo

March 9, 2007

*President Lula da Silva.* There's more journalists here than at the Oscar—[*laughter*—although the artists aren't quite as good looking as the ones that get Oscars.

Your Excellency, Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America; the members of the North American and Brazilian delegations; Governor of Sao Paulo, Jose Serra; our dear president of Petrobras, Mr. Gabrielli; ministers; journalists; my friends; ladies and gentlemen:

This second visit by President Bush to Brazil in little more than 1 year is another step in intensifying dialog between our Governments and our countries. This is a dialog which began even before I took office, when President Bush received me in a visit in December 2002 at the White House. During the frequent meetings and phone calls we have had since then, our relations have always been characterized by extreme frankness, mutual respect, and a constructive spirit.

Our societies are multiethnic. Many cultures and ideas live together within them. They were founded on the principles of pluralism, tolerance, and respect for diversity. The fact that our Governments respect each other, mutually, explains the excellent moment that relations between Brazil and the United States are going through. It also reveals the great potential for cooperation between our countries, if we are able to continue building common objectives.

This has been the basis of the conversations we held today, when we went over our broad bilateral agenda and evaluated how we could best work on regional and multilateral issues. The relationship between Brazil and the U.S. historically has gone beyond individual governments at the head of either of our countries. One proof of this is the broad range of relations amongst business leaders, representatives of civil society, and the citizens of our two countries.

The United States are our largest individual trade partner and the largest investor in Brazil. During my first mandates in Government, trade between our countries increased over 50 percent; U.S. investments in Brazil doubled over the past decade. Brazilian companies are more and more active inside the U.S. economy. They are, alongside the major Brazilian community that lives there, are contributing to generate jobs and income in that country.

Ladies and gentlemen, Brazil is proud of having contributed to the decision by the U.S. Government to increase the share of biofuels in its energy mix. I recall the enthusiasm with which President Bush was first exposed in the meeting we had in Brasilia in 2005 to Brazil's success story in terms of biofuel.

Here in Brazil, we have an extremely successful program, considered a model, which came out of the investment of over 30 years in research and development. It's a program which brings together respect for the environment with the preservation and intensification of the food security of our society. It's a program which has a major social impact because of its capacity to generate jobs, to strengthen family farming, and to distribute income.

This is a field where our two countries can cooperate. The memorandum of understanding on biofuels, which our ministers signed today, is a decisive step in that direction. Bringing together their efforts, the U.S. and Brazil can further push the democratization of energy and bring biofuels to all.

One of the most complex tasks that we face will be to assure access to major consuming centers. Brazil hopes that the ethanol market will be benefited by free trade, free of protectionism. That is the only way that the fuel of the future will be able to promote sustainable development. It also benefit poor and developing countries, by making trade a factor of prosperity for all. This will be a challenge about which I spoke at length with President Bush. We

need to eliminate imbalances that still constrain world trade and that aggravate the asymmetries of today's world.

I expressed to the President my feeling that we are closer than ever to a successful conclusion of the negotiations of the Doha round. All should come out winning, with an ambitious and balanced agreement, especially the poorest countries. More opportunities for growth and for development would be created in the poorest regions of the world. International trade in agriculture would increase, thereby reducing poverty, generating jobs and income in the least favored countries and regions.

That is why I repeated to President Bush my willingness to participate in a meeting in any part of the world to bringing together leaders if this can help us overcome the final difficulties between us and a truly historic agreement.

My dear Mr. President, your visit to Brazil coincides with an exceptional moment that our continent is going through, particularly South America. The dictatorships which our region suffered from for two decades are no more than a painful memory of the past. All South American Governments have arisen from free elections with broad, popular participation. All of them are working in projects for growth with income distribution, capable of putting an end to terrible social inequalities that we have inherited and which has been aggravated by macroeconomic adventures in the past. We are all finally involved in a project for South American integration.

The countries in our region have associated their destiny with that of the MERCOSUR and that of the South American Community of Nations. We know that integration is the best pathway to strengthen democracy and to achieve regional prosperity. It creates wealth and promotes development. It guarantees a more sovereign presence of our region in the world. Our integration is taking place amongst independent nations, where diversity and tolerance are also factors of strength.

We respect the political and economic options of each country. This has allowed us to make notable advances: expanding trade, carrying out infrastructure works, strengthening our energy security, the well-being of our societies, and bringing closer together peoples that will be able to move down their own roads. Integration also opens the way for investments from outside the region in the area of infrastructure and will have a multiplying effect on our economies, dynamizing all forms of exchange.

Mr. President, redemocratization and the conquering of political freedom were not enough to keep millions of Brazilians and Latin Americans out of a situation of extreme poverty. That is why all governments in our region have implemented programs to develop our countries and to fight social exclusion. We, the Presidents, must think about the lives of those people who suffer the most and who, in addition to having democracy to elect their rulers, also have the right to health, to education, to housing, to public safety, to bring up their children as citizens. We all know that political democracy prospers when we have economic and social development, when we eradicate poverty, when we fight exclusion and social inequities.

That is why, my dear President Bush, your visit to Brazil—second visit in such a short time—opens the possibility for the U.S. and Brazilian peoples, and I believe all Latin American peoples, to have the prospect that we are not far away from being able to build a new standard of relations amongst nations, to be able to discuss freely and sovereignly about how rich countries can help poorer countries to develop, and more important than all of that, to assure that democracy will be the reason why the benefits of wealth, the building of wealth itself, and the social benefits that the people need, can fully justify the hard fight to win democracy in our continent.

President Bush, I would like to conclude by saying to you that Brazil is aware of the meaning of the integration of South

America; Brazil is aware of the meaning of the integration of Latin America, just as Brazil is aware of the meaning coming closer—of Brazil coming closer to Africa, and also the U.S. coming closer to Africa. I think the U.S. and Brazil, working together, could build some—carry out some projects that could have the meaning for poorer countries to be able to provide certainty that people would not see in richer countries, just exploiters, but to see richer countries in the world as something else.

And that is why the Doha round is important. That's why the WTO agreement is important. And I see that your negotiating minister is here, the USTR is here; my minister is here, and I think that we should give them one single order: Come to an agreement as soon as possible. Because if the U.S. and Brazil come to an understanding, it's easier for us to convince those who are still not participating in that agreement.

I want to thank you and say that this relation between Brazil and the U.S., which is a longstanding relation consecrated by decades of time, will continue to be strengthened to the extent that we respect each other, to the extent that each respects the sovereign political decision of each state, and to the extent that we are able to build together projects that can help other countries to pull themselves out of the situation of poverty they're in.

Thank you very much, President Bush, for your visit to Brazil.

*President Bush.* I was really looking forward to coming back and visiting with you because every time we have a conversation about mutual concerns and opportunities, it is a constructive and positive dialog.

I respect President Lula. Obviously, the people of Brazil respect him. After all, you won by a landslide election, and I congratulate you for your election, yet was not—had not been back to your country since the elections. I think it's great to be able to say a good friend won reelection because it confirms the fact that democracy is alive

and well in Brazil. And Brazil serves as such a great example for other democracies about what is possible and what's important.

Thanks very much for the trip to the biofuels plant today. I think it's interesting, as I said there at the plant, that we spent a lot of time and a lot of conversations on how we can work together to promote alternative sources of energy. It's in the interests of the United States that we promote alternative sources of energy. And Brazil has showed what's possible.

And so, Mr. President, I appreciate very much your leadership on this issue. I talked to my country about the need to reduce our gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years, that we will have 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels by the year 2017. I think it's an achievable goal. You have shown what is possible. I look forward to sharing research between our countries. I look forward to continuing to explore opportunities.

I share your concerns about the people in democracy not receiving the benefits of democracy. I think you're very wise to recognize that democracy is only as strong as the people feel that the society benefits them. Part of the message on my trip to South America—and eventually Guatemala as well as Mexico—is to say that the American people care deeply about social justice, that we believe in education and health, that we believe in supporting programs that help lift people out of their current conditions, and we want to help.

Thank you very much for our strong discussion on trade. It turns out America and Brazil have—are in the center of the WTO debate; that if we're despondent on the trade talks, a lot of the world will be despondent on the trade talks; that if we're unable to work together on the WTO talks, the world can't work together on the WTO talks. And that's why our conversation was vital, because success of the Doha round for the WTO is necessary for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is the most effective antipoverty program is trade.

And so I commit to you the same thing that you have just committed, and that is, we will work together. We will lock our trade ministers in a room—[laughter]—all aimed at advancing this important round.

I share your optimism about what can get done, and it's going to take a lot of work. I caution other countries, though, that if the United States and Brazil agree, that does not let them off the hook in terms of making the concessions necessary so that everybody is a winner in these trade negotiations.

One thing that I strongly believe in is that I think America needs to be more open to students coming to our country. And I talk to Secretary Rice about that a lot, and I hope a lot of Brazilian students are coming to the United States of America. I hope—I think you'll find it to be a fantastic opportunity to study and learn. And it's in our interests that we have people come and see what we're like, to have people come and see the compassion of the American people.

We talked about foreign policy in our discussions. We spent time on Central America, and one of the messages we will send to our Central American friends is that one way to help develop your countries is for you to adopt ethanol and biodiesel industries.

We talked about Haiti, and I congratulate the President for his strong leadership in accepting the responsibilities for helping Haiti. Brazil has been a strong leader in helping provide stabilization and providing troops. I know it's a strain, Mr. President, but you made a tough choice, and it's a humanitarian choice, and it's a decent choice. And the people of Brazil ought to be proud of your leadership on this important issue.

We talked about Africa. The President shares deep concerns about Africa, as do I. We talked about how we can work together on specific projects aimed at helping people. And so our foreign ministries will talk about specific programs—a Brazilian-



American joint venture to help eliminate poverty and lift people's lives up.

I thank you for your leadership. People don't understand this, probably, but I spent a lot of time on world affairs, and the President of this country is highly respected around the world. People listen to him. He speaks clearly, but he speaks with a set of values that are noble.

And so, Mr. President, I'm so glad you're here—I mean, so glad I am here. I'm looking forward to welcoming you to the United States later on this month at Camp David, to be able to continue our dialog and our discussion about how we can work together for the common good.

Thank you.

*President Lula da Silva.* Thank you very much. As we agreed earlier, we will have two questions from Brazilian journalists and two from U.S. journalists. I'll open the floor for the first question from—[inaudible]—from the Brazilian Television Record Station.

### *Trade*

Q. How could we believe that these possibilities, these commitments that you're taking on to negotiate opening up for the Doha round will be possible, since you have a very recent experience in negotiating FTAA, which did not work out? So what's the difference now in trade negotiations? Will you be trying to speak the same language, despite the difference between Portuguese and English, but try to speak the same language to the rest of the world that these two countries are willing to negotiate? Why is this negotiation at this time different? And perhaps your meeting in Washington will be another chance to set a deadline for the negotiations. Maybe by the end of this month, you can have a commitment.

*President Bush.* First, I think deadlines are a little dangerous when two countries set them, and we're dealing with a lot of other countries. Remember, we can agree, but if other major trading partners don't agree, then all of a sudden, we have set

ourselves up for failure. I'm an optimist that we can get it done. Therefore, I think we need to be careful about creating the conditions that will—for the world to say, "Oh look, they failed."

Since we discussed the FTAA—and the United States has entered into a series of agreements, as have Brazil—in other words, there's a lot of bilateral and regional trade agreements going on. And so just because we had difficulty getting the FTAA done, should not discourage one from trying to do something globally. I mean, after all, there's been a lot of successes on the trade front, just not on that particular trade front.

And no question it was hard on the FTAA, and no question it's going to be hard on Doha. But the thing that's important about Doha is that it is—it really is an opportunity to—for the world to get together to help eradicate world poverty. And there's a compelling reason to keep trying.

And so I'm not the least bit discouraged by past failures, nor am I overly optimistic because we've had a lot of successes in trade agreements. I am realistic in knowing that it's hard work, but it's going to require the leadership of Brazil and the United States to stay at it and work hard and see if we can't reach a positive agreement.

*President Lula da Silva.* Well, my dear friend, Celso, first of all, to achieve an agreement between nations is not a simple thing to do. The complexity of economic problems, as well as political and social problems involved in final decisions, may have extraordinary or disastrous results. I think that we have talked a lot about the Doha round in recent months, and I think that we are moving. We're moving on solid ground to find a chance for the so-called "G-point" to come to an agreement. I am convinced of the willingness, as President Bush said, if Brazil and the U.S. find—both find a point of equilibrium where we can make offers to other countries—because the U.S. had an advantage in this negotiation. There's a lot of people that depend on the negotiations from the U.S.,



but they negotiate in their own name. We, in Brazil, have to negotiate together with the G-20. And the European Union is a group of countries. So you can see that we, in addition to convincing the richer partners, we also have to convince our poorer partners to accept an agreement.

And we accept that challenge; we take it on. We're taking on that challenge because at this point, the success of negotiations is no longer just economic in nature. It's not just a matter of who is going to win or lose economically; the problem now is eminently political. The problem now is whether, as world leaders, we will be competent or not to decide, for better or worse, on the future of millions of human beings that depend on this agreement. I'm convinced that we'll get there.

Second, we cannot compare what we're negotiating now in the Doha round with conversations on FTAA. Of course, you covered my 2002 campaign, and you saw how many speeches I made against the FTAA, back in 2002 when I was first elected. Me and almost all the Presidential candidates running for office in South America were against it, because we believed in the strengthening of MERCOSUR. And we achieved that. We believed, first of all, in strengthening the integration of South America as a first priority. And today, Brazil's largest share of trade is with the rest of Latin America.

This is a demonstration that we took major steps, and that does not mean that we cannot discuss as many bilateral agreements are as possible between Brazil and the U.S., other countries—U.S. and other countries with Brazil. Concretely, when you're negotiating, the numbers get built, and no country wants to be the first one to make an offer. It's just like playing cards; every card you put on the table is spent; you can't take it back. And nobody wants to make the first offer.

Of course, President Bush has his offer up his sleeve; Brazil has one in its vest pocket; the European Union has one stuck

someplace. And others don't want to even play. But I'm certain that he and I do have our cards ready, because we want to play. So at some point, we're going to put our cards on the table, and we're going to see whether we'll be capable or not of coming to an agreement.

I want to say that I am convinced that we can make an agreement. It certainly will not be everything that we could do, but will do enough to continue encouraging the rest of the world, especially the poorest countries, that they will have a chance in the 21st century that they did not have in the 20th century.

#### *Central and South America-U.S. Relations*

Q. Mr. President Bush, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela has been using his country's vast oil wealth to court a whole new generation of Latin Americans. You pretty much avoided using his name. He certainly used yours a lot, including saying earlier today, "Go home, *gringo*." Do you think a visit to Latin America and agreements like the one you forged today will help counter his influence or just give him more ammunition?

And to President Lula da Silva, were you able to persuade President Bush to help you on getting our Congress to lower the sugar ethanol tariffs?

*President Bush.* I'll answer that one for him; he can answer it too. It's not going to happen. The law doesn't end until 2009; then the Congress will accept it—will look at it when the law ends.

You may want to expand on that answer.

As to my trip, I bring the good will of the United States to South America and Central America. That's why I'm here. I don't think America gets enough credit for trying to help improve people's lives. And so my trip is to explain, as clearly as I can, that our Nation is generous and compassionate; that when we see poverty, we care; that when we see illiteracy, we want to do something about it; that when we find there to be a deficiency in health care, we'll help to the extent we can.

I'm sure most people here in South America don't understand the United States has doubled our bilateral aid to countries in Central and South America since I've been the President. It's gone from 800 [\$800 million]\* to 1.6 billion last year. And I say that not to just brag about dollars, but it's a starting point for people to understand this Nation is committed to this prospect. A prosperous neighborhood is in the interest of the United States; a peaceful neighborhood is in our interests.

And so we fully understand that if there's illiteracy, it will affect our country eventually. Plus, the American people have got a great compassion for human rights and human dignity. I'm going to go see some programs here after this press conference, all aimed at lifting the lives of citizens, all aimed at focusing on individuals and how best can they be helped.

There is a lot of investment in the region, as the President noted. Oh, for some, that's just a fancy word, but for others who benefit from the investment through jobs, it's a central part of their life. And so my trip down here is to remind our country that South America and Latin America are good places to invest, particularly in countries that adhere to rule of law and are transparent and believe in the fundamentals of freedom.

And so I'm reminding people that which is pretty evident, that a lot of people know that there are direct ties between our countries. There's a lot of remittances from the United States back to the region. Why? Because there are people working for a living in our country that are sending money home to support their families. So this trip is to remind people of the ties that bind us and the importance of this region for the future of the United States. And I'm real glad to be here, and I appreciate the hospitality.

Get another question moving.

---

\* White House correction.

#### *U.S. Foreign Policy/Trade*

*Q. [Inaudible]* My question is for President Bush, is whether you agree that in recent years, the U.S. really had its back turned to Latin America? And if so, what could be done to make up for the losses in the past, in the last 2 years of your Presidency?

And to ask President Lula, as well, yesterday you criticized U.S. subsidies as nefarious. So if you really decided to put the two ministers in a room to have an agreement, did you receive any signals that it's possible to reduce domestic subsidies in the U.S. to their farmers?

*President Bush.* Well, I strongly disagree with your description of U.S. foreign policy. That may be what people say, but it's certainly not what the facts bear out. I just told you that our bilateral aid package has doubled.

Again, I fully recognize that money alone is not a sign of compassion or care, but it's money aimed at helping people improve their lives. It's social justice money. Most of the bilateral aid money that we spend goes to education programs, health programs.

I'm going to—when I go to Guatemala, I'm going to go to a—I'm going to go outside the capital and see our military building health clinics. The USS *Comfort* is coming to the region to provide care for thousands of people who need health care. We train teachers; we train doctors; we train nurses. And so the characterization that our back has been turned is just—it's not borne out by the facts. It may be a perception, but the facts certainly dispel that.

And that's why I've come. I've been in your great country twice in a very quick period of time, all aiming at sending the message that we care about our neighborhood a lot. And relations between our Governments are strong; we have an open relationship; the dialog is friendly. There's not

100-percent agreement on issues, but, nevertheless, issues are brought to the table in a constructive manner. And it's amazing what you can do when it comes to solving problems, if there's a feeling of mutual respect and a priority.

It's easy to kind of dismiss the United States foreign policy in the region, but think about this: There are millions of people living in our country from the region. The United States is a multicultural society. We've got people from all over South and Central America living in the United States—many there legally, many there illegally, which, by the way, argues for a comprehensive immigration reform plan that teaches people with respect and dignity. It's one of the big issues that I put forth to our Congress, to get a comprehensive immigration plan done.

I appreciate your question, and I'm glad to be down here to be able to answer it.

*President Lula da Silva.* In terms of the question from the U.S. journalist, he asked whether I was capable of convincing President Bush to get the tariffs reduced. If I were able to—if I had that capacity for persuasion that you think I might have, who knows, I might have convinced President Bush to do so many other things that I couldn't even mention here. [Laughter]

This is a process. There's no difference between—in negotiating processes like this and normal negotiations between human beings. There's a time you look a person in the face and say, "I don't like that guy." And a few months later, they might be your best friend, and you were wrong when you said that you didn't like them. So I don't think that a country will give up on the things that protect their trade because someone else is asking. It's a process of convincing that has to take place, a lot of talking. And the day will come when that conversation will mature, and then we can find a common denominator that will allow us to come to an agreement.

In terms of the journalist from the O Globlo newspaper, your question, today we

have a problem of what's at stake. I learned from my Minister Celso Amorim that if we draw a triangle, we could show you what the difficulties are in the negotiations we have. What do countries want from the European Union? They want it to facilitate access to their agricultural market for poorer countries to export to them, including the U.S. wants to export to them.

What do we want from the U.S.? We want them to reduce subsidies that they pay in their domestic market. And what does the U.S. and the European Union—what do they want from us Brazilians and other countries in the G-20? That we have greater flexibility and access to markets for industrial products and services. That's what's at stake; that's what's in the game.

If we are intelligent enough and competent enough to pull out of our vest pockets the numbers that are still held secret, as top state secrets, then we will find a common ground. Don't ask me what the number is. If I knew, I wouldn't tell you, because if I knew, then I'd establish a paradigm, and he'd say that I should back off a little bit. So that's why these numbers are held back, though—as a soccer player, when they're going to kick a penalty goal, they never say which corner they're going to try to kick into. But things are happening. They're underway. Of course there's pessimists about everything in the world. That's no problem.

And the third thing I would like to say to President Bush, if you'd allow me to say one thing: Over time, I have become more and more convinced—and I've said this to my colleagues in CARICOM and Central America, I've said this to countries in Africa—that we actually do not need to be discussing aid to those countries. What we need to discuss is something that's even more important than aid. We need to build projects together, projects that mean development, and that after some time, we can see the concrete results of the money that's been invested. Because in some countries over the years, aid money doesn't always

lead to concrete results because you don't control how it's spent that well.

I'm convinced that in the biofuel programs, if we are mature enough and have the political understanding and can carry out joint projects with other countries with the U.S., involving South Africa, China, India, European countries, and if we fund projects to produce biodiesel and ethanol in poorer countries, and then the richer countries buy biodiesel that's produced there, then we'll see that investments put into those countries have produced results and, even more important, generated jobs. Because nothing gives more citizenry to a man or a woman than to know that they have a job, and to take some money home at the end of the month.

I think that's what we could do. And I said to President Bush: "We could do that for Central America. We could build development projects for poorer countries." Then after 5, 10 years, we'll be able to see that something was done there that's generating wealth. That, in my opinion, is the real way, the major way that richer countries can aid poorer countries.

#### *Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, the Iraqis hold their regional conference tomorrow. What are your expectations for it? And are you now willing to talk directly with Iran and Syria at this meeting?

*President Bush.* The expectations are that nations in the neighborhood, plus nations of the world, recognize that democracy can lead to peace, and that when 12 million people vote to live in a free society, it's in all our interests to help them realize the blessings of a free society. That's the expectations—in other words, a commitment to helping this young democracy survive and thrive.

Our message to the Syrians and Iranians won't change at that meeting, that I've stated publicly, which is, we expect you to help this young democracy. And we will defend ourselves and the people in Iraq from the—from weapons being shipped in to cause harm; that we will protect ourselves and help the Iraqi people protect themselves against those who would murder the innocent to achieve political objectives.

And it's a positive meeting, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters], particularly for Prime Minister Maliki and his Government, in that countries will now be coming to a rather formal meeting to express support. And it's positive because I think it's going to be important for the Iraqi people who have been suffering a lot to hear from other countries in the world that say: "We embrace your courage; we embrace your willingness to take risk for freedom." And we'll see how it goes, but I'm happy to have supported the Prime Minister's request that this meeting take place.

Mr. President, thanks. Your press conferences are nice. I appreciate the Brazilian press for coming. Glad the American press behaved okay. [Laughter] Be careful, they may spend a lot of time at the bars around here. [Laughter] Yes.

Okay, thanks.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:27 p.m. at the Hilton Sao Paulo Morumbi. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. President Lula da Silva referred to Ambassador Susan C. Schwab, U.S. Trade Representative. President Lula da Silva spoke in Portuguese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Prior to a Discussion With Members of the Community in Sao Paulo

March 9, 2007

Well, first I'd like to thank Flavio for his hospitality. Laura and I are so thrilled to be in Brazil. We love your beautiful country, but I also love the fact that there are people who are deeply concerned about the plight of the least of us. And I am very proud of my country's contribution to helping social entrepreneurs helping people help others. I believe you can change society one heart at a time; that's what I believe. But I know in order to do so, it requires people who are willing to make sacrifice.

Flavio is a—runs a place of love and compassion, all aimed at being a part of that social fabric that helps heal the broken heart and provides hope for the future.

And so I thank you all for joining Laura and me. I'm really looking forward to hearing about what you have done, how others

can help. But the main reason I'm here is to thank you. We're all members of God's family, and when one of us hurts, we all should hurt. And there are a lot of hurting people in the world, a lot of hurting people in Brazil. And the people in the United States care.

So I'm honored to be with you. I look forward to the roundtable. Flavio, I guess this is your place, so you start, right?

*[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; the discussion continued, however, and no transcript was provided.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:41 p.m. at Meninos do Morumbi. In his remarks, he referred to Flavio Pimenta, president and director, Meninos do Morumbi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Defense Supplemental Budget Revisions

March 9, 2007

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed revisions to the FY 2007 Department of Defense supplemental request proposed in my FY 2008 Budget. This revised request would better align resources based on the assessment of military commanders to achieve the goal of establishing Iraq and Afghanistan as democratic and secure nations that are free of terrorism. Overall, the discretionary budget authority in my

FY 2007 supplemental proposal would not be increased by these requests.

The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 10.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting  
Proposed Budget Cancellations  
March 9, 2007

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2007 request to cancel \$3.1 billion of funding from lower-priority Federal programs and excess funds. This request would offset fully the funds needed to address the \$3.1 billion FY 2007 funding shortfall for the Department of Defense to implement the recommendations of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The proposed cancellations would affect the Departments of Agriculture,

Commerce, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, and Transportation, as well as the Corps of Engineers.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 10.

The President's News Conference With President Tabare Vazquez of  
Uruguay in Anchorena Park, Uruguay  
March 10, 2007

*President Vazquez.* Mr. President of the United States of America, Madam Secretary of State, members of the delegation visiting us, Ministers of State, the Ambassador of the United States of America in Uruguay, the Ambassador of Uruguay in the United States of America, ladies and gentlemen, journalists: Mr. President, I would like to welcome you together with the very prestigious delegation that is with you. Mr. President, you represent a people that is a friend of the Uruguayan people. We have historical and friendly relations uniting these two countries, these two peoples. These are firm, respectful relations with solidarity.

In this sense, I would like to give an example with two elements which I think are of significance. First of all, Mr. President, thousands of Uruguayan citizens live in the United States of America and have found in that country standards of living that they did not have in our country, and that forced them to migrate. They bettered

themselves there; they have their own families, their work; they have studied; they have health and education for their children. Therefore, this is a very clear element of what the United States people has given to the Uruguayan people.

Undoubtfully, there are many Uruguayans who are still waiting, pending legalization of the situation in this country, but I believe your solidarity will help our citizens to be able to live legally in your country.

And the second example I would like to mention is something that we Uruguayans recall very well. When we underwent the most severe economic crisis of our history, where Uruguay was living a very moving and very serious condition, your country, and you, in particular, Mr. President, gave us a hand to help Uruguay to leave that situation in which it was and start with the way to recovery that we are now trying to consolidate.



Sixteen years ago, another President of the United States visited our country—it was 5 December 1990, and this President was your father. At that time, I was the mayor of the city of Montevideo, and I handed him the keys of the city of Montevideo. We had a brief exchange with President Bush, your father, and I recall a statement: “Let us,” he said, “leave aside our differences—that we do have certain differences—and let us follow the path of agreement and coincidences that we also have.” The defense of democracy as an organization and as a functioning of our societies, but rather as a style of life, the defense of freedoms and the determined struggle to improve the standards of living of our people—giving them work, education, and health—are common elements that permit us to think that we may continue working beyond our differences, Mr. Chairman.

With these words, I would like to say that the path we have followed and the dialog we had today with the President of the United States is precisely this one: to try and increase our trade exchanges, the possibility of placing the fruits of our worker in the markets of the United States of America; try and increase the scientific, technological, cultural exchange with our brother country; and see how, together, we may have a better standard of living for our people.

Mr. Chairman, members of the U.S. delegation, I hope you may feel at home here. Most welcome.

*President Bush.* Thank you, Mr. President. I feel very much at home. You know, it’s—in my State of Texas, when you invite somebody to your *estancia*, it’s a sign of respect. And I thank you very much for this warm gesture of hospitality, but, after all, you are a *Tejano*. [Laughter]

We’ve had—this is our second meaningful dialog. I remember so well your visit to the Oval Office. You were very articulate about your desire to improve the lives of

all people in your country. I was impressed then by your compassion and your care.

I was expecting to see a beautiful country when I came here, and that is precisely what I have seen. Your capital city is magnificent. The architecture is really beautiful. And then, of course, we come to this beautiful place that is so peaceful and reminds me of the great natural resources that your country has.

We discussed a lot of subjects. First of all, Mr. President, I completely agree with the spirit of our conversations, that we will find common ground, and we will advance that common ground for the benefit of our respective peoples.

One place we have common ground is the respect for human rights and human dignity, respect for rule of law; we welcome a free press—most of the time. [Laughter] No, all the time. We honor elections. And Uruguay is a strong example of the stability that can come with democracy. But you also recognize that which I recognize, that you can’t take democracy for granted, that the people have to see tangible benefits.

And so on my trip to South America and Central America, I want to remind people that the United States and its compassionate people care deeply about issues such as education and health, issues that you’re concerned about. We spent a lot of time talking about education, and I suspect most Americans don’t know that we’re actively involved in helping the President institute a program for youngsters to become more literate, particularly in English. We want to continue helping.

We spent time talking about how we can exchange students in a more—in a better way. We talked about exchanging ideas, that our experts sit down at the same table to discuss issues such as alternative fuels. In my trip to Brazil yesterday, we spent time talking about alternative fuels and the need for the United States and Brazil to work together—it’s the same conversation we had in Uruguay.

We talked about the fact that—or at least I talked about the fact—the President is a modest man, but I talked about the fact that the Uruguayan economy is growing at—estimated at 7 percent. And I congratulate you, sir, on creating the conditions so that people feel comfortable making investments that cause economies to grow, and that we want to work together to continue to advance the progress we have made on trade and investment at a pace that both our peoples will be comfortable with.

I want to thank you very much for your commitment to democracy and peace in our neighborhood. I congratulate you and the people of Uruguay for providing peacekeepers to Haiti and to the Congo. It is a gesture of a strong nation to reach out to help others realize the benefits of a free society. And you've sent a strong and powerful message.

Finally, I do want to say something about immigration in the United States. The President has spoken eloquently to me about the need for there to be an immigration policy that upholds the values of America. I explained to him that it is my interest to get a comprehensive immigration bill out of the United States Congress as soon as possible. I look forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats, Mr. President, to do what is right to uphold the laws of the United States, but, at the same time, recognize that, on the one hand, we can't grant automatic citizenship, nor, on the other hand, can we kick people out. And so therefore, there's got to be a rational way forward.

And I pledge to you, as a man who is concerned about people from your country that may be living in the United States, that I will work as hard as I can to have a compassionate and rational immigration law that respects the rule of law, but also respects the great traditions of the United States, a tradition which is a welcoming society, a tradition that says, you know, that we welcome our diversity. Because we be-

lieve in our diversity, we can find the strength of our Nation.

And so I've been—I'm really looking forward to this trip. I'm especially looking forward to the *asado*. I appreciate the—I appreciate your willingness to cook some Uruguayan beef. You've told me all along how good it is, and after we answer a few questions, we're about to find out.

So, Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality.

#### *Uruguay-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* My question is addressed to President George Bush. Bearing in mind the regional context governed by Presidents such as Vazquez or Chavez, especially, what similarities and what differences do you find amongst them? And what is your opinion about President Vazquez and Uruguay?

*President Bush.* The temptation is to try to get people to talk about their differences. I want to talk about our commonalities. We share respect for each other. We respect our countries, we respect our history and traditions, and we share a great respect for a government that—where the people decide who's in charge.

Interestingly enough, we both have gotten rid of colonial powers in our past, and it is—I think it is that heritage that makes Uruguay and the United States such natural partners. We talk about the need to invest and to grow economies through investment. That's a common ground that leads to a positive relationship.

We both recognize that education is vital for the success of our respective countries. When we find illiteracy in the United States, that's where we find poverty, oftentimes. And therefore, education policy is focused at improving the lives of all by giving people the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century.

I think many people in my country don't know that Uruguay is the leading exporter of software in South America. It means that one of the great assets of this country is the brainpower of the country. Oftentimes

when you think of a country like Uruguay, you think of natural resources—fantastic farms, a lot of cows and lambs and blueberries—which, by the way, came up today in our conversation. But I think it is hopeful for both our countries to know that a friend is a leading exporter of something that requires the ingenuity and brainpower of its citizens. And so we find common ground there as to how to work together.

This is a—I would call this meeting very constructive and very hopeful and very positive. And that's—the reason why is because we've got so much in common. There's a lot more that unites us than divides us, Mr. President, and I appreciate the chance to visit with you.

Tony.

#### *Federal Bureau of Investigation*

Q. Bret Baier [FOX News].

President Bush. Bret Baier.

Q. President Bush—

President Bush. So the guy—I'm 60 years old, and he thinks I can't hear. [Laughter]

Q. Sorry about that. Mr. President, the FBI acknowledged that some agents used post-9/11 powers to demand personal information on Americans. What do you say to people who are concerned about the use of these national security letters? And in the wake of how these letters were used, do you still have confidence in Attorney General Gonzales and FBI Director Mueller?

President Bush. I was briefed by the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI on this subject last week. We spent a lot of time talking about the IG report. First of all, I want to compliment the IG for good and necessary work. They brought the findings of this good work to my attention. My question is, what are you going to do to solve the problem, and how fast can you get it solved?

And I was pleased by Director Mueller's answer, that he had already begun to address some of the problems, but there's more work to be done. I thought his testi-

monies the other day were very good; he took responsibility, as he should have. And I have confidence in Director Mueller, as I do in the Attorney General.

I want to remind you, Bret, and others, that the IG report, which justly made issue of FBI shortfallings, also made it clear that these letters were important to the security of the United States. And so we'll address the problems in the report, and those problems will be addressed as quickly as possible.

#### *International Trade*

Q. Good afternoon. The first question is addressed to President Bush. You recognize the protectionist obstacles in your Government. How flexible may your administration be on making progress in a trade agreement with Uruguay, and what agreement has been reached today?

And the second question for both Presidents. President Vazquez, did you ask President Bush to intercede in the differences that Uruguay and Argentina have about the mill plants?

President Bush. We spent a lot of time talking about how to address Uruguayan concerns about market access for certain products. The President talked about a variety of issues when it comes to trade. He felt like the quotas on certain items, such as cows and sheep, was not fair, and I told him I would absolutely consider requests he made.

You thought I was teasing about blueberries, but I wasn't. It turns out, Uruguay produces a fantastic blueberry. And the fundamental question is, will that blueberry—will the blueberry grower be able to sell product into the United States?

So we talked about a variety of produce. And, you know, I told the President; I said: You can't solve problems unless you put the problems on the table, and that where we could help, we would; and where we couldn't, I would give an explanation as to why not.

Now, you brought up protectionist tendencies, and I'm concerned about protectionist tendencies, not only with our own country but around the world. I happen to believe a world that trades freely and fairly is a world that is more likely to be able to address poverty. And therefore, I'm a strong supporter of completing the Doha round of the WTO.

I shared with the President about our strategies as to advance the Doha round. I spent a lot of time with President Lula; he was most interested in our conversations, and I shared our conversations. I didn't betray any confidences, of course, but I talked to him about how we need to advance the Doha round. The United States is fully prepared to reduce agricultural subsidies, as I explained to the President. We just want to make sure there is market access for our products. And that's what I told President Lula, that's what I've told the Europeans, and that's what I shared with the President.

I'm optimistic we can get a deal done. As a matter of fact, our trade minister is—Susan Schwab has remained in Sao Paulo to talk to her Brazilian counterpart, all aiming at continuing to make progress toward what is a complicated, but necessary deal.

Thank you.

*President Vazquez.* As an answer to your first question, I fully agree with what has just been expressed by the President of the United States. We have created a space, starting with this meeting, where our experts, our ministers are going to discuss and make progress on issues of bilateral relationships.

Now, concerning the general multilateral situation, Uruguay has made clear its position in the defense of free trade and tried to have a drop of tariffs and subsidies, which hinder the sale of our great cultural products, particularly. But we have also analyzed the possibility of making progress with the GSP, particularly on certain issues that are going to be considered in the coming weeks.

As to the second part of your question, I have not talked about the problems we have with the republic of Argentina with the President of the United States, amongst other things, because in a few days from now—in a few weeks, and thanks to the conciliation of His Majesty, the King of Spain—we are going to get closer. We're not going to negotiate; we're going to have a dialog between the two Governments in order to find a friendly way out. We're going to try to come to an understanding and to be able to solve the very sad differences that we have with our brethren of Argentina.

#### *President's Visit to Central and South America*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President—Mr. President. For President Bush: Hugo Chavez suggested that you are afraid to mention his name. So are you? And how much of a threat is he to the United States interests in the hemisphere?

And, President Vazquez, can you discuss at all your position between trying to broaden ties to the United States in terms of trade, but also indicate to your other neighbors that you are—want to remain integrated in South American trade?

*President Bush.* I've come to South America and Central America to advance a positive, constructive diplomacy that is being conducted by my Government on behalf of the American people.

My message to the people in our neighborhood is that we care about the human condition and that we believe the human condition can be improved in a variety of ways—one, investment. And so the question is, how can we have constructive dialog with our neighbors as to how to spread the benefits of investment?

I also am reminding people that the United States taxpayer is most generous when it comes to bilateral aid. Since I've been the President, we've doubled the amount of annual bilateral aid to Latin America from \$800 million a year to \$1.6

billion a year. And most of the money is aimed at social justice programs, programs like education and health care.

I also know full well that—and I saw this firsthand yesterday in Sao Paulo—that many American NGOs and faith-based groups and individuals express their concern about the plight of the poor through programs and activities all aimed at giving people a chance. Yesterday in Sao Paulo, we went to a pretty wealthy neighborhood, but it was surrounded by a *favela*. And there we found in the midst of hopelessness, there was a little center of love. And some of the program money had been raised as a result of concerts given in the United States, where citizens, average citizens, contribute to make sure this program remain viable.

And so the trip is a—it's a statement of the desire to work together with people in our neighborhood. I've been to Central and South America a lot since I've been the President, because I fully understand a prosperous and peaceful neighborhood is in the interest of the United States of America.

I would call our diplomacy quiet and effective diplomacy—diplomacy all aimed at helping people, aimed at elevating the human condition, aimed at expressing the great compassion of the American people.

And, Mr. President, I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit with you, have a dialog about how we can advance our interests and the interests of our neighborhood.

*President Vazquez.* Concerning your question, the strategy for international in-

sertion of Uruguay is quite well defined and quite clear. We are in favor of an open integration process; we are strongly in favor of the regional process. We are where we are, and we don't want to leave this place. And the trade we have and the cultural, historical relationships that we have with our brethren countries in the region are very solid, very strong. But we don't want a closed integration process, but an open integration process.

This MERCOSUR should be able to integrate to other blocks or other countries of the world, and also each of the members of this process—for example, Uruguay—might be able to exercise its sovereign right of developing bilateral relations with other integration processes or other countries. It is in this sense that we are working, and it is in this sense that we are holding with the President of the United States.

Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:53 a.m. in the Visitors Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Minister of Development, Industry, and Trade Luiz Fernando Furlan of Brazil. President Vazquez referred to U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Frank E. Baxter; Uruguay's Ambassador to the U.S. Carlos Gianelli Derois; and King Juan Carlos I of Spain. A reporter referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. President Vazquez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's Radio Address

*March 10, 2007*

Good morning. Today Laura and I are in Latin America, where we are visiting five countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia,

Guatemala, and Mexico. These countries are part of a region that has made great strides toward freedom and prosperity in



the past three decades. They have raised up new democracies, and they have undertaken fiscal policies that have brought stability to their economies.

Yet despite the progress we have seen, many citizens in our hemisphere remain trapped in poverty and shut off from the promise of this new century. Nearly one out of every four people in Latin America lives on less than \$2 a day. Many children never finish grade school. Many mothers never see a doctor. The fact is that tens of millions of our brothers and sisters to the south have yet to see improvements in their daily lives, and this has led some to question the value of democracy.

Our Nation has a vital interest in helping the young democracies in our neighborhood succeed. When our neighbors prosper, they create more vibrant markets for our goods and services. When our neighbors have a hopeful future in their own countries, they can find work at home and are less likely to migrate to our country illegally. And when our neighbors feel the blessings of liberty in their daily lives, the appeal of radicalism declines and our hemisphere becomes more secure.

The United States is doing its part to help our neighbors in Latin America build a better life for themselves and their families. We are helping these young democracies make their governments more fair, effective, and transparent. We are supporting their efforts to meet the basic needs of their citizens, like education, health care, and housing. And we are increasing opportunity for all by relieving debt, opening up trade, and encouraging reforms that will build market economies, where people can start from nothing and rise as far as their talents and hard work can take them.

On Monday, I will meet a Guatemalan citizen who has experienced the power of

open trade and free economies; his name is Mariano Canu. Twenty years ago, he was an indigenous farmer whose land provided barely enough corn and beans to feed his family. No one in his family had ever been to college, and most of the people in his village never got past the sixth grade. And his own children's prospects for prosperity looked just as bleak.

Mariano was determined to do better for his family, so he organized an association of small farmers called *Labradores Mayas*. He persuaded his fellow farmers to switch their crops to vegetables they could sell overseas, high-value crops like lettuce, carrots, and celery. Soon they were selling to big companies like Wal-Mart Central America. Today, the business he helped establish is thriving, and it supports more than 1,000 jobs. It also has supported something else, a college education for Mariano's son.

Mariano is showing what the people of Latin America can accomplish when they are given a chance. We must help others like him gain the opportunity to build a better life for their families. The generosity of the American people is helping our neighbors in Latin America build free and vibrant economies. By doing so, we will increase living standards for all our citizens, strengthen democracy in our hemisphere, and advance the cause of peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on March 9 at the Hilton Sao Paulo for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 9, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 3-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Uruguay. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.



Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted By President Alvaro Uribe Velez of  
Colombia in Bogota, Colombia  
*March 11, 2007*

Mr. President, thank you very much. I appreciate your hospitality. I am amazed by the beauty of your country. I've never been here to the beautiful capital city of your country, but Laura and I were struck by two things: the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of the people.

We—I bring greetings from the United States to the people of your country. We have been friends, and we shall remain friends. We value your democracy. I appreciate your strong leadership. We come during a period where your country has come through very difficult times, and now

there's a brighter day ahead. And my message to the people of your country is, we want to help every individual realize their God-given potential.

I'd like to propose a toast to the people of this country and to the leadership of this country. *Que Dios les bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at Casa de Narino. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Uribe. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Alvaro Uribe Velez of  
Colombia in Bogota  
*March 11, 2007*

*President Uribe.* Mr. President of the United States of America, George W. Bush; distinguished members of the delegation; friends from the Government; distinguished journalists who have come from other countries and from Colombia: I would like to welcome again in the warmest fashion possible. I would like to welcome his delegation as well.

During the working lunch we have just had, at the end, I was able to read some beautiful paragraphs from Bolivar, the Liberator: one in the Charter of Angostura, where he actually was talking about the creation of the American Nation around—or on the basis of freedom, tolerance, and of having a general law that would respond to common interest through individual wills. The Liberator also mentioned a very nice paragraph during the Constitution assembly in Bolivia on the legacy of President George Washington.

I was saying that the relations between the Colombian people and the American people are sound. We have mutual understanding on democratic values since the birth of our two states. This visit is a reason for being proud. We will trust even more on our relations and the Colombian process, and we would like to thank you very warmly, President Bush.

You have come to Colombia at a time of unrest because of the peace process that is taking place. You have come at a time of revelations that really have motivated a public debate. But they are taking place because of one reason, and that reason is that our policy on democratic security has tried to defeat terrorism in the guerrillas, in the paramilitaries, because our democratic security policy wants to reestablish democratic institutions fully in Colombia. And these revelations are taking place because our law on justice and peace requires

and demands truth, truth so that the country will know the dimension of the tragedy we have gone through, truth to prepare us for a future free of the guerrillas, the paramilitaries, and the drug traffickers.

The law on justice and peace that is being enforced has been discussed in Congress throughout its approval process, and it has been discussed during its implementation, and has three elements that makes it different from former legislation in Colombia and in the world.

Number one, justice. There will be no amnesty for crimes against humanity. This law requires reparations to take place, and there is no other single country in the world other than Colombia that might say that in order to have shorter sentences within a law of peace, the perpetrators are required to hand in their assets, so as to repair the victims. And that has never happened anywhere else in the world.

There are two countries in Latin America that tried to compensate for the problems of the victims under dictatorships but with money coming from the budget. Here we will strive to give them all the assets that the perpetrators have. It is truth, justice, and reparations, and these are the three key elements of our legislation.

This country has an independent justice system, Mr. President, which makes our democracy different. The decision of my administration in this process of institutional recovery is total support for justice so that Colombia may finally overcome the time of terrorism.

I would like to go back in history. For 30 years, the Marxist guerrillas actually hit Colombia, and they proposed a social revolution, and they produced even more poverty. They proposed more democracy, and they were assassinating and murdering the mayors and the council members, and they were actually killing democracy.

These guerrillas ended up being financed by drug traffickers. And there are many people in many regions of Colombia that were not protected by the state, and now

they feel protected, thanks to our security policy. The growth of the guerrillas and the lack of a state protection for citizens resulted in these guerrillas producing the paramilitarism, and these paramilitary phenomenon started committing the same crimes, atrocious crimes, as the guerrillas. The Marxist guerrillas brought to Colombia the validity of combining all sorts of struggle. They infiltrated universities, the labor movement, and the peasant movement. They infiltrated very important sectors of intellectual movements and journalists. And they infiltrated politics.

The same guerrillas planted a hatred amongst the classes. They wanted to eliminate the foundation of solidarity on which this nation was built. The guerrillas taught the paramilitaries to combine all sorts of struggle. And what happened then? Some of these guerrillas actually signed an amnesty, but they were not required to tell the truth, which is something we are requiring now. So they didn't say which were the sectors of the civil society that had been infiltrated. These guerrillas were not demanded to give reparations to the victims, as we are asking for now. And these guerrillas were able, in spite of having committed so many atrocious crimes, to get an amnesty for atrocious crimes, amnesty that is not given out today for these crimes against humanity.

The peace process that we are undertaking with the—[inaudible]—of truth, justice, and reparations, actually set the limits for peace processes in the future. We have been very rigorous in this process. It has been a very serious process, and the world and Colombia will know that the processes in Colombia in the future, with the guerrillas, such as the ELN and FARC, should require, as we are requiring today, truth, justice, and reparations.

I would like you to know, Mr. President, that our commitment is the full defeat of terrorism and the total recovery of justice and of democratic institutions. We are working with a model of state. We are not

dismantling the state, as has been done in many Latin American countries throughout the nineties, nor are we proposing a state-dominated government. We do not accept the dismantling of the state or state monopolies. What we are building is trust for private investment in Colombia, and at the same time, we are demanding social responsibilities. We see in trust a way of investing in our country. In investment, we see a development tool, and in growth, we see a possibility of overcoming poverty and building equity.

You have come to Colombia, Mr. President, with a thesis which is necessary for our continent, and that is a diversification of the energy basket. After Brazil, Colombia is the second country in the continent in the production of biofuels. We have created the tax incentives. We have approved regulations in agreement with the standards of the World Trade Organization. There are projects that are producing more than 1,000 liters of ethanol in Colombia, and there are many more that are being installed. We have 6 million hectares in the Orinoco department, and these are savannas, in general, that we can use for biofuel production without destroying a single tree in our jungle.

We have thanked the President of the United States of America and his delegation for the support given to Colombia through the Plan Colombia. The fight against drug trafficking has received support, practical support, and your support, the support of President Clinton, the support of your Congress. Your enthusiastic support, Mr. President, have been very practical and have helped the struggle of the Colombian people against drug trafficking.

We have the opportunity of discussing very important issues as well, such as the agenda against poverty, our social goals, our program of forest rangers families, which is unique in the world, that is paying 50,000 peasant families so that they can protect the jungle, free of drugs, and so that they

can recover the jungle where it has been destroyed.

We have discussed our trade agreement again and political possibility of integration, and far away from ideological sectorisms that is trying to look for opportunities of investment and employment with dignity and social security programs.

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for coming to Colombia. I am very proud of my fellow countrymen, when you could come here after landing at the airport, going through this beautiful landscape, and was able to go to Plaza de Bolivar and to this palace. I am very proud, Mr. President, that the world may see how the Colombian people is overcoming nowadays the great difficulties that we have suffered in the last years.

And again, thank you so much for your visit, sir.

*President Bush.* Thank you very much for your kind words and for your invitation. Laura and I are thrilled to be back in your country again. I've been really looking forward to coming to this beautiful capital city, and I thank the people of Colombia for such a generous welcome.

We did have an extensive conversation, but that's what you'd expect when friends sit down at a table together. I bring the greetings of the United States. The people of this—my country care deeply about the human condition. We believe strongly in human rights and human values, just like you believe in them. We're two strong democracies, and we've got a lot in common and a lot of values that we share. So this visit advances those values.

I listened very carefully to the President when he was—expressed concern about the immigration laws of the United States. He was most eloquent in his concern about Colombians who live in the United States, and I assured him that a top priority of my administration is the passage of comprehensive immigration reform. I will work with both Republicans and Democrats to

get a comprehensive bill to my desk as quickly as possible, Mr. President.

We talked about the benefits of expanding trade so that people in both our countries can benefit. The United States is Colombia's largest trading partner. Colombia is the second largest market in Latin America for U.S. farmers. Trade is beneficial to both countries, and it can grow even more with the free trade agreement that we signed in November.

I told the President that I will work hard for the passage of that important piece of legislation. I believe that a trade package with Colombia is in the interests of both our nations, Mr. President.

I'm looking forward to visiting with some Afro-Colombians today to talk about social justice programs. The reason I do is because it's very important for the people of South America and Central America to know that the United States cares deeply about the human condition and that much of our aid is aimed at helping people realize their God-given potential. And so we'll talk about programs all aimed at giving people a chance to realize their dreams, Mr. President.

You described many of those programs at lunch—or your cabinet described many of those programs at lunch, and I was most impressed by the strategy of your administration and the vigor and the energy of your Cabinet.

I'm looking forward very much to talking and continuing to work with you to defeat the drug lords and narcotraffickers—narcoterrorists. You recognize, like I recognize, that the most important function of state is to provide security for its people. You cannot tolerate, in a society, the ability of people to take innocent life to achieve political objectives. And so I appreciate your steadfast strength, and so do the people of this country.

I am looking forward to working with you on the second phase—or the next phase of Plan Colombia. We're going to work with your government to continue to

fight drug trafficking. The United States has an obligation to work to reduce the demand for drugs, and at the same time, work to interdict the supply of drugs. There's a lot we can do. But part of it is to help you exercise control over all your territory, is to strengthen the rule of law, and to expand economic opportunity for the citizens. And we want to help.

The Plan Colombia recognizes the importance of protecting human rights. I appreciate the President's determination to bring human rights violators to justice. He is strong in that determination. It's going to be very important for Members of my United States—our United States Congress to see that determination. And I believe, if given a fair chance, President Uribe can make the case.

This Colombia Government continues to make progress that is going to earn greater confidence from all its citizens and greater respect in the international community. You've set high expectations for your nation. I appreciate your determination, and I'm proud to call you a personal friend and to call your country a strategic partner of the United States. Thank you for having me.

Okay.

#### *Colombian Government*

*Q.* Good afternoon. President Bush, what is your opinion about the way in which the government has handled the scandal of the politicians involved in drug trafficking because—and the paramilitaries?—because we know that there are many more members involved with the paramilitaries. Up to what extent do you support President Uribe given the fact that most of these paramilitary heads are drug traffickers? And finally, the U.S. will insist on extraditing these people?

*President Bush.* I support a plan that says that there will be an independent judiciary analyzing every charge brought forth, and when someone is found guilty, there's punishment. That's the kind of plan I support.

It happens to be the kind of plan the President supports. In other words, there's no political favorites when it comes to justice, that if someone is guilty, they will pay a penalty. And the best way to assure that that penalty is fair and the justice is fair is for there to be a court independent from politics.

And so when I asked this very same question to the President about the news I've been reading in Washington, DC, the same questions he's going to be asked when he and his government come to talk to our Congress, he answered just like I described. He said: "We have an independent court. We've got a firm law. People will be held to account, whether or not they're—no matter what political party they may or may not be associated with." That's what the people of Colombia expect; that's the kind of justice they're going to receive.

Listen, this country has come through some very difficult times. And the best way to heal wounds is for people to see fair, independent justice being delivered, and I believe that's the kind of justice this government will do.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

#### *U.S. Troop Deployment/Democracy in Colombia*

Q. Some lawmakers on Capitol Hill are finding it disconcerting that the number of U.S. troops deployed keeps climbing. Even the budget revisions that you announced a couple of days ago ordered up more. I'm wondering, do you think that the American citizens should now look at the troop buildup that you announced in January, the 21,500, as merely a starting point? And—

*President Bush.* Go ahead.

Q. And, President Uribe, with all the talk about Chavez, could you tell us your opinion on whether you think his influence in the region is overstated?

*President Uribe.* What is my opinion on?

Q. With all the talk about Chavez, could you tell us how much you—if you think

that his influence in the region is overestimated or exaggerated?

*President Bush.* The troop announcement I made was over 20,000 combat troops. Secretary Gates and General Pace went up to Congress and testified to the effect that those combat troops are going to need some support. And that's what the American people are seeing in terms of Iraq, the support troops necessary to help the reinforcements do their job. My hope, of course, is that Congress provides the funding necessary for the combat troops to be able to do their job, without any strings attached.

Secondly, in terms of Afghanistan, I did announce, as a result of a review of our policy, an additional 3,200 troops. But in addition to that, the troops that you're referring to are going to be part of a training and embedding mission that I did also discuss during that strategy, although I didn't have any details of the troops.

*President Uribe.* Colombia is a loyal ally to the States, and it shows solidarity towards Latin America as well. We have promoted more integration with the U.S.A. through Plan Colombia and the free trade agreement and more integration with Latin America as well. The Andean community, it has been led by Colombia and has an agreement signed with MERCOSUR. We have contributed to the creation of the South America Union. Colombia has been recently accepted as the main member of a Plan Panama Puebla.

So we are looking also for a trade agreement with Canada. We are about to close negotiations with three Central American countries. And as you can see, this is our democratic and loyal international policy. With our sister countries, we have very good relations. We respect, and we ask everyone to respect, the guiding principles of international public law, as well as the respect for the autonomy in each country and the principle of nonintervention. We have to help one another in promoting



freedom and in overcoming poverty and in conquering health.

I have to mention something about the question that was asked to President Bush. Number one, the whole world must know that this country was affected for 30 years by the Marxist guerrillas; that these guerrillas infiltrated politics and journalism; that they infiltrated the labor movement and labor unions, universities. And the truth was never demanded, which is something we have to demand in the future.

Number two, the world must know that many—during these years, some regions in Colombia were not protected. Number three, the world must know that the guerrillas and the lack of protection was what generated the paramilitarism. Number four, the world must know that this administration is the first one that has started fighting directly against the paramilitarism. There is a political discussion going on, but the paramilitary aggression has gone down radically.

Why? Because the law on justice and peace has let most—has resulted in most of the paramilitary leaders being in jail because our security policy has actually eliminated more than 1,700 of these paramilitary groups' members. And I'd like to have so many people from other countries in Colombia present here to be able to say that most of the crimes that are being tried and prosecuted happened before my administration, to say that democratic security has been recovering the transparency in electoral processes in Colombia. Last year's elections, the opposition to my administration has not even one complaint about lack of guarantees. They were able to visit all the places with which in the past were not possible to visit because, on the one hand, there was control by the guerrillas, and there was also paramilitary control in other regions, and they couldn't visit these places.

Candidates running for the Presidency in 2006 received effective guarantees. They were able to visit the whole country, and the effect of the democratic security policy

was quite evident because there were no pressures against them by the terrorists. The only pressure in the year 2006 were against the people who supported my campaign in departments in the southern part of the country, where FARC, together with the drug traffickers, introduced a strike, and they threatened those who were going to vote for me. And this is something that the world should be aware of. And there were candidates to Congress and the President from all ideological movements.

The world must also know that it is a government that has asked for the truth; that the government is promoting the law on justice and peace; that it is this administration that has made the decision of dismantling the criminal machinery of the paramilitaries; that it was the government who made the decision to put them in jail; that it is this Government that has made the decision that they have to give out their own assets to—for the reparations of the victims; and that it is the government that has made the decision of supporting justice fully.

For the first time, the supreme court of justice in Colombia, which is an independent branch, has its own investigators. Thanks to the will of this administration of funding this group, we are dismantling what was built for many years, for more than three decades. Terrorism advanced in taking parts of Colombia, and terrorism made progress in suppressing freedoms, in threatening journalists, in assassinating labor union leaders. And of all this, we are actually making progress.

So I think I have to tell an anecdote as well. Not long ago, I was asked if the government supported direct transmissions on TV of the hearings where the paramilitaries are being tried before the prosecutors. And I said that the government supported this transmission alive and direct because that is the way to get the truth. So instead of being afraid for telling the truth, we have been supporting truth. Instead of looking for ways out of justice,



we are trying to support justice as much as possible.

Let's talk about the Director of the security agency, the DAS. When he left this agency, there were no complaints of links with paramilitaries against him. And he was then accused of facts that were known months after he left this agency, the security agency. And I have to discuss these subjects because these are subjects that are becoming increasingly important in international debates. The Minister of Defense has said that if there were any militaries related to terrorist organizations, they will be withdrawn from their positions.

But we cannot fall into the trap of the guerrillas, that we should weaken the armed forces. We are not going to make them weak, because this is the only way we have to have a country without any guerrillas and without any paramilitaries. There are members—if there are members of this Government that have any links to these organizations, will be immediately removed from their offices.

And so I am concerned for the question asked by the journalist. And he said—and this is not correct—that there are many members of the government related or with links with paramilitary groups. And this is a contradiction because this is the first government ever that has prosecuted the paramilitaries, that has actually killed some of the paramilitaries and sent others to jail. We are going to eliminate paramilitarism, and we are going to eliminate the guerrillas, because we can't fall in the trap that poses a paramilitary scandal that will actually do away with all the results in democratic security.

The Minister of Defense, at lunch, was saying that we are going to levee a tax on the wealthiest contributors in Colombia so that they can contribute to the consolidation of the democratic security program. And we will demand the truth without any fears, and this is what makes a difference.

When I was running for the Presidency, I was not well interpreted. I was saying

that Colombia had to eliminate the guerrillas, but perhaps I was misunderstood because I also said that the only way was to recover the institutions and, hence, that we had to eliminate the paramilitaries as well.

On August the 7th, I will have been 5 years in power, and throughout all the time—and I say this before a great ally, the President of the United States, and before the world, thanks to the journalists present here—throughout this Government, we have constantly fought the guerrillas, the paramilitaries, and the drug traffickers continuously. Our sole purpose is Colombia free of this plague; our sole purpose is a Colombia that will have strong institutions again. There is nothing to hide here. We are fighting against narco and terrorism. And let that be clear to you all.

*Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)/American Hostages*

Q. Good afternoon. This is a question for President Bush: FARC—the FARC has many people kidnaped for political purposes and for very many years. And the humanitarian agreement has been discussed, amongst others, the free citizens of your countries. Mr. Shannon said this week that the U.S. would be extremely happy if we could get a solution through a humanitarian agreement. So my question is, are you going with your administration to propose an option of a humanitarian agreement, so that these kidnapes are finally released, vis-a-vis a military action?

And number two, Mr. President, is it true that you two discussed the military actions that had to be reinforced to release the hostages? And you have not answered if you are going to insist on extraditing the paramilitary heads from Colombia.

*President Bush.* In terms of the extradition, I'm going to work with President Uribe. We've had good relations; we're friends; we've worked very closely on the extraditions. And so it will be a government-to-government decision.

In terms of the hostages, I am concerned about their safety, I really am. I'm worried about their families. These are three innocent folks who have been held hostage for too long, and their families are concerned about them. We hear from their families. Their kidnapers ought to show some heart, what they ought to show. And I've obviously discussed this with the President, and he's developing strategies that will, hopefully, bring them out safely. That's all I ask.

It's amazing—isn't it?—to live in a society where you've got part of your country where people just kidnap somebody who is here trying to help, without any regard to whether or not—how their family feels.

So that's what I think about, sir. That's what's on my mind about those hostages. Obviously, I'd like to see them come out safely.

Matt [Matt Spetalnick, Reuters].

#### *Iran and Syria/Iraq Regional Conference*

Q. President Bush, in your assessment, what, if anything, was accomplished at the Baghdad regional conference? And what are your expectations for future rounds? Also, do you take—do you believe that Iran and Syria were serious in their post-conference statements that they want to help stabilize Iraq? And if that is true, do you see a possibility of opening the way towards more formal direct contacts with those two countries?

*President Bush.* I'm the kind of person that likes people to say something and then do it; then we'll react. Words are easy to say in politics, in the international diplomacy. If they really want to help stabilize Iraq, there are things for them to do, such as cutting off weapon flows and/or the flow of suicide bombers into Iraq. There's all kind of ways to measure whether they're serious about the words they uttered. We, of course, welcome those words. Those are nice statements. And now they can act on them.

I thought the conference—well, first of all, I thought the conference got people in the neighborhood to say positive things about the young democracy. In other words, people are now committed publicly to helping Iraq, which was, I thought, very positive. I think the other benefit from the conference is, is that the government gained some confidence. In other words, this young democracy had nations from around the neighborhood and around the world come and talk to them in a way that was constructive and positive.

Part of the success in Iraq is going to be whether or not this government has got the confidence necessary to make hard decisions. They're learning what democracy is all about. They've come from a tyranny to democracy in a pretty quick period of time. And I believe the conference will give the different factions inside Iraq the confidence necessary to do the hard things to reconcile and the government the confidence necessary to make the decision so that reconciliation can happen.

So it was a positive outcome. And in terms of the expectations of the next meetings, we'll see. But the point is, is that the momentum made in the first one can be carried over to the second one. Secretary Rice will be going to that meeting. In other words, it's a step up in—I'm not dissing anybody, but it's a step up in the pay grade; let's put it that way. [Laughter] And I think—and I think Condi is going to—will take an agenda that will help advance this young democracy, and she's going to work with the other nations to do so.

*Gracias, Senor Presidente.*

*President Uribe.* Gracias, President.

*President Bush.* Thank you very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:34 p.m. at Casa de Narino. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. President Uribe referred

to Andres Mauricio Penate Giraldo, Director, Department of Security Administration, and Minister of National Defense Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia. President Uribe also referred to ELN, the National Liberation Army. A reporter referred

to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. President Uribe spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Prior to a Discussion on the United States Afro-Colombian Outreach Program in Bogota

March 11, 2007

Well, Mr. President, thank you very much. Laura and I, as well as Secretary of State Rice and our Ambassador, are honored that citizens from your country have come to share with us stories and concerns that will better enable our Government to help. And the reason I say that is because the best foreign policy for the United States is to help people realize their full potential. That can be done through education, jobs.

The President and I had a long discussion this morning about issues that will help create jobs and facilitate the flow of trade, for example, all aiming at helping the people in our respective countries realize God-given potential. And so we come bringing the greetings of the people of the United States. Our Ambassador has briefed me on some of the programs that the taxpayers of my country have helped fund. But we're really interested in hearing your stories.

And Colombia is a fine democracy. And the true test of a democracy is for every citizen in that country to be able to feel the full promise of society.

And so we thank you for coming. And, Mr. President, why don't we—we can go around the table, and I'm interested in hearing the different stories about the lives of some of your citizens.

Shall we start? How about you, doctor? Do you want to start?

*[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; the discussion continued, however, and no transcript was provided.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. at Casa de Narino. In his remarks, he referred to President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia and U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William B. Wood.

## Remarks Following a Tour of Labradores Mayas in Iximche, Guatemala

March 12, 2007

*The President.* You know I—Mariano, when I gave a speech in the United States, I talked about you. And Mrs. Bush and I have been looking forward to meeting you because you—

*Mariano Canu.* So have I.

*The President.* —you represent people who dream, people who work hard, and people who make wonderful products.

And there's two things I want to share. One, that USAID, which is funded through the generosity of the American people, is helping people like you all throughout the

region to realize your dreams, because we believe that—we believe in the dignity of every person. And we want people to realize their God-given potential. You have proven that if just given a chance, you and hundreds of others can succeed, and that's what we want.

Secondly, free trade is important for a lot of people. It's important for our country.

*Mariano Canu.* It's a gateway for us.

*The President.* It's a gateway. It creates jobs in America just like it creates jobs here.

And so we thank you for your wonderful hospitality. We loved being with your families.

*Mariano Canu.* And we thank you, too, all so much for all the support you've given us, from USAID, from the Guatemalan Government, from the President. We're very, very grateful.

*The President.* Thank you, sir. *Gracias. Que Dios les bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. Participating in the tour was Mariano Canu, cofounder, Labradores Mayas, who spoke in Spanish and had his remarks translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Guatemala City, Guatemala March 12, 2007

*President Oscar Berger Perdomo of Guatemala.* Dear friends, welcome all. On behalf of my Government and on behalf of the people of Guatemala, I am pleased to welcome President George W. Bush, his wife, and his distinguished delegation in our country.

We celebrate that President Bush decided to include Guatemala in his tour throughout Latin America. We welcome you with affection in this multiethnic and plurilingual country, where—[inaudible]—cultures live together, with strong features of modernity, and where, after a lengthy and painful conflict that divided us during 40 years, we are, with determination, following the path of reconciliation, in search for building a plural, democratic, tolerant, and participatory society.

Our historic relationship with the United States of America, at times troubled, date far back. We are pleased to confirm that in recent decades this relationship matured and is today characterized by a further

interaction that are respectful and broad in scope.

We share values, including, of course, representative democracy and social justice. We also share interests that grew last year with the entry into force of the free trade agreement between the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic on the one hand, and the United States of America on the other hand.

And we would be remiss if we do not recall that at present it is estimated that approximately 10 percent of our population live in the United States of America, upon the integration of the labor markets of both nations.

As is the case in every mature relationship, once in a while differences of opinion arise, for example, with regard to the issue of migrants, in particularly those who have been deported without clear justification. But as is also the case in every mature relationship, what brings us together exceeds by far those differences. We value that relationship, and we shall make effort

in order to enhance and extend it, as we shall make effort to address the differences that we find between us with a constructive spirit.

We shall take advantage of our conversations today, that will take place within a framework of cordiality and openness, to address topics of mutual interest—fighting poverty, respect for human rights, and a frontal fight against organized crime, as well as Central America's economic integration. We shall also review the strengths and weaknesses of our own evolution since the signature of our peace accord.

I finish by reiterating our recognition to President Bush for his persistence in having been able to put forth the free trade agreement, and also for his initiative to promote an integrated migratory reform, that we would trust will culminate with your approval, Mr. President. These two initiatives will certainly contribute to bring our two nations even closer together.

Once again, President Bush; First Lady, Madam Laura Bush; and members of your delegation: Welcome to Guatemala.

*President Bush. Senor Presidente, gracias por su bienvenidos a este pais, pais bella.* I thank you and the First Lady for treating Laura and me with such grand hospitality. This is my first official visit to Guatemala, and we thank the people of this country for their magnificent hospitality.

I'm honored to stand in the historic courtyard where the 1996 peace accords were signed. The accords mark the end of 36 years of internal conflict and the beginning of a more hopeful future for Guatemala.

Guatemala is a proud country with a rich culture. This morning, Laura and I toured the highlands where the ancient Mayans built a great civilization many centuries ago. This beautiful land is now the home of Central America's largest democracy. You

have built a diverse and vibrant nation, and the people of the United States admire your determination and your resilience.

Our two countries share many values. We both believe good governments must be accountable to the people they serve and subject to the rule of law. We both believe free enterprise and hard work help lead to prosperity, and we both believe our nations have a responsibility to spread opportunity and advance the cause of social justice.

The United States and Guatemala are partners in this important work. We're working together to improve access to education and health care to give Guatemalans a safe and legal path to jobs in the United States and to lift millions of people out of poverty by expanding trade. The ties between our two countries have never been stronger or more important.

Mr. President, Laura and I appreciate the invitation to visit your country. We appreciate the time we spent with you and your very accomplished wife. You're a man of vision and courage. You understand that real leadership requires making tough choices that serve your nation well in the long term.

I appreciate your unwavering commitment to your people, Mr. President, and I look forward to working with you to build a better future for both our countries.

*Muchas gracias, mi amigo.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. on the Patio de la Paz at the National Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Wendy Widmann de Berger, wife of President Berger. President Berger spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's News Conference With President Oscar Berger Perdomo of Guatemala in Guatemala City

March 12, 2007

*President Berger.* Distinguished members of the media, welcome, and thank you for honoring us with your presence. A very fruitful, interesting, and productive day with President Bush. Today's visit to the Department of Chimaltenango, Iximche, the contact that we were able to have with our people, the cultural legacy that we were able to witness together, and that the special meaning that it is together closer to the Guatemalan people, and hear from them of their history with President Bush and Mrs. Bush, has been very important today.

After that very interesting visit, we met with teams of Presidents Bush and Berger, and evidently, on the table were extremely important topics, particularly as regards Guatemala. And we were able to discuss security and our efforts to fight drug trafficking. In that sense, President Bush expressed his full support for—expressed his support, also, for the Maya Jaguar plan that is already in operation, and has told us that he is going to make a regional proposal to fight drug trafficking, regionally, where he is inviting Mexico and the Central American countries to join the United States in that fight. Part of this strategy seeks to train the security bodies that are in charge of fighting drug trafficking and the intelligence that is going to surround these teams, and then be able to identify these sources in a permanent strategy—and I insist, regional strategy—which I think is key: We should no longer work in isolation; we should work jointly, that is, the countries that face this very serious problem.

Likewise, we talked about the Millennium Challenge Account. And Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told us that Guatemala continues to be among the countries that could be elected. In the coming 2 months, we are going to receive a response.

We expect that it might be favorable for Guatemala.

Today President Bush, who is participating in this productive effort, we were able to see how these Guatemalan workers produce the best vegetables in the world and have been able to enter a very important market, particularly the Central American market, the effort of whose integration President Bush is also aware of.

Of course, President Bush's visit brings us closer to the most important and largest economic power and the largest market in the world, with many possibilities, through CAFTA, where we can have—give better access to the U.S. market to Guatemalan produce, where we highlighted snow peas and berries, chili peppers and tomatoes. We had a limitation, and there was—as of a couple of months, we are exporting significant amounts of Guatemalan produce. So we also mentioned support by U.S. Customs to control Guatemalan port and customs services. This gives us a better rating and makes it possible for us to exercise a more efficient trade effort.

We've mentioned to President Bush, and we've invited the United States to become the partner of the Central American Economic Integration Bank—CABEI—one that he favored. And he is well aware of the fact that this bank and its resources are used to build infrastructure, to promote investment, and to give support to governments as well.

I believe that everyone will probably be waiting to hear from the—about the topic of migrants. This is a topic that we discussed at greater length with President Bush during the trip this morning and during this afternoon's meeting. It is a concern for President Bush; it is a concern for the Guatemalans and the 13 million illegal



aliens who are currently living in the United States.

President Bush has confirmed that there are no express instructions to persecute Guatemalan illegal aliens; that is, somebody is acting beyond the scope of the law, he has to be brought before the law. But if—there is no intention to persecute undocumented workers. He has convinced us that the best proposal is the migration law reform. He extensively explained the efforts that the—what the efforts will need to be engaged by the Democratic groups and the Republican groups in the Senate, but that should not be an issue that should be on the agenda next year. That should be taken care of, and he expects that by August, we will have a reform for the immigration act, where a legal status will be considered for those who are already living there and regulations of how to become a legal worker in the United States.

I would like to take this opportunity, President Bush, to thank you for your visit. Guatemala feels honored. We feel highly satisfied and deeply committed with this effort. We have been in the eyes and the minds of the entire world during these couple of hours that we have been sharing with you. And what is most important, I believe that for the people in the highlands of Guatemala today, there was a message of closeness, of rapport with President Bush, and of a hope. Together, we can achieve great things, as Mariano Canu said in Tecpan, where he showed us what he can do with his work team, how he can give added value to the wonderful vegetables of the highlands of Guatemala, to be able to send it to the great U.S. market.

Once again, for President Berger, this has been a wonderful opportunity to have been able to share with Mrs. Bush and President Bush. And for Guatemala, it is a reason for pride. Once again, thank you very much for your visit.

*President Bush.* *Senor Presidente*, thank you very much for your warm welcome. I agree with you; it's been a great day

for Laura and me. And we really loved traveling with you and Wendy, and it's just a wonderful experience.

I appreciate your kindness on this first official visit to your country. Relations between the United States and Guatemala are stronger than ever. We're friends, and that's important. Our countries are fellow democracies. We're partners in trade. We're allies in the cause of social justice. Today President Berger and I discussed some of the ways that the United States and Guatemala can continue to work together to build a more hopeful future for the people in our respective countries.

Guatemala is a strong and vibrant democracy of more than 12 million people. President Berger understands the importance of building a government that is accountable to all its citizens, and I appreciate that commitment. I appreciate the steps you've taken to increase transparency, to reduce corruption, to modernize the civil service, and to help improve Guatemala's record on human rights. You've got strong leadership, Mr. President.

In September, you elect a new President, who will face the task of building on your successes. The United States and the international community will support the people of Guatemala in holding free and fair elections.

Your President and I both believe that a strong democracy requires security from drug lords and violent criminals. So we spent a lot of time talking about that today. I appreciate the fact that you have renewed the fight against the drug trade, that you've worked to eradicate opium poppy, and you fired hundreds of corrupt police officers. That's what leaders do; you find problems and you address them for the good of the people. We appreciate Guatemala's commitment to this work, and we'll continue to stand with you.

President Berger is working with the United Nations to form an international commission to help investigate and prosecute organized crime in Guatemala, and

the United States strongly supports this effort. Our countries are working together to fight transnational gangs. And the President was right: I suggested we think about this issue regionally. You've got to understand that these gangs are able to move throughout Central America and up through Mexico into our own country, and therefore, we've got to think regionally and act regionally.

The first thing we can do is share information so we can help track down gang members, and we can increase communications; we can develop effective ways to protect children from gangs. There's a lot of work to be done, but it first starts with making a sincere commitment to addressing the problem.

Improving education is an important goal for both our nations. We spent a lot of time today talking about education. And the President and First Lady of Guatemala are absolutely committed to extending education's reach beyond just the capital city. And I appreciate that commitment, Mr. President. More than 40 percent of the population of this country is under 15 years old—it's an interesting statistic, isn't it?—which means that a more hopeful future depends on teaching the younger generation the skills necessary to be able to succeed in the 21st century.

And we want to help. We've done some interesting work here, and the American people need to know that our commitment, our bilateral aid in Guatemala, goes toward helping meet education goals. It's in the interest of the United States that there be literate populations in our neighborhood. In the city, in the Department of Iximche, we established a project that helped raise the number of children who complete first grade from 51 percent to 71 percent. It's not a well-known program, but it worked. And this country of mine is committed to helping make these kind of programs successful, Mr. President.

We also want to expand access to health care. Today, as the President mentioned,

we went to Santa Cruz Balanya; it was a really interesting moment. The American people would have been incredibly proud of watching our military folks dispense with basic health care needs to people who needed help. And the people of Guatemala would be especially proud to have seen your military working side by side with our troops to do the same thing. There's a great mission of compassion, and it's making a difference to people's lives.

Imagine not being able to see, and all of a sudden, somebody appears in your life, gives you an eye test, and fits you for glasses so you can see better. Or you have a perpetual toothache, and somebody shows up, in this case in military uniforms, and says, "How can I help?" It is in the interest of the United States to continue these kinds of missions, Mr. President.

It is estimated that we have served more than 160,000 Guatemalans since 2001, providing health care, basic health care needs. And I was sharing with the President a little earlier that we're going to set up a health care training mission in Panama, so that we can train trainers, so that people in Guatemala can come and get just the basic skills necessary to take back to their towns and villages to be able to dispense with basic health care.

The United States and Guatemala trade a lot, especially now that Guatemala has become a full member of CAFTA-DR. President Berger and I believe that CAFTA can spread opportunity, provide jobs, and help lift people out of poverty. We saw how trade can transform the small village of Chirijuyu, part of our experience in traveling with the President was to get outside the capital. It was really, really fun and really heartwarming. As a matter of fact, it was one of the great experiences of my Presidency. The town has grown from subsistence farming to selling high-value crops like lettuce and carrots and celery. As a matter of fact, I got to pack some lettuce. The President and I were hauling boxes

of lettuce; we were putting them in the truck.

I met Mariano Canu. See, I talked about this man, Mariano Canu, in my speech in Washington, DC. I'd never met him, but I was intrigued by his story about how a fellow had gone from being a subsistence farmer, just scratching out a living, barely making it, the father of six kids wondering whether or not they would have a future, and then he organized an organization of small farmers called *Labradores Mayas*. And they came together and became more efficient, and then they found markets. They found markets throughout Central America as a result of CAFTA, and into the United States as a result of CAFTA.

And the guy is making a living. He's making more than a living; he's built a thriving enterprise. You should have seen the look on his face, about how proud he was to show to the President of his country and the President of the United States the great progress being made.

As the President mentioned, I'm working with the United States Congress on comprehensive immigration reform. He asked me about an incident that took place up in Massachusetts the other day. I said, "Yes, we're going to enforce the laws in our country, just like you should enforce the laws in yours." It is against the law for somebody to hire somebody who is in our country illegally to work. And therefore, the deportations took place as a result of law enforcement enforcing the law. This wasn't—they didn't say, "Oh, maybe there's Guatemalans there; let's go get them." That wasn't what happened, just so you know. You've got to understand that when we enforce the law, we do so in a fair and rational way. It just so happened that Guatemalans were working there illegally.

He also mentioned to me that there's some conspiracies about how children are being left behind in Guatemala. *No es la verdad*. That's not the way America operates. We're a decent, compassionate country. Those are the kind of things we do

not do. We believe in families, and we'll treat people with dignity. And the system needs to be fixed. And so we spent time talking about our strategy to get comprehensive immigration reform out of the Congress.

As I told the President, it seems like to me, we've got to get this done by August. I hope so. I don't want to put a timetable on the legislative process. Timetables are generally meant to be broken. We don't believe in timetables, but I do believe in pressing hard and working with Democrats and Republicans to get it done, Mr. President. And we want there to be a rational way for people to come and do jobs Americans aren't doing. We don't want people to feel like they have to get stuffed into the back of a truck and pay exorbitant fees to *coyotes* to come and try to realize dreams. There's got to be a better system.

And I told him the biggest problem in the debate is going to be what to do with the people who are already in our country illegally. And I explained to him, there will not be amnesty, automatic citizenship; it's just not going to happen. Nor is it feasible to try to kick everybody out of our country. That's not possible. And so I'm going to work with members of both parties to find a rational middle ground to have a comprehensive plan, Mr. President. It's important to you, but it's important to the United States of America to do this as well.

We also talked about adoption. I don't know if my fellow citizens understand this, but there are a lot of U.S. families who adopt babies from Guatemala—thousands of babies. This year, it is very important for the United States and Guatemala to implement the Hague Convention on adoptions to help protect children and families during the adoption process. We found common ground on that issue. And I appreciate your strong stand, Mr. President, and I assured the President we would follow through ourselves.

I can't thank you enough for your leadership. I appreciate the vision you have for

your country. When you speak, you speak with passion, because you care deeply about the future of Guatemala, and you care deeply about the people of Guatemala. It's an honor to be with you. It's been a joyful trip for us. I'm looking forward to the dinner that you're hosting for Laura and me. I'm not going to talk too long because I might get too hungry. [Laughter] But thank you for your time.

*President Berger.* Thank you, Mr. President. Very nice—[inaudible]. Thank you. Thank you, President Bush. I have here a note where I'm asked to make reference to the members of the media who are going to ask questions.

Go ahead, Francisco.

### *Illegal Immigrants*

*Q.* President Bush, good afternoon. Mr. President, deportations continue. At the end of 2006, and only a week ago, this practice of deporting, of arresting immigrants and beginning a process of deportation, continued. In Guatemala, information of abuse of authority and lack of respect for the right of the Guatemalan immigrants has been disseminated. My question is, now that you are in Guatemala, is there a commitment from your country to the 13 million Guatemalans to cease these deportations since you expect to have a comprehensive immigration reform?

*President Bush.* The commitment is, people will be treated with respect, but the United States will enforce our law. It's against the law to hire somebody who is in our country illegally, and we are a nation of law.

The best way to solve the concerns of the citizens of Guatemala—listen, I fully understand that the citizens of Guatemala are concerned about their relatives or friends who are in the United States. And I appreciate that. The best way to address the concerns inherent in your question is for me to work with Congress to get a comprehensive bill. And I'm optimistic we can do so. It's going to be tough work—

don't get me wrong—but I believe we can get a comprehensive bill out of the Congress.

And I think you'll find that—let me say, I certainly hope you'll find that people who are in the—that are interfacing with our Government are treated with respect and decency. That's certainly the instructions. Now, I'm sure they don't want to be sent home, but, nevertheless, we enforce laws. And I readily concede the system needs to be changed, and I hope I can convince the majority of both the House and the Senate to change the law in a rational way.

Massimo [Massimo Calabresi, *Time*].

### *Congressional Action on Immigration Reform*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. May I extend good wishes to your father's health.

*President Bush.* Thank you.

*Q.* You've spoken throughout this trip about the—

*President Bush.* That's actually a kind gesture. Thank you.

*Q.* You've spoken throughout the trip about the need for comprehensive immigration reform. It's been a big subject here in Guatemala City. Can you provide a little more detail, sir, if you would, about how you intend to overcome congressional opposition? There is opposition in both parties, specifically at the moment. A bill has been expected for some time now. You've been working with Senators, and your staff have been working with Senators. Is there a holdup? How are you tackling the problem at the moment, sir?

*President Bush.* Yes. No, I appreciate that. He's referring to the process at this point in time, about why hadn't a consensus bill in the Senate began to emerge. And it's because this is a complicated issue that requires both parties learning to work together on this issue. I believe it is, first of all, incumbent to find, as best as possible, a coherent Republican position in the Senate. And that's where we're spending a lot of time right now. And then, as I

understand it, Senator Kennedy will be carrying the bill on the Democrat side, and then once we can get a coherent Republican position, one that most Republicans are comfortable with, then we'll start working with the Senator.

As you know full well that if we don't have enough consensus, nothing is going to move out of the Senate. And if nothing moves out of the Senate, nothing is going to happen in the House. And so therefore, the initial stages of getting a bill that meets objections is time consuming, but it is worth it and necessary in order for us to be able to address the concerns, many of which were expressed during the last debate on immigration reform.

Now, I'm optimistic, I really am. I believe we can get something done, and I believe we're beginning to find consensus. I think there is pretty widespread consensus that there ought to be a temporary-worker plan that says, you can come legally to the United States to do a job Americans are not doing, for a period of time. That will help a lot of the Guatemalan citizens. It will mean somebody, first of all, doesn't have to sneak in the country in the first place and pay a *coyote* or buy forged documents or sleep in some sleazy place hiding from authorities until you're able to make destination. You'll be able to come in, in a rational way.

Secondly, that once you're in the United States, if you have to come home to be with your family, you'll be able to do so in a legal way; in other words, you'll be able to come back and forth without fear. Now, you won't be able to—there will be a time limit on the amount of time, and that's part of the negotiations.

The hard issue, as the President noted and I just talked about, was what to do with the people who've been in our country for more than a limited period of time. And that's a difficult issue, and it's one that's got a lot of politics in the country. The idea of giving someone automatic citizenship is just not acceptable. It's not ac-

ceptable to a lot of people in our country, and, Massimo, you understand that. And yet the fundamental question is, how do you design a system that doesn't raise those fears? And yes, obviously, he didn't like my answer. Oh, you did like it? Well, good. [Laughter]

My dad had been ill, and he kindly brought greetings, for which I am grateful.

### *Legislative Agenda on Immigration Reform*

Q. Thank you, sir. That was very specific. That's a lot, though. Do you think you can get that done by August?

President Bush. Well, I—you know, August is a date that I was musing about, and that date came to mind because I understand how difficult it can be coming down the stretch in the legislative session in a calendar year, because the appropriations bill—you're learning more about this than you probably want to know—but the appropriations bills begin to crowd out the calendar in the latter part of the year. And they can consume a lot of time.

And therefore, my hope is—it's certainly not a promise, but my hope would be—that we'd be able to get something out of the Senate and then into the House, and something—then they can work the conference in the fall. That would be the hope.

And—but I'm not the person that sets the calendar. I'm just a simple member of the executive branch. [Laughter] It's the legislative branch that decides the calendar.

And—go ahead.

President Berger. I would like to say that, in fact, the Guatemalan people would have preferred a more clear and positive response, no more deportations, so to say. But, as the President has said, there is a legal framework that needs to be respected. But historically, I think that we have never been so close to finding a solution to this problem as now.

I was very pleased to hear President Bush say that this is a problem that they



also have. It is not only a problem for migrants, it is a problem for the American citizens who have—and a problem that has to be resolved. We have never before been as close as we are at this time of seeing a light at the end of the tunnel and, in a near future, in getting the undocumented status changed for 13 million illegal aliens who are living in the U.S.

*Narcotics and Drug Trafficking/Death of Salvadoran Congressmen*

Q. Good afternoon, President Bush and President Berger. President Bush, in Guatemala, there is a very serious problem of drug trafficking. You talk about a regional strategy to tackle it. I would like to ask you to expand on this topic, also taking into account that the latest reports produced by the United States on Guatemala have not been very favorable. And also, the issue of drug trafficking has led to very serious security problems in Guatemala. The latest was the murder of three Salvadoran Congress Members. The U.S. is also participating in this investigation. How far will the U.S. cooperation go? Because there is also the request for a mini-Colombia Plan to face it.

President Bush. Yes. The drug trafficking is very serious—a serious problem for the United States, and so—most of the drugs end up in the United States, which really says that we need to do a better job of convincing our citizens not to use drugs. If demand for the drugs went down, it could make it more difficult for the drug traffickers to find markets.

Secondly, drug trafficking is a serious problem because narcotrafficking destabilizes areas. It's in our interests, in our country, to promote prosperity and peace and stability. Narcotraffickers promote instability and tensions, which make it hard for the general populous to become prosperous. It also turns out, narcotraffickers oftentimes leave behind the poison as they head to other markets; in other words, the

local population can become deeply affected by *drogas*.

And so this is a serious issue. We've had experience in dealing with one state that obviously had to deal with the potential of narcotraffickers undermining democracy, and that's Colombia. This is—in my judgment, the best way to deal with this problem and to convince others throughout our country that it makes a lot of sense to commit assets is to think regionally, because as the President mentioned, he said, one of the interesting dynamics that's taking place here is that people and goods are moving quite freely across borders. Well, if people and goods are moving quite freely, drug traffickers will be moving quite freely. And there's kind of almost a borderless domain for these people.

And therefore, thinking regionally—and that includes the United States and Mexico and Central America. Now, I'll bring this up with President Calderon tomorrow, about how we can work constructively. A lot of this has to do with sharing of information; in other words, we pick up pretty good information at times. After all, the United States, oftentimes, is the endpoint, is the end of the distribution chain. And sometimes our DEA or folks can trace back movements of drugs, which might then be able to help the region be able to disrupt and affect.

Look, I am a “if they break the law, arrest them” person. I think we ought to go find these people and bring them to justice. And it's tough, because the richer they become, the more lethal they become and the more dangerous they are to democracies. And that's why there needs to be a collaborative effort, the details of which will emerge as we continue to strategize. But step one is to share information.

As to the Salvadorans, of course, I'm deeply concerned about their death, as is the President. And we have sent, I think, four FBI agents down here to help with forensics and to help track down the leads, so that wherever those killers may light,



the authorities can go get them. And that's what we need to do.

But this is a serious issue, and we spent a lot of time talking about it.

Elaine [Elaine Quijano, Cable News Network].

This will be your last question, Mr. President, and then we can start thinking about dinner, *la cena*. *Que vamos a comer?*

President Berger. Tortillas.

President Bush. Tortillas? *Que bueno*. [Laughter]

President Berger. We have tortillas with guacamole and beans.

President Bush. *Con almuerzo, hoy*.

*Border Security/Immigration Reform/Trade*

Q. Thank you. President Bush, your decision to sign legislation authorizing construction of a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border was not viewed positively here in the region. How would you respond to critics who feel that that sent a message that Latin Americans are not welcome in the United States?

And, President Berger, what are your thoughts on the idea of a fence, the U.S. border policy in regard to a fence?

President Bush. I did sign legislation modernizing our border. It was more than just fence; it was infrastructure—kind of a novel infrastructure, like detection devices, berms. We've got a very long border, and it needs to be enforced. It needs to be enforced not only to stop *coyotes*, but it needs to be enforced to stop drugs. It needs to be enforced to stop potential terrorists, and it needs to be enforced to stop arms—by the way, arms that sometimes go the other way—I'm told. And so we've got to have border. That's what countries do; they enforce their borders.

And so we modernized the border. It was more than just fence. And I understand it sent a signal that said, you're not welcome. Quite the contrary: People are welcome, but under the law. There are thousands of people in our country who are not citizens who are there legally. The

question is, what do we do with people who have been there over years, the result of a law that isn't working well? And I've already given that answer.

I will also explain that part of convincing people that a comprehensive plan can work is to assure the American people that we're doing our duty by enforcing law. In other words, a lot of citizens said, "You just don't care about whether or not we have a border that's secure." And the Congress responded by saying, "Of course, we care." It is the first step toward a comprehensive bill. In other words, people in Congress were saying, "Let us do something about border enforcement, and then let's go comprehensive." I hope that's what they're saying.

In other words, that's what I'm pressing them to say. Okay, we've responded to the needs of border enforcement; there are people being sent back. As a matter of fact, I think it's interesting—and frankly, I didn't anticipate this—that the good press corps of Guatemala, reflecting the concerns of the Guatemalan people, and the President of Guatemala reflecting the concerns, asked me about deportations. I mean, that was a primary concern. It means that something is—the law is being enforced, is what that means.

The American people need to be persuaded, Elaine, that the Government takes our responsibilities seriously, which then will make it easier to convince reluctant Members of Congress to come up with a comprehensive plan.

Now, I've always been for a comprehensive plan. You might remember, if you look back at some of my speeches—I know you didn't listen to any of them, but you might want to go back and read them. [Laughter] Well, that's not fair. Okay, anyway, but I've always felt it was important. And I learned firsthand how important it was as the Governor of Texas. I used to say, family values do not stop at the Rio Grande River and

that people are coming to do jobs Americans are not doing because they want to feed their families. That's why I said that.

By the way, the reason why trade is important in helping the programs like *Labradores Mayas* is that I also believe most citizens in Guatemala would rather find meaningful jobs at home instead of having to travel to a foreign land to work. And therefore, the more we can enhance prosperity in our neighborhood, the more we can encourage trade that actually yields jobs and stability, the less likely it is somebody who is worried about putting food on the table for their family will be coming to the United States.

Anyway, I thank you for your interest on the topic, Mr. President. It's been a wonderful press conference. Thank you.

*President Berger.* I would like to close with that topic: the American Dream for everyone. And we can have that American

Dream in our own countries by promoting education, by improving infrastructure, by implementing CAFTA, which is a very interesting tool to produce and to export and also to attract investment and generate jobs. I would believe that we are firm along those lines and that the American Dream is going to be the dream for all the Americans living in the American Continent.

Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:37 p.m. at the National Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Wendy Widmann de Berger, wife of President Berger; and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico. President Berger and some reporters spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Temozon Sur, Mexico March 13, 2007

*President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico.* Your Excellency, Mr. George W. Bush, President of United States of America, Mrs. Laura Bush, and distinguished members of the staff accompanying President Bush: I hope you are all welcome to Mexico. We're very pleased with your visit because it reflects your interest upon our country, and it allows us to dialog about our complex bilateral agenda.

For many reasons, the relationship with the United States of America is a most important relationship for Mexico, but also the relationship with Mexico is a most important relationship for the United States of America. This is what you have expressed, Mr. President, in a meeting like this one when you expressed some years ago that there is no relationship all over

the world that is most relevant to the United States than that one that you have with Mexico. Unfortunately, the terrible happenings against the United States people made that in a very understandable way, the priorities changed. Nevertheless, I believe that it is now time to retake the spirit of those words and to direct our relationship toward a path of mutual prosperity. We are countries and friends as people with our prospective place and a shared future that I am certain that we can reach for mutual benefit.

I come originally from the State of Michoacan, one of the States that has endured tremendously with migration. And I know the pain of the families when they split and also of all those towns where the elderly are remaining alone. I also know that Mexicans lose in each migrant the best

of our people—young people, working people, and audacious people, strong people—people that leave Mexico because they do not find the opportunities here in order to pull through with their lives. This is which we want to generate jobs for Mexicans here in Mexico, because that is the only way in order to truly solve the migratory issue.

That is a solution that is convenient for all of us, and, as a result, we should commonly resolve it, because while we have two economies that complement each other, but yet are not equal. One is intensive in labor, and the other one is intensive in capital. So therefore, migration might not be stopped, and certainly not by decree. This is why we are intensively working, so instead that our labor will be moving to where the capital is located. It will rather receive in Mexico the investment where the labor is located, and our families will not continue splitting themselves nor our population. Mexicans, we all do fully respect the right that of the Government and the people of the United States of America has to decide within its territory what will be best for their concerns and security.

But at the same time, we do consider in a respectful way that we may truly stop the migration by building a kilometer of highway in Michoacan or Zacatecas than 10 kilometers of walls in the border. This is why we wish to respect the rights of everyone, more so of our population. This is why we recognize and support the effort that you are conducting, Mr. President Bush, in order to promote a comprehensive migratory reform in the Congress of the United States, and we wish you the best of successes. This is why we also would like to continue working together, and now with tremendous emphasis in order to accelerate the development of our people, because I am certain that there is nothing better for the security and prosperity of our region than the prosperity of Mexico.

On the other hand, we share the intention of keeping a safe border, because those who live on both sides of the border deserve so, being American or Mexican. The government does the part that it has to do; it gets back all the public plazas and the streets from criminals and drugs. We have accredited with facts our firm commitment in our battle against those who wish to poison the bodies and the souls of our young population. But in order to be successful in our struggle, we need the collaboration and the active participation of our neighbor, knowing that while we will not reduce the demand for drugs in a certain area, it will be very difficult to reduce the supply in ours.

Mr. President, I have no doubt that together our Governments will move forward in the generation of new opportunities of well-being and prosperity for our nations. Please feel very, very welcome to Mexico.

*President Bush. Buenos dias. Estamos encantados de estar en Mexico otra vez.*

Mr. President and Mrs. Zavala, thank you for your warm welcome. We're delighted to be back in your country. As Governor of Texas, I visited your beautiful country many times, and I came to know and admire the people of Mexico. As President, I've worked to strengthen the ties between our two nations. Mexico was the first country I visited after I became President of the United States. The United States and Mexico are partners. We're partners in building a safer, more democratic, and more prosperous hemisphere. And a strong relationship between our countries is based upon mutual trust and mutual respect.

President Calderon, I appreciate your determination to create new opportunities for the people of Mexico. I share your commitment to building an Americas where the poor and the marginalized begin to feel the blessings of liberty in their daily lives. I respect your views on migration. Because we're working together, I believe we will make good progress on this important issue. Together, we're working to ensure that we

have a secure and modern border that speeds the legitimate flow of people and commerce and stop those who threaten our common safety and prosperity.

The United States respects rule of law. But in the debate on migration, I remind my fellow citizens that family values do not stop at the Rio Grande River, that there are decent, hard-working, honorable citizens of Mexico who want to make a living for their families. And so, Mr. President, my pledge to you and your Government—but more importantly, the people of Mexico—is I will work as hard as I possibly can to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

We support your plans to improve education and health care and housing for all your citizens. We will continue to work with you to expand opportunities for trade and investment. We will work together to facilitate a smooth transition to full trade, especially on sensitive issues like corn and beans. We recognize that the best hope to lift millions out of poverty is to spread prosperity through free and fair trade. The people of the United States understand that when we help our neighbors build a better life for themselves, we advance peace and prosperity for all of us.

Today, the most important ties between the United States and Mexico are not government to government, they are people to people. These ties include churches and faith-based institutions that serve people on

both sides of the *frontera*. These ties include our colleges and universities, which run important exchange programs for students and teachers. These ties include our businesses, which trade one another—trade with one another and invest in each other's countries. And these ties include the families who send an estimated \$20 billion in remittances each year to their relatives here in Mexico, one of the largest private economic initiatives in the world. These ties are vital, and they are growing.

Mr. President, geography has made our countries neighbors, but the choice we've made for each other is a choice for freedom. And that choice has made us friends. I'm honored to be in your country. I'm looking forward to our discussions over the next 2 days. You have set a very ambitious agenda that is going to require a lot of hard work. But I'm confident that by working together, we'll build a better life and a future of hope for our peoples.

Thank you for having me. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:04 a.m. at Hacienda Temozon. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon. President Calderon spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in Merida, Mexico March 13, 2007

*Senor Presidente*, thank you very much for your gracious hospitality. I think you picked a perfect place to invite Laura and me and our delegation. It's a beautiful land. It is a spectacular day. And our meetings

were constructive. Thank you, First Lady, for your hospitality as well.

Relations between Mexico and the United States are *muy importante*. We've got a great history. We've got a strong tradition of working together. And my job,

Mr. President, is to do all I can to work with you to advance progress on both sides of the border.

There are issues, of course, issues that we discussed today and will continue to discuss in a manner of respect and dignity. Perhaps the biggest issue concerning your country is the issue of migration. America is a country of law; we'll respect law. But America is also a hospitable country, a country that recognizes the value of each human being. And as the President of your grand country, I know you're deeply concerned about how your citizens are treated within our country. And my pledge to you and the people of Mexico is, they'll be treated with respect and dignity.

The best way to do that is to pass a migration law that upholds the values of America and, at the same time, allows us to respect the rule of law. As I told you in private, as you expressed your deep concerns about whether or not America can pass such a law, that I will use all the

efforts I can, working with both Republicans and Democrats, to pass such a piece of legislation.

We spent a lot of time talking about Mexico's important role in the world, and I thank you for your leadership, Mr. President. You're President of a great country. You will use your influence to foster social justice and prosperity and peace. I look forward to your leadership on such issues; I look forward to helping you as best I can, as best as you request to do so.

And I, too, would like to offer a toast. I'd like to offer a toast to the great people of a great country, *nuestro amigo*, Mexico, and to your *salud*, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at Hacienda Temozon. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Calderon.

## Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in Merida March 13, 2007

Mr. President, Mrs. Zavala, members of your government, Governor of Yucatan, the mayor of Merida, other government officials, distinguished guests: *Buenas noches, y gracias*. Laura and I are delighted to be back in Mexico. We're grateful for the warm hospitality of President Calderon and Mrs. Zavala. We appreciate the chance to dine in this beautiful setting, which calls to mind Mexico's rich history and its bright future.

For Laura and me, the connection to Mexico stretches back for decades. *Somos Tejanos*. We have come to admire your country, the people, and your culture. As Governor, I worked closely with my counterparts on this side of the border and

made a lot of friends in Mexico. As President, Mexico was the first country I visited and the first country whose leader I welcomed for a state dinner at the White House. Over the past 6 years, I've traveled all across your nation, from here in Merida to Monterrey to Los Cabos on the Pacific Coast. And this evening the relationship between Mexico and the United States is as strong and is as vibrant as it has ever been, and President Calderon and I intend to keep it that way.

The ties between our countries are deep and lasting. We are united by the bonds of family. We are united by the growing commerce that crosses our border each



day. And we are united in our faith in an Almighty God.

The accident of geography made our two countries neighbors, but common values have made us friends. The most important value we share is our belief in democracy, and last year, the world saw Mexican democracy in action. Across the country, large numbers of voters turned out for an election that was open, honest, and really close; come to think of it, it sounds familiar to me. [Laughter] Your fidelity to the democratic process was the mark of a nation growing in confidence and freedom. And in the end, the Mexican people chose a good man to be their President.

Shortly before his inauguration, President Calderon came to see me in the Oval Office. I was impressed by his character, his leadership, and his devotion to the Mexican people. He's an innovative thinker with a vision of justice and prosperity for all in this nation. And during his first 100 days as President, he's shown his commitment to delivering results for all the people he has served. In my conversations today, he shared his willingness to work with members of all political parties and with people from all sectors of the civil society.

Today we discussed the President's top priorities. I share those priorities. His top priority is to provide security throughout the country. He's taking bold steps to enforce the rule of law and to crack down on organized crime and drugs, and reform the judicial system.

The United States is a strong partner in these efforts. We've got work to do on our side of the border. People provide drugs because there is a demand for drugs, and the United States must do a better job of reducing the demand for drugs. And at the same time, I look forward to close cooperation. We'll work with the President and other Presidents in our region to interdict the supply of drugs.

President Calderon also knows the importance of creating new opportunities for Mexico's economy. He's laid out innovative

policies to combat poverty and to create jobs. I found one of his policies most interesting: rewarding Mexican companies that hire first-time workers. And I appreciate his strong commitment to housing and infrastructure in southern Mexico.

He's called for economic reforms that encourage competition and fight corruption. He understands the importance of free and fair trade. The United States welcomes a strong Mexican economy, and we fully understand that we must work together to facilitate a smooth transition to full trade, especially on sensitive issues such as corn and beans.

President Calderon holds deep convictions on the matter of migration, and so do I. Our nations share a 2,000-mile border, and that should be a source of unity, not division. So we're working together to keep both sides of the border open to tourism and trade and closed to criminals and drug dealers and smugglers and terrorists and gun runners.

I appreciate the President's commitment to secure Mexican borders on both the north and the south. And I told the President today—and I'm going to keep repeating it while I'm here in Mexico—that I know our country must have comprehensive immigration reform. We are a rule of law. But it's important for the American citizens to understand that family values do not stop at the Rio Grande River, and that it's in our Nation's interests to have a comprehensive immigration law so we can uphold the great values of America, values based on human dignity and the worth of each individual.

And so, Mr. President, it's been a good day. We spent a lot of time talking about important issues in a very constructive and friendly way. I appreciate your candor. I appreciate you being straightforward. And I, too, would like to offer a toast to good people of Mexico and its leaders.



NOTE: The President spoke at 8:16 p.m. at Hacienda Xcanatun. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon; Governor Patricio Jose Patron Laviada of Yucatan, Mexico; and Mayor Manuel Jesus

Fuentes Alcocer of Merida, Mexico. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Calderon. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks in a Discussion With Training, Internship, Exchange, and Scholarship Program Recipients in Merida March 14, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all for joining us. One of the best things America can do is help people realize their dreams. The best way to realize dreams is through education.

I'm so happy that you all have joined me to share with me your experiences from one of our most effective programs, which is a program all aimed at improving the human condition. I'm proud of the citizens of the United States who show great concern for citizens in our neighborhood. And I thank you for coming to share your experiences.

Victor, would you like to start? I mentioned you in *un discurso en los Estados Unidos* about the benefits of this program. I understand you went to Bettendorf Community College—Scott Community College? Okay. Well, tell us, Victor, your story.

*Victor Lopez Ruiz.* Ladies and gentlemen, I want to express my deepest appreciation for this opportunity. Thank you, Mr. President, for sharing my story in your speech last week. Your words fill me so happy. And I have the encouragement to keep working in my community. I want to express my gratitude, as well, to Becas CASS and USAID for selecting me for this scholarship in 2004. I received an associate degree in international business and trade at Scott Community College, Bettendorf, Iowa.

And finally, I would like to thank everyone that supported me and helped me for

this opportunity, my dreams come true, especially my family. I had to face many challenges to get an education, but I learned that with right attitude and a lot of effort and commitment, everything is possible.

At the age of 12, I had to leave my community to be able to study high school. I faced several obstacles, including the fact that I did not speak Spanish, because my language is Tzotzil. Now I speak three languages. I had to work to support my education. This is how I was able to study. I still continue fighting for my dream today, which makes me value them even more.

I really enjoyed my time in the U.S.A. I lived with a nice family for the first year. We had a hard time trying to communicate to each other, but quickly I felt like one of their family. I still talk with them, and although I miss my Mexican food—[laughter]—I thought I would only be eating hamburger and pizza. [Laughter] My American family introduced me to delicious food, and I gained weight. From the U.S.A. culture, I learned to value organization, civic responsibility, and respect and tolerance, to be able to work with others.

I did an internship in a coffee production company in Bettendorf, to use the skills that I was learning in commerce and administration. These same skills have helped me to start a small, family-run Internet cafe and bakery in Comitán, Chiapas. I also volunteered with two associations; one is a

local coffee company made up of indigenous people—coffee growers. They assist with financial management and human resources, assist them in possessing the certificate, and serve as a translator. I am also continuing my education in bachelor degree in accounting at *Universidad Autonoma de Chiapas*.

I want to invite Mexican young people to come together and commit to their community and our country. Education is the only means to improve our quality of life and achieve peace, social peace in the entire world.

Once again, thank you for this scholarship program. I hope the U.S.A. Government continues to support this program so that other young people can have the same opportunity that I have had.

Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you very much, Victor. What was the name of the family in Bettendorf?

*Mr. Lopez Ruiz.* Peter and Mary Shaffer.

*The President.* Well, I thank them. I hope they feel good about the fact that they helped you. There's a lot of American families that have great compassion for people around the world. And thank you for sharing the story.

Marcela, you went to Texas?

*Marcela Ruiz Esparaza.* I went to Texas. Good morning, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. Being a small-business owner is more than just a job or as a way to take a living; it's a true calling in life—the power of having an idea, taking a risk, and starting a small business that fulfills a need in the marketplace, and that creating jobs is truly magical. In Mexico, there exists a very strong entrepreneurial spirit, just like in the United States, where men and women from all over the country are ready to engage their God-given abilities, work hard, and improve the life of their families.

I have dedicated my life to helping business men and women in the State of Aguascalientes live their dreams and start their own small businesses. My center, CE INNOVA, was started in 2001 and has since helped over 300 small businesses start and prosper, which has resulted in the creation of hundreds of jobs and improved the lives of countless families.

A key factor in the CE INNOVA SBDC success was having the opportunity to participate in a training program offered by the *Universidad Autonoma* of Guadalajara and the University of Texas at San Antonio, and supported by USAID. The diplomatic training program shared a small-business counseling and training best practices from the 1,100 centers from U.S. small-business development network. This training not only helped us for better assist the entrepreneurs of Aguascalientes, but it also linked us with counterparts in the U.S. and helped us support a growing Mexican association of SBDC, now led by the *Universidad de*—[inaudible].

On behalf of the many business men and women that we have helped, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the American people for supporting us. I am very proud of the work of CE INNOVA SBDC and the Mexican Small Business Development Center Network are doing here in Mexico to grow the small-business sector, create jobs, and improving the life of its community.

Thank you very much.

*The President.* Very good. Thank you all very much; thanks. We'll eat a little breakfast now, where we can continue our discussion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Merida. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## The President's News Conference With President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa in Merida

March 14, 2007

*President Calderon.* Good morning, Mr. President, dear friends from the media. I thank you for being here in this press conference. I would like to thank very sincerely President George Bush for visiting our country and for dedicating almost 3 days to his visit in Mexico.

I am very pleased to inform you that President George Bush and myself, we're fully satisfied for how fruitful this meeting has been for both countries. As leaders of sovereign nations, we have talked in a respectful environment and a cordial environment about very diverse and complex issues of our bilateral agenda. We coincided in sharing our core responsibility, which now, more than ever, happened to be a shared responsibility. We reiterate our commitment with democracy, with the defense and respect of human rights, the promotion of free trade, with the rule of law, security, sustainable development and, in particular, our fight against poverty.

From this platform of understanding, we have covered in detail each of the issues of our bilateral agenda. I would like to express my gratitude to President Bush that we have talked so openly, with the sincerity and respect of both countries that are not only neighbors, but they are pursuing to do what true friends should do.

We have talked, for example, about the strengthening of a task force that will be directed to the transition of full trade of sensitive products such as corn and beans. We talked about the need to cover the phenomenon of migration as a factor of prosperity for both nations, orderly migration process. And we acknowledged the effort that President Bush and his administration is doing in order to promote within the Congress a comprehensive migratory reform that will acknowledge the rights of the migrants and workers, that would allow

orderly and legal programs for temporary jobs, and would allow the reunification of family ties.

We have expressed our concern for protecting and guaranteeing human rights of those who cross the border and, above all, about the enormous relevance of generating in Mexico opportunities that the citizens need for their development.

We shared the need of having a safe border that will close the gates to drugs, arms, and terrorism and that will open its doors to trade, prosperity and trade. Our border should be a tightening and closing point; the border should bring us together and not separate us. For this, we are considering the possibility of establishing new cross points and border bridges that will speed up the transit of goods and people. Both Presidents have agreed to coordinate in a better way our actions in order to confront organized crime in both sides of the border.

Mexico and the United States are nations that are joined together in the pursuit for better levels of well-being for its people. We do have the means, and, in this meeting, we have seen the political will in order to reach shared goals. I'm fully convinced, then, from this visit on, we will be able to start a new stage of the relationships that take place between Mexico and the United States.

*President Bush.* *Senor Presidente, gracias. Buenos dias.* Laura and I have had a fascinating trip, and our final stop was a really good one, Mr. President. Glad to be back in Mexico. This is an especially beautiful part of your wonderful country. The hospitality was very generous, and the meals were quite good. [Laughter] *Estoy lleno.* [Laughter]

Over the past 2 days, the President and I have had a very—a series of friendly and

very productive meetings. That's what the people of our respective countries expect. They expect people to work out differences in a constructive way. They expect leaders to seize opportunities for the benefit of our respective peoples. And the spirit is very strong to work together.

I appreciate so very much the fact that during our meetings, we reaffirmed the values of democracy and transparency and rule of law that guide both our countries. We discussed ways to make our Nation safer, both nations safer and both nations prosperous.

President Calderon is taking a tough stand against organized crime and drugs, and I appreciate that. I made it very clear to the President that I recognize the United States has a responsibility in the fight against drugs. And one major responsibility is to encourage people to use less drugs. When there is demand, there is supply. And to the extent, Mr. President, that we can continue to make progress to reduce drugs, it will take pressure off of Mexico. So we have a responsibility.

Mexico has a responsibility as well, and the President is working hard on that responsibility. And we agreed to work together. Mexico is obviously a sovereign nation, and the President, if he so chooses, like he has, will lay out an agenda where the United States can be a constructive partner.

And the other place where we can work together is in the region. And so the President, who is a very strong leader in Central America, for example, will work with the United States and the Central American countries to develop a regional plan, because it could be successful in Mexico, and yet the problem could be transferred to the south, in which case we wouldn't have the security we would want. So, Mr. President, thank you for your leadership on this issue. I'm looking forward to working with you on it.

We talked about the economy. My view is, is that when Mexico grows, the United

States benefits. And obviously, to the extent, Mr. President, you're able to put forth your innovative policies, we applaud your efforts. I appreciate so very much some of the innovative ideas that you're putting forward. As I said last night in the dinner, I appreciate very much the fact that you're focusing development in the south of your country.

Obviously, there was a lot of discussion about trade. People in my country are concerned about trade; people in Mexico are concerned about trade. There are strong protectionist sentiments in the United States. And I will work, Mr. President, to reject those protectionist sentiments, because I believe trade is one of the best avenues to help common prosperity. And anytime we have trade relations, there will be complications. And I pledged to the President that we would work together to ensure a smooth transition to full trade in dealing with sensitive issues such as corn and beans.

Education is an important issue that is—for our two countries. And I appreciate your commitment to strong education. The United States can help. I'm a big believer in student exchanges between our two nations, on both sides of the border. And one reason I am, is because I think it's important, sometimes, for people to gain an accurate perception of my country by coming to my country. I love for the fact that students travel back and forth.

Mr. President, this morning I met with some students that are funded through USAID programs, who have come to the United States to take different courses in different subjects, and then have come back to Mexico to lend the expertise that they have gained to improve the communities in which they live. This is a vital program that the United States must continue, in my judgment, in order to help people realize the great benefits of education.

We spent a lot of time on the important and sensitive issue of migration. I say "sensitive" because obviously this is an issue

that people can use to inflame passions. I say "important" because a good migration law will help both economies and will help the security of both countries. And the reason I say that is that if people can come into our country, for example, on a temporary basis to work, doing jobs Americans aren't doing, they won't have to sneak across the border.

And by the way, a system that encourages people to sneak across the border is a system that leads to human rights abuses. It's a system that promotes *coyotes* and document forgers. It's a system that allows for the exploitation of citizens who are trying to earn a living for their families.

And so, Mr. President, as we discussed, I will work with Congress, with members of both political parties, to pass immigration law that will enable us to respect the rule of law and, at the same time, respect humanity in a way that upholds the values of the United States of America.

I appreciate your hospitality. It's been a very warm greeting, Mr. President. I thank you and your good wife for being so kind to Laura and me. I look forward to future conversations. *Muchas gracias.*

*President Calderon. Gracias, el Presidente.* We will have a Q&A session now, starting with the Mexican press.

#### *Mexico-U.S. Relations/Mexico's Foreign Policy*

Q. Good morning, President of the United States of America, President of the United Mexico States.

*President Bush. Perdoname.*

Q. Good morning. Your visit is coming to an end now—this is a question for President George Bush: At the end of your visit, sir, have you found allies in order to place a counterweight to the initiatives of Hugo Chavez? What commitments did Felipe Calderon take on in order to be a counterweight to these initiatives of Hugo Chavez, on the one hand?

And on the other hand, President Felipe Calderon, Foreign Minister Patricia has

said that you are working in order to strengthen the relationship with Venezuela. How is this compatible with the commitments that you're taking on with President Bush in order to give thrust to this counterweight in Latin America concerning Hugo Chavez?

*President Bush.* Thank you for the question. We spent a lot of time talking about Mexico's role in the world. Mexico is a respected nation; President Calderon is a respected leader. But our conversations focused on democracy and rule of law and prosperity and how to improve the lives of our fellow citizens. We spent time talking about social justice and concern for the poor.

One of the reasons I've come down here again is to remind people in this important part of the world that the United States cares deeply about the human condition; that we spent 1.6 billion of bilateral aid last year, most of the money going to social justice programs. And that doesn't include programs like the one I saw in the highlands of Guatemala, where our military was providing basic health care for citizens.

So, Mr. President and I spent time talking about how to advance a hopeful agenda, one that will lift the spirits of people. And I respect the role Mexico plays. I mean, Mexico will lead diplomatic efforts for the common security and common prosperity, and that's an important role.

*President Calderon.* The commitment and purpose of my Government is to have constructive, positive, and sound relations with all countries of the world and, of course, with the countries of Latin America, without exception. And certainly the more—the most important relationship with Mexico abroad is the one that we have with the United States, due to the migration that exists, the flows through the borders, and all else that you are well aware of.

However, Mexico is respectful of the opinions of other leaders. We are respectful of the heads of states of other countries,



such as Venezuela and certainly the United States. We are a government that has principles and values, values such as democracy, freedom, liberty, and legality and certainly security and safety.

On the other hand, not as a strategy—this was not something that we focused on as a strategy in our talks, but as a conviction of our government. Mexico has to play a role which is balanced, weighed, and it has to be a leader in Latin America, in agreement with its culture, its history, its economy, its people.

We are deeply Latin American, and we, too, want justice, development, democracy for all of Latin America. That is where we are engaged, and we are committed. We certainly do agree and coincide with other countries, many countries, of course, who coincide and agree with those principles.

#### *Department of Justice*

Q. Mr. President, thank you. The Attorney General acknowledged yesterday that in a statement made by—

*President Bush.* Hold on, Roger [Roger Runnigen, Bloomberg News]. The world wants to hear your voice.

Q. Thank you. The Attorney General acknowledged yesterday that there were mistakes in the firing of prosecutors. What is his future in your cabinet? Do you have confidence in him? And more importantly—or just as important—how effective can he be in Congress going forward when he's lost a lot of confidence among Democrats and doesn't have any defenders among Republicans?

*President Bush.* I do have confidence in Attorney General Al Gonzales. I talked to him this morning, and we talked about his need to go up to Capitol Hill and make it very clear to members in both political parties why the Justice Department made the decisions it made, making very clear about the facts. And he's right: Mistakes were made. And I'm frankly not happy about them, because there is a lot of confu-

sion over what really has been a customary practice by the Presidents: U.S. attorneys and others serve at the pleasure of the President. Past administrations have removed U.S. attorneys; it's their right to do so.

The Justice Department recommended a list of U.S. attorneys. I believe the reasons why were entirely appropriate. And yet this issue was mishandled to the point now where you're asking me questions about it in Mexico, which is fine. I mean, if I were you, I'd ask the same question. This is an issue that—and so Al—let me just say, Al was right; mistakes were made; and he's going to go up to Capitol Hill to correct them.

I appreciate the fact that he's taken some action, because anytime anybody goes up to Capitol Hill, they've got to make sure they fully understand the facts and how they characterize the issue to Members of Congress. And the fact that both Republicans and Democrats feel like that there was not straightforward communication troubles me, and it troubles the Attorney General, so he took action. And he needs to continue to take action.

#### *Immigration Reform/President Calderon's Meeting With Former President Vicente Fox of Mexico*

Q. Good morning to both Presidents. President Bush, I ask you, why do Mexicans want to—why would you think that Mexicans could believe in a reform in migration when for so many years, this was not a possibility nor reality? And what are your chances of coming through with this bill in Congress? And President Calderon, you had lunch with President Fox. Can you tell us what you talked about?

*President Bush.* They talked about *carne*. [Laughter] Excuse me. I wasn't there. [Laughter]

No, that's a legitimate question, and the question is, why now? Why do I think something positive can happen? Well, first of all, the legislative process takes awhile



in the United States. I don't know about Mexico, Mr. President, but sometimes legislators, you know, debate issues for awhile before a solution can be achieved.

And we had a very—by the way, we haven't had a serious debate on migration until recently. A law was passed in 1986, and then there really wasn't a serious debate until pretty much starting after the year 2000, if my memory serves me well. I've always known this is an important issue because I happened to have been the Governor of Texas. And so I'm very comfortable about discussing the issue and have elevated the issue over the past years. And Members of Congress have taken the issue very seriously, but it's hard to get legislation out of the Congress on a very complex issue.

A lot of Americans were deeply concerned that the United States was not enforcing our laws. They felt like there wasn't a commitment to the rule of law. Over the past year, I believe we have shown the American people that there is a strong commitment to the rule of law. And I think Members of Congress are now feeling more comfortable that the country is committed to rule of law, which then makes some more openminded to my argument, which is that if we can have migration reform, it will make it less likely somebody will feel like they have to sneak across our border, and, therefore, take pressure off the border. In other words, security for the country, border security, will be enhanced by a good migration law, and then it will make it easier for us to focus our assets on drugs, terrorists, criminals, and guns moving both ways.

I believe—I feel pretty good about it. I don't want to predict legislative successes. But I can tell you my mood, and my mood is optimistic because the mood in the Congress seems like it has changed from skepticism last year to knowledge that getting a comprehensive bill will be in the Nation's interests.

Secondly, I'm optimistic because Republicans in the Senate are working with Democrats in the Senate. We're facilitating that work. The administration is very much involved with helping the Senators find common ground, to the point where we can move a bill as quickly as possible out of the Senate so it gets to the House of Representatives.

I'm not a betting man. I don't like to bet, because when I do, I usually lose. But I'm an optimistic man, in this case, about getting comprehensive reform, and a bill is in the interests of both countries.

*President Calderon.* I met with former President Vicente Fox, whom I like, and we have a good friendship. We belong to the same party. I invited him to lunch; we talked for quite a while, talked about matters in a very constructive fashion. And he congratulated us for the work that we've done during these first 100 days. He also said that he had the will to collaborate and cooperate in a respectful fashion with the government for the benefit of Mexicans.

I have also met with other former Presidents, and I'm sure that I will continue to meet with President Fox in the future throughout my administration.

*President Bush.* Here it comes.

#### *Department of Justice*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President, President Calderon. On the dismissal of U.S. attorneys: There have been allegations that political motivations were involved. Is political loyalty to your administration an appropriate factor? And when you talked to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales last year, what did you say? And what did you direct him to do?

*President Bush.* Thanks, Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News]. I've heard those allegations about political decisionmaking; it's just not true. Secondly, just so you know, I get asked—I mean, I get complaints all the time from Members of Congress on a variety of subjects—this Senator, this Congressperson so-and-so—and there's

occasionally frustration with the executive branch. And they will pull me aside and say, "Are you aware of this? Are you aware of that?" And I did receive complaints about U.S. attorneys.

I specifically remember one time I went up to the Senate, and Senators were talking about the U.S. attorneys. I don't remember specific names being mentioned, but I did say to Al last year—you're right, last fall, I said, "Have you heard complaints about AGs? I have"—I mean, U.S. attorneys, excuse me—and he said, "I have." But I never brought up a specific case nor gave him specific instructions.

Q. Sir, might he have inferred that you discussed it with him—was a need for him to take action?

*President Bush.* You're going to have to ask Al that question, but as I say, I discuss with my Cabinet officials complaints I hear. I mean, when Members of the Senate come up and say to me, "I've got a complaint," I think it's entirely appropriate and necessary for me to pass those complaints on. Now, I don't every single time, but people view their moment with the President, sometimes, as an opportunity to unload their frustrations about how things may be working in their State—or Congresspersons, how things may be working in their district. And whether it be the Attorney General or the Secretary of State or other members of my Cabinet, I pass those complaints on at times.

What Al did was, and what the Justice Department did was appropriate—U.S. attorneys serve at the pleasure of the President. In other words, they're appointed by the President; they can be removed by the President. What was mishandled was the explanation of the cases to the Congress. And Al has got work to do up there. And the thing I appreciate about the Attorney General was, he said publicly that he could have handled it better—mistakes were made—and took action. And obviously, more action needs to be taken. That's what I discussed with him on the phone today.

### *Energy/Trade*

Q. Good morning. President Calderon, concerning energy matters, 3 days before the celebration of the anniversary of the expropriation of oil in our country, could you tell us what the position of the Senators of opposition have stated about these matters of oil? We know that the reserves and, of course this oil abundance, perhaps, is coming to its end. Was this issue on oil discussed here?

And, President Bush, 2008 will welcome the opening up of livestock and agriculture matters. Sir, is there a possibility of renegotiating or, perhaps, leave it for a later date this negotiation of this part of the trade agreement because of the complaints of Mexican producers?

*President Calderon.* The truth of the matter is that we did not discuss this issue of oil, because this is something that has to do specifically with Mexicans. This is a Mexican issue. We will not privatize a company that belongs to Mexicans, such as of the case of Pemex. We will have to see this later on, in terms of sovereignty, and speak about the initiatives, of course, and to see what our Congress states. We do have problems with the decline of, especially, Cantarell, which has been very important in the production of oil throughout the years, but which is declining in amounts. But we will have to be very clear on the fact that we will be sharing responsibility between Congress and the President.

Concerning agriculture and livestock, I do share the sensitivity of our working group and President Bush. We have set up a working group to deal with the matters of corn and bean, precisely to make more agile this transition, which is established at the end of the free trade agreement, NAFTA.

We do have different problems now today, different from what it was 1 year ago, when we see that the prices of corn are going down. We are having very high costs in our production. This has left our

producers out of competition. And now we are seeing what consumption is all about with these very high prices, in the case of corn.

However, due to the circumstance we have had in this meeting, we strengthened and we will be strengthening even more a group, a working group, which will address these issues, which are very sensitive for Mexican producers.

*President Bush.* No, no. Excuse me, Tony. One reason I didn't bring up energy is because energy is—it belongs to sovereign Mexico. And I'm confident that the President will make the best interests for the people of Mexico, working with the Congress.

In terms of opening up NAFTA, renegotiating NAFTA is a mistake, in my judgment. NAFTA has worked. And there is a mechanism in place, that the President just described, about how to resolve sensitive issues. There will be sensitive issues on a frequent basis when it comes to trade. And the best way to resolve those is through negotiations and discussions, recognizing the sensitivities on both sides of the border. But trying to renegotiate a treaty that has been incredibly important for both sides of the border, in my judgment, would be a mistake. You don't want to weaken NAFTA; you want to make sure it stays strong in order that prosperity continues to expand and people benefit on both sides of the border.

*Immigration Reform/Immigrant Life in the United States*

Q. Thank you. President Bush, you said the other day that you want to first—on immigration, want to first find a coherent Republican position in the Senate. Most Senate Republicans voted against last year's bill in the Senate. What changes are you willing to make? And would you be willing to forgo a path to citizenship as part of that bill? And, President Calderon, it's been reported you have relatives working in the United States. What have you learned from

their experiences? Do you know, do they want to become citizens? And do you know, are they there legally? [*Laughter*]

*President Bush.* What was your question again? No. [*Laughter*] Michael Chertoff and Carlos Gutierrez are negotiating with Republicans, helping Republicans find common ground, Steve [Stephen Dinan, Washington Times], and this isn't the appropriate place to be conducting negotiations.

It is the appropriate place to talk about the spirit of moving the bill forward. And obviously, we would like to be able to convince no-voters that it makes sense to be for a comprehensive immigration policy. I feel strongly that it's in our interests, national interests, to get a bill done. That's why, after all, I took—I gave the address to the United States from the Oval Office on this very subject.

And you asked about amnesty—look, amnesty is not going to fly. There is not going to be automatic citizenship; it just won't work. People in the United States don't support that, and neither do I; nor will kicking people out of the United States work. It's not practical. It is not a realistic solution. Some may articulate that, but it's empty talk. And so therefore, there's got to be a middle ground, a reasonable way to deal with the 12 million or so people that have been in our country for a period of time. And that's where a lot of the discussions are taking place, Steve. And I think we can find a rational way forward, somewhere in between automatic citizenship and kicking people out of the country. It's in our interests we do so. I mean, we are a nation of law, and therefore, if we can change the law for the better, we ought to do so.

And so, Mr. President, back to the man's question over there, I'm optimistic. And—but he helped—his question was somewhat insightful—well, very insightful—because what he pointed out was the legislative challenges that we face. He also made it clear in his question that the administration is very much involved with working with

Republican Senators to help find common ground between Republican Senators and Senator Kennedy, who is emerging as the lead Senator on the Democrat side.

I will tell you, if we can find that common ground, we have a very good chance of getting the bill out of the Senate, because Senator Kennedy is one of the best legislative Senators there is. He can get the job done. I know firsthand, because we reformed our education system, Mr. President, with his help in 2001. Not to slip in another issue, but we do need to get No Child Left Behind reauthorized, and I'm looking forward to working with Senator Kennedy on the reauthorization.

*President Calderon.* Yes, I do have family in the United States, and what I can tell you is that these are people who work and respect that country. They pay their taxes to the government. These are people who work in the field; they work with—in the fields with vegetables. They probably handle that which you eat—the lettuce, et cetera. These are people who respect the United States. These are people who have children, who want these children to be educated with respect for the land where they live and with respect for Mexico.

I am from Michoacan, and in Michoacan, we have 4 million people—2 million of these Michoacanos are in the States. We want them to come back; we want them to find jobs here in Mexico. We miss them. These are our best people. These are bold people—they're young, they're strong, they're talented, they have overcome tre-

mendous adversity—who are working so that they can come back to their country someday.

And I'm saying this for all Mexicans, not only those Mexicans that I am related to by blood, by land, soil, air. And I want to say that I am fighting so that instead of having our people cross the border to find work, we want investments to cross the border and come over here.

The U.S. economy is capital intensive. We are labor intensive. We can give democracy to our people if we find sound basis so that we could also find those factors which can give jobs to our people. I have said this, and I will continue to say this: I hope—and I've hoped—that someday, everybody will believe as I do. I believe in work. I believe that I will see all of these people coming back, and embrace them knowing that, well, that we live in countries that defend liberty and freedom.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:04 a.m. at the Fiesta Americana Merida. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon. A reporter referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela; and Secretary of Foreign Relations Patricia Espinosa Cantellano of Mexico. President Calderon and some reporters spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Joint Statement by the United States of America and Mexico *March 14, 2007*

Mexico and the United States, as proud and sovereign countries, today reiterate their conviction that the shared values of democracy, transparency, rule of law, and respect for human rights are the solid founda-

tion on which the increasingly rich and complex networks that link their economies and societies are based.

Presidents Felipe Calderon and George Bush resolved during their first official

meeting in Mexico on March 13 and 14, 2007 in Merida, Yucatan, to strengthen the partnership between two friendly neighbors. They agreed that government to government relations are but one small measure of the interaction between our two great countries. Our ties are deeper and wider: they are societal, economic, cultural, and familial.

During their meeting, the Presidents reviewed the wide range of issues of the bilateral relationship and the cooperation undertaken by their governments in order to promote productive and mutually beneficial relations between Mexico and the United States. The Presidents identified new opportunities to work together in order to improve the quality of life of their peoples as well as to make North America the most prosperous, secure and competitive region in the world.

In this vein, the Presidents acknowledged that economic growth and job creation are vital to reducing poverty and inequality and improving the quality of life. They emphasized the centrality of expanding trade between the United States and Mexico as the basis for our shared prosperity. They recognized the need for our governments to work together to speed and facilitate the secure and ever-expanding movement of legitimate goods and people across our shared border, including the development of new infrastructure and the more efficient use of existing infrastructure, where possible.

In seeking to enhance North American competitiveness based on the twin pillars of security and prosperity, the Presidents also underscored their awareness regarding the need to work together to facilitate the transition to full free trade in such areas as agricultural products. To this end, the Presidents agreed to intensify the discussions within the framework of the bilateral working group on corn and dry beans.

The Presidents recognized the continued threat to both nations posed by organized crime and drug trafficking, especially their

associated violence, which do not respect borders. They underlined that the important efforts of the Mexican Government to confront organized crime head-on, as one of the most important priorities of its own domestic agenda, would benefit from increased support from and cooperation with the United States. In this connection, they reiterated their commitment to intensify cooperation and information sharing between the law enforcement agencies of Mexico and the United States, especially along the border region. The Presidents stressed their commitment to increase bilateral cooperation to target criminal organizations, fight arms trafficking, which fuels the violence of criminal organizations, as well as drug trafficking, including methamphetamine and precursor chemicals, and illicit financial activities, including bulk currency smuggling across our borders.

The management of the U.S.-Mexican border is a shared responsibility. Our common fight against organized crime must be accompanied by cooperative actions in other areas which will also promote the security, prosperity and well-being of our border communities. Improved communication and information-sharing at all levels will allow us to continue to transform the border into a region of growing and shared prosperity.

Recognizing that the border region encompasses a remarkable diversity in landscape and native species, the Presidents acknowledged the need to continue efforts to protect our shared natural resources, including air and water, through binational cooperation.

The Presidents recognized that immigration across our common border vitally links both countries, involves shared responsibilities, and represents one of the most critical issues for the future well-being of both our peoples. In this regard they underscored the need to encourage productive investment aimed at creating more and better



paid jobs in Mexico as an essential component of any comprehensive strategy to address this phenomenon and agreed on the need to continue advocating an approach to comprehensive immigration reform.

The Presidents also agreed to explore opportunities for people-to-people exchanges, especially in education, as a central tool in fostering greater understanding between our two countries. In this context they stressed that the investment Mexico and the United States make in human capital must be considered an essential component of their efforts to promote North America's competitiveness and economic growth with justice and security for our peoples.

Finally, Presidents Calderon and Bush reiterated their conviction that the future

of Mexico and the United States—and of the whole North American region—is now, more than ever, a shared future. Our commitment to the advancement of democracy, the respect for human rights, the promotion of free markets, the rule of law, security, sustainable development, and expanding opportunity for all, they underlined, will contribute to the consolidation of a prosperous, just, and peaceful future for all citizens in the Americas.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this joint statement. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Vice President Adil Abd Al-Mahdi of Iraq March 15, 2007

*President Bush.* It is such an honor to welcome the Vice President of a free Iraq to the Oval Office.

Mr. Vice President, I appreciate your courage. I don't know if the citizens of my country know, but the other day, a killer tried to take your life. And fortunately, you sit here, and you speak with enthusiasm and optimism about the future of your country.

One of the reasons why—the main reason why I've reinforced our troops in Iraq is to give leaders such as yourself the opportunity to do the hard work of reconciliation. I appreciate very much the progress that you're making. I know it's hard work. It's hard work to overcome distrust that has built up over the years because your country was ruled by a tyrant that created distrust amongst people.

But you, Mr. Vice President, are showing strong vision and a vision of peace and reconciliation. And I welcome you to the

Oval Office. I thank you for your courage, and I thank you for the conversation we've had.

*Vice President Abd Al-Mahdi.* Thank you. Thank you, President. Thank you for receiving me, and the present occasion to thank you personally and to thank the American people for all the support you've given to Iraq, the sacrifices. Also, I visited yesterday some soldiers in the hospital, and I saw their high spirit. They had, really, better morality than I had, talking about their mission.

We are working hard together. Our security plan is marking some points. We are not finished, but we are doing better than expected in this plan. This will not solve the whole problem; the reconciliation process will take our political agenda forward. We are working on many issues: the hydrocarbon law, which we approved in the Cabinet; we are working on a de-Baathification



law, and it will be presented later. We are working on so many things.

So really, I want to take this occasion to thank all Americans—the United States, you, Mr. President, the Congress, the administration—for all the sacrifices, effort,

assistance given to help my country. Thank you.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks at the National Republican Congressional Committee Dinner March 15, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. I had the honor of representing our great country over the past week in five different countries in our neighborhood, but I must tell you, it sure is good to be home. And it sure is good to be with you all. I'm proud to be standing with strong leaders like John Boehner and Roy Blunt. I thank you all for recognizing that it's in the best interest of the United States of America that John Boehner become the next Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Some of you may not know about my early political career: I ran for the United States Congress in 1978 in west Texas. I came in second place in a two-man race. *[Laughter]* The campaign obviously didn't turn out the way I hoped it would, but things worked out okay in the end. The key is to learn from every election and to come back stronger. And with your help, that's exactly what we're going to do in 2008.

I appreciate the character of the men and women on the Republican side of the United States House of Representatives. I've gotten to know them well over the last 6-plus years. But tonight I think it's appropriate we remember the life of a good man and a devoted public servant, Congressman Charlie Norwood. He fought lung cancer, he's in our thoughts and prayers, and we send our very best to Gloria and their family.

I appreciate the fact that you invited Laura, John. It's a smart move to invite her; actually, she was Boehner's first choice. *[Laughter]* She is still traveling, but she sends her love and her respect. I know I'm not very objective, but I firmly believe Laura, in all due respect to my mother, is the finest First Lady our country has ever had. Well, mom was pretty good too, mom was pretty good too. She's still telling me what to do, for all you mothers out there.

I want to thank Congressman Tom Cole, who is the chairman of the NRCC. I've known Tom a long time. He comes from right north of Texas. The NRCC has got one competent, smart, able person in Tom Cole, and I appreciate you serving, Tom. I really thank Devin Nunes, from California, for his leadership in this dinner tonight. Devin, it's good to see you; thank you for being here. I know I mentioned his name once; I'm going to mention it again—the House Republican whip, Roy Blunt from Missouri, is doing a fine job. I appreciate you, Roy. I'm proud to be with Cantor, Putnam, Granger, McCotter, Carter, and all the rest of the Members of the House of Representatives. Thanks for coming; appreciate you being here.

But most of all, thank you all for supporting this good group of folks. Obviously, it takes support like yours to get us back in the majority, but it also takes good ideas and takes people who are willing to stand

on principle, people not driven by polls or focus groups, but people who stand for what they believe, no matter what the critics may say. We believe in a strong national defense. We believe in less government and lower taxes. And we believe that government ought to trust the American people to make the best decisions for their lives.

Ours is an optimistic agenda, and ours is a realistic agenda. And by pushing good ideas and standing strong for what's right, I believe that we can retake the Senate and the House and hold the White House in 2008.

The biggest challenge we face is to protect the American people from harm. You know, I recognize that after September the 11th, it would be easy for our Nation to let down its guard. I knew that the farther we got away from that tragic event, more likely—the more likely scenario would be that people would say, “Well, maybe the enemy is not there.” And frankly, that's okay. It's not okay, however, if your Federal Government forgets their responsibility. And I just want you to know that every day, I think about and my administration thinks about our most important task, and that is to defend you. And the best way to do so is to stay on the offense and defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We are chasing down the enemy by using good intelligence and by deploying some of the finest citizens our country has ever produced. And we will defeat the enemy in the long term by defeating their hateful ideology with an ideology of hope, based upon the universal concept of liberty.

This war on terror is fought on many fronts: in Afghanistan, in places like the Philippines, and around the globe. But the central front in this war—the central front, and our need to protect the American people, is being fought in Iraq. We're pursuing a new strategy in Iraq: a plan that demands more from Iraq's Government; a plan that brings security to Baghdad, as our top priority; and a plan that gives our troops the

reinforcements they need to carry out their mission.

In Washington, we also have important decisions to make on Iraq. And the most pivotal question is whether the United States Congress will stand behind our new commander, General David Petraeus, and give our commanders the flexibility they need to do their jobs and our troops the support they need to carry out their mission.

Next week, the House will begin debate on an emergency war spending bill. And some in the Congress are using this bill as an opportunity to micromanage our military commanders or to force a precipitous withdrawal in Iraq or threaten vital funding for Iraqi security forces and fund projects that have nothing to do with the war on terror. I believe the Members of Congress are sincere when they support our troops. And now is the time for them to show that support. Our men and women in uniform are risking their lives, and they need the firm support of the United States Congress.

Today the United States Senate wisely rejected a resolution that would have placed an artificial timetable on our mission in Iraq. And I thank the Republicans and Democrats who voted down that resolution. Many of those Members know what I know, that if American forces were to step back from Baghdad now, before the capital city is more secure, the scale and scope of attacks would increase and intensify; a contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country and, in time, the entire region. The enemy would emerge from the chaos emboldened, with new safe havens and new recruits and new resources and an even greater determination to harm the United States of America. If we were to leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy would follow us to the United States of America, and we're not going to let it happen.

We've got work to do to make sure this economy continues to stay strong. Our principle is that if we trust you with your money, if the American people have more of their own money to save and spend and invest, the economy flourishes. And so we cut the taxes for the—on the American people. We cut taxes for everybody who pays taxes in America. And our plan is working; this economy of the United States is strong.

America—not government, but America—has created more than 7.5 million jobs in the past 3½ years. Unemployment is low; inflation is low; wages are rising. This economy is on the move, and the best way to keep it moving is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

Oh, I know you'll hear the argument here that you've got to raise taxes to balance the budget, but we're proving them wrong. I set a goal that we would cut the deficit in half in 5 years. We completed that goal years ahead of schedule. Why? Because when the economy grows, tax revenues increase. And the other reason why is because I worked with Republican leaders to bring fiscal sanity to the United States Congress. The best way to balance the budget is to grow the economy and not overspend the people's money. So I'm looking forward to working with John and Roy and the other Members of the House to pass a budget that can eliminate the Federal deficit within the next 5 years without raising taxes on the American people.

We need to come together to solve hard problems. One of the hardest problems in Washington is to reform Social Security and Medicare. There are a lot of baby boomers, like me, getting ready to retire. As a matter of fact, my retirement age of 62 is right around the corner, which will be a convenient time. *[Laughter]* And there are a lot of people like me. There are a lot of baby boomers who have been promised greater benefits than the previous generation, but the problem is, there are fewer people pay-

ing into the system and the system cannot be sustained.

My attitude: Now is the time for Republicans and Democrats to come together, to put their ideas on the table, to reform Social Security and Medicare to save a future generation from onerous taxes. Now is the time to act; now is the time to put politics aside; and now is the time to do the hard work the people of the United States of America expect us to do.

We believe strongly that this country needs to remain competitive so that we can remain the economic leader in the world. And one of the best ways to remain competitive is to make sure our youngsters get a good, sound education. I believe strongly in local control of schools, but I also believe in raising standards and holding schools accountable for achieving results.

I don't see how you can solve a problem unless you diagnose a problem. And that's precisely the spirit behind the No Child Left Behind Act. Because we're measuring and because we're holding people to standards, test scores are rising all across the United States of America. We're getting better test scores in reading and math, and, most importantly of all, our minority students are beginning to close the achievement gap. The No Child Left Behind Act is working, and the United States Congress needs to reauthorize that good piece of legislation.

We believe that dependency on oil from overseas is a national security and economic security risk. You see, when you import a lot of oil from parts of the world that may not care for the United States of America, that's a national security risk. Or when you import a lot of oil from parts of the world where supply could be disrupted by a terrorist attack, that is a national security risk. We live in a global world, and as demand for crude oil rises in emerging economies like China and India, it causes the price of crude oil to go up, which raises the price of gasoline for you. And therefore, reliance upon oil

is an economic security risk. And therefore, I look forward to continuing to work with the United States Congress to diversify our way out of dependency on oil.

And we're making good progress. We have got a comprehensive policy to do so. We believe in nuclear power. We believe in clean coal technology. We believe in solar and wind energy. And we believe in spending taxpayers' money to develop technologies that will change the way we—change how we power automobiles. We're spending a lot of your money to develop new batteries so that within a short period of time, there will be plug-in hybrid batteries—which means if you're living in a city, you can drive the first 20 miles on electricity and not on gasoline. And I also strongly believe that it makes sense to empower our farmers to grow crops that can be converted into energy, like ethanol and biodiesel.

We're on the verge of important technological breakthroughs here in America, technological breakthroughs that will enable a future President and future Congresses to say, "We have done our duty for national security reasons, for economic security reasons, all of which, as well, will enable us to be better stewards of our environment."

We have got an issue with health care in the United States of America. If you're running a small business, you understand the pressures you feel as a result of growing health care costs. But I caution you in this debate to remember, there is a philosophical divide in Washington between those who believe that government is the best provider of health care and those of us who believe that the best decisionmakers for health care are the providers and the patients.

Government has got a responsibility to the poor, and we're meeting that responsibility. We've got a responsibility to the elderly. And thanks to the leadership of people like John Boehner and Roy Blunt, we modernized Medicare by doing something unusual in medicine: we actually interjected

marketplace forces; we included the marketplace. We said, our seniors should be allowed to make choices about what's best for them. Costs projected for Medicare are lower than expected. The market works. And the reforms we passed for Medicare are good, solid reforms for America's seniors.

We've got a strong record to run on, and we're going to make it stronger by passing association health plans. If you're a small business, you should be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so you can buy insurance at the same discount that larger companies are able to buy insurance.

We believe strongly in health savings accounts, which empowers consumers to shop in the marketplace for—to meet their health care needs. But we also understand that there must be transparency in health care for pricing and quality. We strongly believe in interjecting information technologies into health care, all aimed to hold down the cost of health care without inviting more government into your lives.

And finally, if you're interested in controlling health care costs and if you want to make sure health care is available, elect people who will vote for medical liability reform. There is too many lawsuits running too many good doctors out of practice in America.

I'm looking forward to working with the United States Congress on an idea that we put forward that will make private health insurance more affordable and more accessible to more of our citizens, and that is to change the Tax Code. I believe strongly that we ought to create a standard tax deduction for health insurance like the standard tax deduction for dependents. A family with health insurance would get a \$15,000 deduction from incoming payroll taxes, whether they buy coverage on their own or get it from their employer. If you're single, you get a \$7,500 deduction. The whole purpose of the plan is to level the

playing field to give those who buy insurance on their own the same tax advantage as those who get insurance through their jobs.

I know I'm not talking to Senators here—[laughter]—but I do want to assure you all that I will continue to fulfill my obligation to put people on our benches who will strictly interpret the law and not legislate from the bench.

We've got a full agenda, and we're working well together. Ours is an agenda based upon solid philosophy that we don't need more government, but we need more trust in the American people. Ours is an agenda that says, if you have more of your own money, the country benefits. And ours is an agenda that recognizes our primary responsibility is to stay steady and focused and defeat the enemy of the United States of America and leave behind a more secure America for generations to come.

The greatest honor of being the President is to represent a group of decent, honorable folks. And those are the people of the United States. I cannot tell you what a joy it is to travel our country and to meet quiet, compassionate people who, on a daily basis, love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Oftentimes, I'm asked to define the strength of the country—and, sure, our

military is strong, and we're going to keep it that way. And, yes, our wallets are fat, and hopefully, they get fatter for all of us. But the great strength of the United States of America, the true strength of this country, is the fact that there are millions of fellow citizens who, on a daily basis, reach out to somebody in need; they reach out to say: "How can I help you, brother? What can I do to make your life better?" People who say: "If you need a little love in your life, you can count on me." This country is changing one heart and one soul and one body at a time because we've got millions of our fellow citizens who love our country and love their neighbors.

I'm optimistic about this country. You've got to know something about your President: I am some kind of optimistic about where we're headed. We're a great nation, and we intend to keep it that way. And I thank you for your help.

May God bless you. May God bless your families. And may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:39 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gloria Norwood, wife of former Rep. Charles W. Norwood, Jr.; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors

*March 16, 2007*

A couple of weeks ago, I announced that Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala agreed to chair a commission of our fellow citizens to look into the health care that our veterans and those in the military are receiving.

Today I was pleased to meet the Commission members that have been selected. We've got Purple Heart recipients;

got the wife of a severely wounded troop; we've got a doctor; we've got compassionate people who all care about whether or not our Government is fulfilling its responsibility to make sure our health care systems, both at DOD, Defense Department, and at the Veterans Administration, are meeting our obligations.



And I assured the members of this committee that I will support their work and will address the problems that they find. We owe it to those who wear the uniform and their families to make sure that our troops have the best, and that's what this Commission is meant to do. And I thank you for your willingness to serve. You're doing the country a great service, because the Commission report will ensure that service goes beyond my time in office. In other words, it'll really set the stage for this Presidency and other Presidencies,

set a standard that we expect Government to follow.

So thanks for being here; appreciate your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. in Room 180 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Coauthors, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

## Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Shamrock Presentation Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland *March 16, 2007*

Thank you. *Taoiseach*, good morning, or, should I say, "Top o' the morning." [Laughter] I'm really pleased that you came back to the White House. I'm looking forward to our discussions. And I cannot thank you enough for your strong leadership in resolving the issues of Northern Ireland, and I stand ready to help.

I gratefully accept the bowl of shamrocks. I am delighted that you have joined us, once again, to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. Saint Patrick's Day is an occasion that unites two distinct groups of Americans: those who are of Irish descent and those who wish they were. [Laughter] Whether they're Irish today or every day, Americans are grateful for our country's Irish heritage and the enduring friendship that exists between Ireland and the United States is strong.

The ties that bind our two nations stretch all the way back to our country's founding. Ireland gave us at least nine signers of the Declaration of Independence and many more who risked their lives to defend it. Irish Americans fought valiantly to preserve the Union in our Civil War. They helped turn back the totalitarian ideologies of the

20th century. And they're fighting bravely in today's war on terror, risking their lives to secure a future of freedom and peace for generations to come.

Many of Ireland's sons and daughters came to our shores to escape poverty and famine. Once here, they helped us build and strengthen this great Nation with their gifts of industry and talent and faith. Irish workers built our railroads, our cathedrals, and our cities. Irish writers and musicians have enriched our literature and our culture. Irish priests and nuns established parochial schools that have helped generations of children build lives of prosperity and purpose. And with their many contributions, Irish Americans remind us of our heritage as a nation of immigrants and our duty to remain a welcoming society.

In 1783, President George Washington—I refer to him as the first George W.—[laughter]—wrote to recent Irish immigrants in New York that "America is open to receive the oppressed and persecuted of all nations," and he expressed his wish that the blessings of equal liberty and unrestrained commerce would one day prevail in Ireland.



Well, today, Ireland is a free, independent, and very prosperous nation. Ireland now has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. And over the past decade, our two nations have enjoyed a strong and growing trade relationship. And as Ireland prospers, a land whose people came to America seeking a better life is now attracting to its own shores immigrants with those very same dreams.

It has been said that the Irish, like the presence of God, are to be found everywhere. On this Saint Patrick's Day, we're grateful for the presence of the Irish in our country. And we are blessed by your

presence here at the White House, *Taoiseach*. I thank you for coming to help us celebrate Saint Patrick's Day and honor the friendship between our two nations. In the words of the Irish proverb: "May the Lord keep you in His hand and never close His fist too tight." [Laughter]

Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Ahern.

## The President's Radio Address *March 17, 2007*

Good morning. In times of war, Congress has no greater obligation than funding our war fighters. And next week, the House will begin debate on an emergency war spending bill.

The purpose of this legislation should be to give our troops on the frontlines the resources, funds, and equipment they need to fight our enemies. Unfortunately, some in Congress are using this bill as an opportunity to micromanage our military commanders, force a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, and spend billions on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war on terror.

Our troops urgently need Congress to approve emergency war funds. Over the past several weeks, our Nation has begun pursuing a new strategy in Iraq. Under the leadership of General David Petraeus, our troops have launched a difficult and dangerous mission to help Iraqis secure their capital. This plan is still in its early stages, yet we're already seeing signs of progress. Iraqi and American troops have rounded up more than 700 people affiliated with Shi'a extremists. They've also launched ag-

gressive operations against Sunni extremists, and they've uncovered large caches of weapons that could have been used to kill our troops.

These are hopeful signs. As these operations unfold, they will help the Iraqi Government stabilize the country, rebuild the economy, and advance the work of political reconciliation. Yet the bill Congress is considering would undermine General Petraeus and the troops under his command just as these critical security operations are getting underway.

First, the bill would impose arbitrary and restrictive conditions on the use of war funds and require the withdrawal of forces by the end of this year if these conditions are not met. These restrictions would handcuff our generals in the field by denying them the flexibility they need to adjust their operations to the changing situation on the ground. And these restrictions would substitute the mandates of Congress for the considered judgment of our military commanders.

Even if every condition required by this bill was met, all American forces, except

for very limited purposes, would still be required to withdraw next year, regardless of the situation in Iraq. The consequences of imposing such an artificial timetable would be disastrous.

Here is what Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently told Congress: Setting a fixed date to withdraw would “essentially tell the enemy how long they would have to wait until we’re gone.” If American forces were to step back from Baghdad before it is more secure, the scale and scope of attacks would increase and intensify. A contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country, and, in time, this violence would engulf the region. The enemy would emerge from the chaos emboldened with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. Such an outcome would be a nightmare for our country.

Second, the bill would cut funding for the Iraqi security forces if Iraqi leaders did not meet rigid conditions set by Congress. This makes no sense. Members of Congress have often said that the Iraqis must step forward and take more responsibility for their own security, and I agree. Yet Members of Congress can’t have it both ways. They can’t say that the Iraqis must do more and then take away the funds that will help them do so. Iraq is a young democracy that is fighting for its survival in a region that is vital to American security. To cut off support for their security forces at this critical moment would put our own security at risk.

Third, the bill would add billions of dollars in domestic spending that is completely

unrelated to the war. For example, the House bill would provide \$74 million for peanut storage, \$48 million for the Farm Service Agency, and \$35 million for NASA. These programs do not belong in an emergency war spending bill. Congress must not allow debate on domestic spending to delay funds for our troops on the frontlines. And Members should not use funding our troops as leverage to pass special interest spending for their districts.

We are a nation at war, and the heaviest responsibilities fall to our troops in the field. Yet we in Washington have responsibilities as well. General Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate without a single vote in opposition, and he and his troops need these resources to succeed in their mission. Many in Congress say they support the troops, and I believe them. Now they have a chance to show that support in deed as well as in word. Congress needs to approve emergency funding for our troops, without strings and without delay. If they send me a bill that does otherwise, I will veto it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on March 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks on the Fourth Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq *March 19, 2007*

Good morning. Four years ago today, coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to remove Saddam Hussein from

power. They did so to eliminate the threat his regime posed to the Middle East and to the world. Coalition forces carried out

that mission with great courage and skill. Today, the world is rid of Saddam Hussein, and a tyrant has been held to account for his crimes by his own people.

Nearly 12 million Iraqis have voted in free elections under a democratic Constitution that they wrote for themselves. And their democratic leaders are now working to build a free society that upholds the rule of law, that respects the rights of its people, that provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

At this point in the war, our most important mission is helping the Iraqis secure their capital. Until Baghdad's citizens feel secure in their own homes and neighborhoods, it will be difficult for Iraqis to make further progress toward political reconciliation or economic rebuilding, steps necessary for Iraq to build a democratic society.

So with our help, Iraq's Government is carrying out an aggressive plan to secure Baghdad. And we're continuing to train the Iraqi security forces so that they ultimately take full responsibility for the security of their own people.

I've just received an update on the situation from Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. My conversation with the Prime Minister followed a briefing earlier this morning that included Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates, along with General Petraeus and Ambassador Khalilzad, who participated by video conference from Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki and General Petraeus emphasized that the Baghdad security plan is still in its early stages, and success will take months, not days or weeks. Yet those on the ground are seeing some hopeful signs. The Iraqi Government has completed the deployment of three Iraqi Army brigades to the capital, where they've joined the seven Iraqi Army brigades and nine National Police brigades that were already in the area.

The Iraqi Government has also lifted restrictions that once prevented Iraqi and coalition forces from going into areas like

Sadr City. American and Iraqi forces have established joint security stations. Those stations are scattered throughout Baghdad, and they're helping Iraqis reclaim their neighborhoods from the terrorists and extremists.

Together, we've carried out aggressive operations against both Shi'a and Sunni extremists, carried out operations against Al Qaida terrorists. We've uncovered large caches of weapons and destroyed two major car bomb factories that were located on the outskirts of Baghdad.

I want to stress that this operation is still in the early stages; it's still in the beginning stages. Fewer than half of the troop reinforcements we are sending have arrived in Baghdad. The new strategy will need more time to take effect. And there will be good days, and there will be bad days ahead as it—as the security plan unfolds.

As we help the Iraqis secure their capital, their leaders are also beginning to meet the benchmarks they have laid out for political reconciliation. Last month, Iraq's Council of Ministers approved a law that would share oil revenues among Iraqi people. The Iraqi legislature passed a \$41 billion budget that includes \$10 billion for reconstruction and capital improvements. And last week, Prime Minister Maliki visited Ramadi, a city in the Sunni heartland, to reach out to local Sunni tribal leaders.

There's been good progress. There's a lot more work to be done. And Iraq's leaders must continue to work to meet the benchmarks they have set forward.

As Iraqis work to keep their commitments, we have important commitments of our own. Members of Congress are now considering an emergency war spending bill. They have a responsibility to ensure that this bill provides the funds and the flexibility that our troops need to accomplish their mission. They have a responsibility to pass a clean bill that does not use funding for our troops as leverage to get special interest spending for their districts. And they have a responsibility to get

this bill to my desk, without strings and without delay.

It can be tempting to look at the challenges in Iraq and conclude our best option is to pack up and go home. That may be satisfying in the short run, but I believe the consequences for American security would be devastating. If American forces were to step back from Baghdad before it is more secure, a contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country. In time, this violence could engulf the region. The terrorists could emerge from the chaos with a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they had in Afghanistan, which they used to plan the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. For the safety of the American people, we cannot allow this to happen.

Prevailing in Iraq is not going to be easy. General Petraeus says that the environment in Iraq is the most challenging that he has seen in his more than 32 years of service. He also says that he has been impressed by the professionalism and the skill and determination of our men and women in uniform. He sees in our troops, quote, “a true will to win and a sincere desire to help our Iraqi partners achieve success.”

Four years after this war began, the fight is difficult, but it can be won. It will be won if we have the courage and resolve to see it through. I’m grateful to our service men and women for all they’ve done and for the honor they’ve brought to their uniform and their country. I’m grateful to our military families and for all the sacrifices they have made for our country. We also hold in our hearts the good men and women who’ve given their lives in this struggle. We pray for the loved ones they have left behind.

The United States military is the most capable and courageous fighting force in the world. And whatever our differences in Washington, our troops and their families deserve the appreciation and the support of our entire Nation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Honoring the 2006 NCAA Football Champion University of Florida Gators

March 19, 2007

Please be seated. This isn’t exactly “The Swamp.” [Laughter] This weekend, it would have been “The Ice Rink.” Today it is the White House that welcomes the National Champion Florida Gators.

So you might remember, one of my family members held elected office in Florida. Yes, that was—[applause]—I hope he’s found work. [Laughter] And so I said: “You know, I had the privilege of welcoming the Texas Longhorns to the White House.” He said: “One of these days, you’re going to

be welcoming a Florida team.” And he’s right. One year after the Longhorns came, here comes the mighty Gators. And we welcome you, and we’re glad you’re here.

So you might call it Gator country. This is the 100th anniversary of college football at the University of Florida. It’s a pretty fine way to celebrate the 100th year.

I want to thank Coach Urban Meyer and Shelley for joining us. I appreciate Dr. Machen, the president of the University of Florida, and his wife Chris. Manny

Fernandez, thanks for coming—he's a chairman. Members of the boards of trustees, we're glad you all are here. Thank you for serving.

Carolyn Roberts, who is the chair of the board of governors, is with us. I presume the athletic director is here. If not, he's probably done—it's amazing, isn't it—so, like, the basketball team and now the football team. Like, what are you doing down there? *[Laughter]* Yes, Gatorade. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate the members of my administration who are here, but I particularly want to thank the Members of Congress, starting with Senator Bill Nelson. Thank you for coming, Senator. Appreciate you being here. Adam Putnam—all he talks about is Gator football. Cliff Stearns—appreciate you being here, Cliff. Corrine Brown, thank you for coming. John Mica, Ander Crenshaw, Jeff Miller, and Gus Bilirakis, thank you all for joining us. Thanks for serving.

So the Florida Gators had the Nation's toughest schedule, and instead of wearing them down, it made them tougher; instead of, like, discouraging them that they got the bad deal when it came to the schedule, all that did was cause them to play harder. And it put them in pretty good stead going into the championship game. Like, you might remember, all the pregame polls said you couldn't win. *[Laughter]* So much for polls.

I don't know how you felt when the guy ran the kickoff back—looked like a rough start—but didn't let you—it get you down. And you showed an unbelievable offense and a swarming defense. And we really congratulate you; you're a well-coached team of highly disciplined athletes.

I particularly like the story of the two quarterbacks, Chris Leak and Tim Tebow. First of all—*[applause]*. Where's Tebow? There he is. It's like the guy is trying to bring the single wing back, you know? *[Laughter]* And so Tebow takes a look at Florida and sees the fact that they've got

a 4-year starter, but loves the school more than anything else and helps Chris Leak be a better quarterback. That's what we call teammates—people playing together for the common good. And we thank you both for the leadership you've shown. Of course, you wouldn't be half the players that you are without the huge offensive line and the receivers and backs you've got behind you; I know you would say that.

I appreciate your defense. I clearly remember linebacker Earl Everett. I've seen that face before. *[Laughter]* So has the whole country. You might remember, Everett lost his headgear. He didn't lose his head—*[laughter]*—but he lost his headgear; he went on to make a great tackle in a key moment. That's called tough defense, hard-nosed defense.

Where's Ray McDonald? Can I say what Ray McDonald said? Can I quote you, Ray? Okay, I will. *[Laughter]* Here's what he said: "We don't really believe in destiny. We believe when your number is called, you make the play." What he's saying is, is that there's no chance: "We win because we do what we're coached to do, and we're good at it." And I appreciate the spirit, and I appreciate the caliber of people on this team.

It didn't take Urban Meyer long. Like, the guy shows up, the next thing he knows, he's at the White House. *[Laughter]* Whoever hired him, good choice. He's an amazing coach, with a good coaching staff. And so I congratulate not only the players, but I congratulate the coaching staff. I congratulate all those who pick up the towels and make the program run. I thank those who help sell the tickets and the unsung heroes of any athletic program. If you're here, we welcome you to the White House, and we appreciate what you've done for the national champs.

I do want to say another thing about this program, Mr. President. I was very pleased to see that the graduation success rate of Florida's athletic programs are 15 percent higher than the national average.

After all, you are representing a great university. And I appreciate the fact that people can be student-athletes. I appreciate it because at some point in time, you're not going to be an athlete. At some point in time, you're going to have to use the skills you learned as a student to be a constructive citizen of the United States. And so, Coach, I appreciate the fact that you work hard with these players to make sure that they take advantage of this fantastic opportunity, and that is to be a student at the University of Florida.

I also appreciate the spirit of giving that's a part of this football program. I don't know if you know this or not, but Coach Meyer hosts the annual Urban Meyer Golf Scramble for Kids. This year, the event raised a record \$300,000, all aiming at helping youth organizations buy equipment, all aiming at touching a soul, trying to make somebody's life better.

Coach, I appreciate the example you set, and I also appreciate the fact that 32 of your football players volunteered for community organizations; 32 souls said: "I'm more than a football player; I'm a leader when it comes to helping the community in which I live."

Jemalle Cornelius just so happens to be captain. Here's what he said; he said: "If everyone took a small leadership role in whatever it is they do, we can help eliminate some of the problems that are in our society." I love the spirit. I love the fact that champions understand you've got to be a champ on the field as well as a champ

off the field. And I believe one of the reasons this program is successful is because not only you're good football players, but you're good people.

And I want to say one other thing about—now that I've got the mike—[laughter]—I want to say something at Cam Brewer. Where's Cam? There he is, right there—United States Marine. I appreciate the fact that you wore the uniform of the United States of America. I appreciate the fact that you put self—something larger than yourself as an important part of your life. It's a good example, isn't it? And now I appreciate the fact that you've taken advantage of the educational opportunities offered to those who have worn the uniform and gotten yourself an education at a fine university.

Again, I want to welcome you all to the White House. It's an honor to welcome you here. More importantly, it's an honor to welcome the National Football Champion Florida Gators.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; J. Bernard Machen, president, Manny A. Fernandez, chairman of the board of trustees, and Jeremy N. Foley, athletic director, University of Florida; Carolyn K. Roberts, chairman of the board of governors, State University System of Florida; and Ray McDonald, defensive end, and Jemalle Cornelius and Cam Brewer, wide receivers, University of Florida football team.

## Statement on the Death of Raymond D. Nasher

March 19, 2007

Ray Nasher was a brilliant businessman, diplomat, and philanthropist. Through his service at the United Nations, he represented the best of his country and his home State of Texas. Through his patron-

age of the arts, he shared his magnificent collection of modern and contemporary sculpture in countless office spaces and the world-class museums he created in Dallas and at Duke University. Ray served the



last three Presidents as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and served his country by giving

all Americans greater access to the arts. Laura and I send our deepest condolences to Ray Nasher's family and friends.

## Message to the Congress on Trade With Haiti

March 19, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

The Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006 (Division D, Title V of Public Law 109-432), amends the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (Title II of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106-200)(CBERA), to make certain products from Haiti eligible for preferential tariff treatment. In accordance with section 213A of CBERA, as amended, I have determined that Haiti meets the eligibility re-

quirements under section 213A(d)(1) of CBERA, as amended, and that Haiti is meeting the conditions regarding enforcement of circumvention under section 213A(e)(1) of CBERA, as amended.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
March 19, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20.

## Remarks on Energy in Claycomo, Missouri

March 20, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Alan, thank you. It's good to be here in Kansas City. Thank you for your warm hospitality. I've had—I guess you'd call it "Car Day." [Laughter] I started off at a GM plant across the way, and now I'm at the Ford plant. My impressions are—is that American automobile companies are essential to keeping us competitive, essential to providing good jobs, and these manufacturing facilities are full of some really—finest citizens in our country.

I thank you for your hospitality. I enjoyed walking up and down the line, shaking people's hands. I'm impressed by just how warm everybody was. And I thank you; I really do. It's been a joy to be here.

The reason I've come is, I want to highlight an important initiative for the country, and that is to promote technologies so we are less reliant upon foreign sources of oil.

And the best way to become less reliant on foreign sources of oil is to manufacture automobiles that will use either less gasoline or different kinds of fuels. And that's what we're here to talk about.

The Ford plant, the GM plant are producing automobiles that are the beginning, really, of helping this country develop a wise energy policy and a wise environmental policy. And so I appreciate the fact that we've seen hybrid technologies and the world's first hybrid SUV, ethanol-driven cars. Americans are just getting used to this kind of technological—these technological breakthroughs—something you're used to. See, you make these cars all day long, but I don't think our citizens fully understand what is happening in America. And that's why I've come to highlight the technological changes that we're seeing.

I've set out a goal of reducing America's gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years. Some of our fellow citizens say: "Well, of course, that's just typical; they stand up there and put out a goal that's not achievable." I think it's achievable. And one way for me to make the case that it's achievable is to remind people about the new technologies that are being developed in a place like this Ford plant.

I believe that—I call it 20/10, in other words, reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years. And I'm looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to get it done. See, this is the kind of thing where we should be able to come together for the good of the country and promote technologies, and to encourage consumption of hybrid automobiles.

The American people expect us to work together. See, that's what they want. I'm confident that we can. And Congress needs to pass good bipartisan energy legislation, and they need to do it by the start of the summer driving season. That would be a good sign that we recognize that we've got a problem here in America, and we aim to solve it together.

I appreciate Sam Graves—he's the Congressman from this area—traveling down with me. Sam, thank you for being here. Sam's a farmer. I'm about to talk about ethanol a little bit. Let me put it to you this way: I like the idea that farmers are growing energy that powers our cars. I'd rather be paying American farmers than people overseas for the energy that fuels this economy. And so when you're making a vehicle that runs on ethanol or a flexible vehicle, you're really helping national security.

But before I get to that, I want to thank Alan for his leadership of Ford. I appreciate Ken Ward, the plant manager. Thank you for giving me a tour. How about your president of the UAW 249? He's not only the president, he happens to be the mayor. [Laughter] I told him—I asked him—[ap-

plause]—I said, "You've got to be a busy guy," filling the potholes at the same time that he's worrying about the employees. But, Mayor, thank you—I call you "Mayor." I could call you "President." [Laughter] I appreciate the tour, and thanks for hanging out there with me.

I want to thank all the employees that are here. I also came over with Paul Marr. He's the plant manager of the General Motors Fairfax Assembly. I know you'll greet him kindly. But thank you for coming, Paul. I appreciate you being here.

I mentioned national security. I bet you didn't think in terms—or maybe you do think in terms of national security when you make these modern automobiles here. See, I believe that when you're dependent on oil from parts of the world where people may not necessarily like us, that creates a national security problem. I know that when you're dependent on oil and the objective of some of the terrorists is to destroy oil networks, it creates a national security problem for us. In other words, the more we're dependent on oil from somewhere else, the more we're vulnerable to national security issues.

I deal with it every day in the Oval Office. And so when I tell people that a goal of reducing the amount of gasoline, which means we'll use less crude oil, is in the national security interest of the country, I think—I hope—you're beginning to get the drift of what I mean. It's like when I say to a worker, "When you make one of these cars, you're helping the national security of the country."

I like the idea of being independent. I understand that when the demand for crude oil goes up in another part of the world and the supply of crude oil doesn't match it, the price of gasoline goes up in America. That's another issue we have to deal with when we're dependent on crude oil. About 60 percent-plus of our crude oil comes from overseas.

And so what do we do about it? What should the country do to lessen our dependence on energy from somewhere else? Well, one thing we need to do is to promote the idea of technologies changing the way we live. And that's what you're doing at the plant.

And so I appreciate very much the idea of hybrid vehicles. If Americans don't know what I'm talking about, these are vehicles that either run on gasoline or electricity. You take it for granted; you live with them every day. Some people don't know what we're talking about. It's—this is a new market opportunity for Ford. More and more people are going to be saying, "How can I help us be less dependent on foreign sources of energy?" Well, one way is to buy a hybrid.

It makes sense for the Government to encourage people to buy hybrid vehicles, and so we've got a tax credit for somebody who purchased such a vehicle, up to \$3,500 a person. I think it makes sense to encourage consumer behavior to buy a car that you manufacture here or at the GM plant, not to be favoring one plant over the other. There have been—about 700,000 hybrids have been sold in America. That's the beginning of something different, isn't it? It's the beginning of a new market.

The next wave of technologies, I'm told, is for there to be plug-in hybrids. In other words, battery technologies: I'm hoping at some point in time relatively quickly, you all will be installing new battery technologies in these automobiles that will enable people to drive on electricity more than on gasoline.

So part of the strategy has got to be for the Federal Government to promote research and development on technologies that will enable us to become the leader in battery technologies—lithium ionic batteries. I mean, it's very conceivable, one day, that somebody living in a big city will be able to drive the first 40 miles on electricity. Now imagine if all the big-city drivers were able to drive on electricity, not

on gasoline; how much more—how much less dependent on foreign sources of oil we'd be. Remember, oil is the feedstock for gasoline.

And it's coming. And I predict, relatively quickly, that you'll be making automobiles that will have this battery technology in. And I think it makes sense to use some of your money to encourage new technologies and to encourage research and development. And that's what we're doing. So part of the strategy is to really develop new battery technologies.

And by the way, what you're proving here is, a car that—or a truck—doesn't have to look like a golf cart if you're running on electricity. It can be a normal size vehicle that people like to drive. Texans like to use pickup trucks, as you well know. And it makes sense to have these technologies fit in the kind of trucks that people like to drive or the kind of cars that people demand. And that's what's happening.

I appreciate the idea of flex-fuel vehicles for the American citizen. That means that you can either use ethanol, or you can use gasoline, and you can choose. I like the idea of the consumer having more options. You're producing flex-fuel vehicles here, where somebody can decide to fill up with ethanol, or they can decide to fill up with gasoline, their choice. It turns out that Henry Ford—Model T was one of the first flex-fuel vehicles. I didn't realize that until I came here, but that he had the vision of having the Model T run either on gasoline or ethanol. Isn't that interesting?

And finally, it's now becoming in the marketplace. Why? Because it's going to be necessary for this country for national security and economic security reasons to start using different kinds of fuels.

And here in the Midwest, you have seen a boom in ethanol production and ethanol usage. And the reason why is, is that corn-based ethanol is leading an amazing change in the country. We consume about 5 billion gallons of ethanol right now in America. That's up nearly fivefold in a relatively

quick period of time. The problem we face is that right now, the most efficient way to make ethanol is through the use of corn. And that's fine if you're a corn grower, but it's not fine if you're a hog raiser—[laughter]—because that price of corn is beginning to affect the people who are raising hogs. And I understand that. That's why we're spending a fair amount of money on developing new types of technology that will enable us to use something besides corn to make ethanol—whether it be switchgrasses or agricultural refuse or wood chips.

And that technology is coming. It may sound farfetched to some that, one of these days, we'll be making a product that can go into a Ford pickup truck out of wood chips, and you'll be able to drive just like it was full of gasoline, but those days are around the corner. And it makes sense for us to promote that kind of technologies.

Right now the ethanol industry is sectionally based because this is where the corn is grown. The idea is to develop new ways to be able to process different materials so that ethanol can be more widespread around the country. If you're a Ford guy working here on the line, it's in your interest that we promote new ways to make ethanol. After all, the flex-fuel vehicle would then become more in demand.

All this is aimed, by the way, at doing what I told you, and that is to make us less dependent on crude oil. It's really interesting—isn't it?—for the President to be talking about, one of these days, people driving pickup trucks driven by ethanol, fueled by ethanol from wood chips. Is it real? I think it is. Otherwise I wouldn't be standing here talking to you about it. Is it necessary? I know it's necessary for the sake of the future of this country.

Ultimately, there's going to be hydrogen driving these vehicles. Some of us aren't probably going to be able to drive by the time those show up, and so the meantime—[laughter]. Of course, I'm not driving much anyway these days. [Laughter]

I do believe we ought to reform the CAFE standards in a way that's based upon size—not fleetwise, but on different sizes—in order to be able to encourage better mileage. But the big gains in this 20/10 program are going to come through by alternative fuels. And that's what I want to share with you, that this is a national objective.

We spent about \$12 billion over the last 6 years to promote different kinds of researches, different kinds of ideas, trying to make sure America stays on the leading edge of technological change. I strongly believe it's in our interest to be the leader of technologies. Technology changes the way we have lived our lives; technology is going to change the way we drive our cars. And so part of the strategy to be better stewards of the environment and, at the same time, less dependent on foreign sources of energy is to change the automobile. And I've come to this plant because that's what you're doing. You're making a new kind of automobile that is literally a part of a changing America for the better.

An energy strategy has got to be more than just an automobile strategy. I mean, we can reduce dependency on oil, and we will; we're still going to need oil. And therefore, I think it makes a lot of sense for us to continue to explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways here in America. If you're worried about a terrorist attack, like I am—terrorist attack on our infrastructure somewhere else that will affect the price of oil, I do believe it makes sense to double the size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, to have oil in place in the ground that we could then use in order to protect the American consumer against sudden disruptions of supply.

We got a lot of coal in America. We've got about 250 years worth of coal. If you want to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, it seems to make sense to develop the energy reserves you have at home. And—but coal burns—doesn't burn cleanly. And so therefore, we're

spending a sizable amount of money on clean coal technologies. I believe that within a relatively quick period of time, we will have the ability to use coal to fire our electricity without emitting greenhouse gases or pollutants, zero-emission coal-fired plants. We've still got work to do. But there's a lot of research going on, and it makes sense to spend that kind of money on developing ways that we can be good stewards of the environment and use a plentiful supply of coal.

I strongly believe in nuclear power. If you're somebody who is concerned about greenhouse gases, it seems like to me that it's logical then that you support the use of nuclear power. A nuclear powerplant is the ultimate source of renewable fuels, and it has zero emissions. It makes a lot of sense, to me, to promote a nuclear power. The engineering technologies have developed to the point where they're safe.

It's an interesting part of the debate. I know there's a lot of folks who worry about nuclear power. I would just hope people would keep an open mind about it. If you really do want to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy and want to worry about the environment, there's no better way to protect the environment than the renewable source of energy called nuclear power.

I do believe wind power makes sense. All we've got to do is put a couple of turbines in Washington, DC, and we'll be energy free. There's a lot of—[*laughter*—a lot of hot air there, you know. [*Laughter*]

What I'm telling you is, is that we've got a comprehensive plan, comprehensive ideas on how to meet the challenges, really, of the 21st century. I'm a believer in tech-

nologies, and I'm a believer in the ingenuity of the American people. And for the skeptics, all you got to do is come into a place like this and see what they're building.

And I believe it's just the beginning; I really do. That's what I've come to share with you, my sense of optimism about the country. As a matter of fact, I don't think there's anything we can't achieve when we put our mind to it. This country has overcome challenges in the past, and we'll darn sure overcome them in the future.

One of the challenges we have is to protect the country from a group of terrorists who'd like to do us harm. And here in this Ford plant, I want to declare to you: No matter how tough it gets, this country is going to stay steadfast and do the job that you expect us to do, which is to protect you from harm.

And another challenge facing us is this challenge of energy independence. We're making great strides, continue to make great strides. And they'll look back and say of this generation that I'm a part of—I hope they'll look back and say, "They did their job. Job well done."

Thanks for letting me come by, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at the Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant. In his remarks, he referred to Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Company; Ken Ward, plant manager, Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant; and Jim Stoufer, president, United Autoworkers of America Local 249, and chairman of the board of trustees, Village of Claycomo, MO.

## Remarks on the Department of Justice and an Exchange With Reporters *March 20, 2007*

Earlier today my staff met with congressional leaders about the resignations of U.S. attorneys. As you know, I have broad discretion to replace political appointees throughout the Government, including U.S. attorneys. And in this case, I appointed these U.S. attorneys, and they served 4-year terms.

The Justice Department, with the approval of the White House, believed new leadership in these positions would better serve our country. The announcement of this decision and the subsequent explanation of these changes has been confusing and, in some cases, incomplete. Neither the Attorney General nor I approve of how these explanations were handled. We're determined to correct the problem.

Today I'm also announcing the following steps my administration is taking to correct the record and demonstrate our willingness to work with the Congress. First, the Attorney General and his key staff will testify before the relevant congressional committees to explain how the decision was made and for what reasons.

Second, we're giving Congress access to an unprecedented variety of information about the process used to make the decision about replacing 8 of the 93 U.S. attorneys. In the last 24 hours, the Justice Department has provided the Congress more than 3,000 pages of internal Justice Department documents, including those reflecting direct communications with White House staff. This in itself is an extraordinary level of disclosure of an internal agency in White House communications.

Third, I recognize there is significant interest in the role the White House played in the resignations of these U.S. attorneys. Access to White House staff is always a sensitive issue. The President relies upon his staff to provide him candid advice. The Framers of the Constitution understood

this vital role when developing the separate branches of government. And if the staff of a President operated in constant fear of being hauled before various committees to discuss internal deliberations, the President would not receive candid advice and the American people would be ill-served.

Yet in this case, I recognize the importance of Members of Congress having—the importance of Congress have placed on understanding how and why this decision was made. So I'll allow relevant committee members, on a bipartisan basis, to interview key members of my staff to ascertain relevant facts. In addition to this offer, we will also release all White House documents and e-mails involving direct communications with the Justice Department or any other outside person, including Members of Congress and their staff, related to this issue. These extraordinary steps offered today to the majority in Congress demonstrate a reasonable solution to the issue. However, we will not go along with a partisan fishing expedition aimed at honorable public servants.

The initial response by Democrats, unfortunately, shows some appear more interested in scoring political points than in learning the facts. It will be regrettable if they choose to head down the partisan road of issuing subpoenas and demanding show trials when I have agreed to make key White House officials and documents available. I have proposed a reasonable way to avoid an impasse. I hope they don't choose confrontation. I will oppose any attempts to subpoena White House officials.

As we cut through all the partisan rhetoric, it's important to maintain perspective on a couple of important points. First, it was natural and appropriate for members of the White House staff to consider and to discuss with the Justice Department whether to replace all 93 U.S. attorneys



at the beginning of my second term. The start of a second term is a natural time to discuss the status of political appointees within the White House and with relevant Agencies, including the Justice Department. In this case, the idea was rejected, and it was not pursued.

Second, it is common for me, members of my staff, and the Justice Department to receive complaints from Members of Congress in both parties and from other citizens. And we did hear complaints and concerns about U.S. attorneys. Some complained about the lack of vigorous prosecution of election fraud cases, while others had concerns about immigration cases not being prosecuted. These concerns are often shared between the White House and the Justice Department, and that is completely appropriate.

I also want to say something to the U.S. attorneys who've resigned. I appreciate your service to the country. And while I strongly support the Attorney General's decision and am confident he acted appropriately, I regret these resignations turned into such a public spectacle.

It's now my hope that the United States Congress will act appropriately. My administration has made a very reasonable proposal. It's not too late for Democrats to drop the partisanship and work together. Democrats now have to choose whether they will waste time and provoke an unnecessary confrontation, or whether they will join us in working to do the people's business. There are too many important issues, from funding our troops to comprehensive immigration reform to balancing the budget, for us to accomplish on behalf of the American people.

Thank you for your time. Now I'll answer a couple of questions.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

*Resignation of Eight U.S. Attorneys/  
Disclosure of Information to Congress*

Q. Mr. President, are you still completely convinced that the administration did not

exert any political pressure in the firings of these attorneys?

*The President.* Deb, there is no indication that anybody did anything improper. And I'm sure Congress has that question. That's why I've put forth a reasonable proposal, for people to be comfortable with the decisions and how they were made. Al Gonzales and his team will be testifying. We have made available people on my staff to be interviewed. And we've made an unprecedented number of documents available.

Q. Sir, are you convinced, personally?

*The President.* There's no indication whatsoever, after reviews by the White House staff, that anybody did anything improper.

Michael [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post].

Q. If today's offer from Mr. Fielding is your best and final offer on this, are you going to go to the mat in protecting the principle that you talked about? And why not—since you say nothing wrong was done by your staff, why not just clear the air and let Karl Rove and other senior aides testify in public, under oath? There's been a precedent for previous administrations doing that.

*The President.* Well, some have; some haven't. My choice is to make sure that I safeguard the ability for Presidents to get good decisions.

Michael, I'm worried about precedents that would make it difficult for somebody to walk into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, here's what's on my mind." And if you haul somebody up in front of Congress and put them in oath and all the klieg lights and all the questioning, it, to me—it makes it very difficult for a President to get good advice. On the other hand, I understand there is a need for information sharing on this. And I put forth what I thought was a rational proposal, and the proposal I put forward is the proposal.

Q. And then you'll go to the mat; you'll take this to court—

*The President.* Absolutely. I hope the Democrats choose not to do that. If they truly are interested in information—in other words, if they want to find out what went on between the White House and the Justice Department, they need to read all the e-mails we released. If they're truly interested in finding out what took place, I have proposed a way for them to find out what took place. My concern is, they would rather be involved with partisanship; they view this as an opportunity to score political points.

And anyway, the proposal we put forward is a good one. I mean, there really is a way for people to get information. We'll just find out what's on their mind.

Kelly O [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News].

*Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/  
Department of Justice*

*Q.* Sir, in at least a few instances, the attorneys that were dismissed were actively investigating Republicans—in San Diego, in Arizona, in Nevada. By removing them, wouldn't that have possibly impeded or stopped those investigations? And, sir, if I may also ask about the Attorney General. He does not have support among many Republicans and Democrats. Can he still be effective?

*The President.* Yes, he's got support with me. I support the Attorney General. I told you in Mexico, I've got confidence in him, and I still do. He's going to go up to Capitol Hill, and he's going to explain the very things—questions you asked. I've heard all these allegations and rumors. And people just need to hear the truth, and they're going to go up and explain the truth.

*Q.* In San Diego, Nevada, Arizona, Republicans were the targets of investigations, and those U.S. attorneys were removed. Does that not give the appearance—

*The President.* Well, I don't—it may give the appearance of something, but I think what you need to do is listen to the facts, and let them explain to you—it's precisely why they're going up to testify, so that the

American people can hear the truth about why the decision was made.

Listen, first of all, these U.S. attorneys serve at the pleasure of the President. I named them all. And the Justice Department made recommendations, which the White House accepted, that 8 of the 93 would no longer serve. And they will go up and make the explanations as to why—I'm sorry this frankly has bubbled to the surface the way it has, for the U.S. attorneys involved. I really am. These are—I put them in there in the first place; they're decent people. They serve at our pleasure. And yet now they're being held up in this—into the scrutiny of all this, and it's just—what I said in my comments, I meant about them. I appreciated their service, and I'm sorry that the situation has gotten to where it's got. But that's Washington, DC, for you. You know, there's a lot of politics in this town.

And I repeat: We would like people to hear the truth. And, Kelly, your question is one I'm confident will be asked of people up there. And the Justice Department will answer that question in an open forum for everybody to see.

If the Democrats truly do want to move forward and find the right information, they ought to accept what I proposed. And the idea of dragging White House members up there to score political points or to put the klieg lights out there—which will harm the President's ability to get good information, Michael—is—I really do believe will show the true nature of this debate.

And if information is the desire, here's a great way forward. If scoring political points is the desire, then the rejection of this reasonable proposal will really be evident for the American people to see.

Listen, thank you all for your interest.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. A reporter referred to Counsel to the President Fred F. Fielding.

## Message on the Observance of Nowruz *March 20, 2007*

I send greetings to those celebrating Nowruz.

Nowruz is a special time of thanksgiving and celebration when millions of people around the world who trace their heritage to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and Central Asia welcome the New Year. For thousands of years, it has been an occasion when family, friends, and loved ones come together to reflect on the blessings of the past year and look forward with a spirit of renewal and hope.

America is strengthened by the rich cultural diversity of our people, and we are

blessed to be a Nation that welcomes individuals of all races, religions, and cultural backgrounds. Celebrating Nowruz honors the values of family and tradition and helps preserve the unique fabric that makes up our country.

Laura and I send our best wishes for health and happiness in the coming year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting the Sweden-United States Social Security Agreement *March 20, 2007*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (42 U.S.C. 433(d)(1)), I transmit herewith the Supplementary Agreement on Social Security between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Sweden. The Supplementary Agreement was signed in Stockholm on June 22, 2004, and is intended to modify certain provisions of the original United States-Sweden Agreement, which was signed May 27, 1985, and that entered into force January 1, 1987.

The United States-Sweden Agreement, as revised by the Supplementary Agreement, remains similar in objective to the social security agreements that are also in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bi-

lateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefits that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Sweden Agreement, as revised by the Supplementary Agreement, contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Supplementary Agreement with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the Supplementary Agreement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act on the effect of the Supplementary Agreement on income and

expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Supplementary Agreement and a composite text of the United States-Sweden Agreement showing the changes that will be made as a result of the Supplementary Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Supplementary Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend to the Congress the Supplementary Agreement to the United States-Sweden Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
March 20, 2007.

## Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand

March 21, 2007

*President Bush.* Madam Prime Minister, welcome. We've had a really fruitful discussion. The Prime Minister and I have visited several times over the course of the years. Every time I've talked to Helen Clark, I've found a very straightforward, honest woman who cares deeply about the country she represents. And I really thank you very much for coming back.

We talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about the importance for the United States and New Zealand to work cooperatively in helping democracy in places like Afghanistan. We talked about North Korea and Iran, our mutual desire for these problems of nations wanting to have nuclear weapons to be solved in a peaceful way by using the diplomatic process.

We talked about commerce. We talked about the environment and the need for our respective countries to work toward energy security. I assured the Prime Minister that my initiative to reduce gasoline in the United States by 20 percent over the next 10 years was a realistic initiative that's going to require new technologies, which we hope that other parts of the world, including New Zealand, will find useful to help achieve the common objective.

We talked about the South Pacific, and I praised the Prime Minister on her leader-

ship in dealing with some difficult issues. I assured her that our Government want to help in any way we can. We understand this is a—some of the countries there have got difficult issues, and it requires New Zealand's leadership, with U.S. help, to help solve the problems—and Australian help as well.

We talked about the need for us to continue to work together in the Asia Pacific region, about how APEC is a useful forum for New Zealand and the United States to work with China and other nations.

All in all, I found it to be a constructive conversation, such a good conversation I've decided to invite her for lunch.

Madam Prime Minister.

*Prime Minister Clark* Well, thank you, Mr. President. It has been a good conversation. It's a very good relationship. And we've talked about the areas in the new international security environment where we're working particularly closely—counterterrorism, counterproliferation. The President is very familiar with the work New Zealand has been doing in Afghanistan and very appreciative of it, as I know the Afghanistan Government and people are.

We've talked about New Zealand's support in the counterproliferation area. I've told the President today that following on

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



clear that my veto would be sustained. Today's action in the House does only one thing: It delays the delivery of vital resources for our troops. A narrow majority has decided to take this course, just as General Petraeus and his troops are carrying out a new strategy to help the Iraqis secure their capital city.

Amid the real challenges in Iraq, we're beginning to see some signs of progress. Yet, to score political points, the Democratic majority in the House has shown it is willing to undermine the gains our troops are making on the ground.

Democrats want to make clear that they oppose the war in Iraq. They have made their point. For some, that is not enough. These Democrats believe that the longer they can delay funding for our troops, the more likely they are to force me to accept restrictions on our commanders, an artificial timetable for withdrawal, and their pet spending projects. This is not going to happen. Our men and women in uniform need these emergency war funds. The Secretary of Defense has warned that if Congress

does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April the 15th, our men and women in uniform will face significant disruptions, and so would their families.

The Democrats have sent their message; now it's time to send their money. This is an important moment—a decision for the new leaders in Congress. Our men and women in uniform should not have to worry that politicians in Washington will deny them the funds and the flexibility they need to win. Congress needs to send me a clean bill that I can sign without delay. I expect Congress to do its duty and to fund our troops, and so do the American people, and so do the good men and women standing with me here today.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. He also referred to H.R. 1591.

## Remarks at a Celebration of Greek Independence Day

March 23, 2007

*The President.* Your Eminence, thanks. It's great to have you back at the White House. One of the joys about being the President is, you get to meet some pretty interesting people. And I will tell Your Eminence, I value our friendship. You're such a gentle soul, and it gives me great—it soothes my spirit to be with you. I appreciate your prayers, and I appreciate your leadership, and I am proud to join you in celebrating the 186th anniversary of Greek independence. And we're glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

As you can tell, there is going to be a series of orations, and then you get to go have some refreshments. [Laughter] I

appreciate the leaders of the Greek American community who are here with us today. Our country is home to 1.2 million Greek Americans—actually, more than that. And, Your Eminence, Greek Americans have really enriched our culture and enriched our Nation's heritage. They're a lively bunch, as you know—[laughter]—

*Archbishop Demetrios.* Absolutely.

*The President.* —but an important group of people in our country, and that's really what we celebrate here. We celebrate our friendship with the nation of Greece.

And, Madam Foreign Minister, thanks for coming. I talked to Condi about her

discussions with you. We have a lot to do together, and I appreciate your leadership.

I thank the Ambassador for joining us today. Mr. Ambassador, thanks. Thanks for bringing Francoise, wife. I appreciate the Ambassador from—the Cypriot Ambassador to the United States. Andreas, thank you for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thank you for bringing your wife Kareen.

I want to thank Nick Burns for being here, former Ambassador to Greece from the United States, now top official at the State Department. One of my top advisers happens to be a Greek American—Fran Townsend, Fran Fragos Townsend—[*laugh-ter*—whose advice I listen to on a regular basis, Your Eminence. Thank you for serving.

I appreciate Members of Congress who have come. Thank you all for taking time: Congressmen Carolyn Maloney from New York, Gus Bilirakis from Florida, John Sarbanes from Maryland, Zack Space from Ohio. I appreciate you all coming. You're welcome to be here.

I want to thank Father Alex—wherever you are—there he is. Father Alex, yes, trying to be as low profile as possible. [*Laughter*] Appreciate you coming, and thanks for your continued friendship.

I want to thank members of the United States military, Greek Americans who wear the uniform of the United States. I thank you for your service; I thank you for your dedication; I thank you for your stalwart defense of freedom and peace.

As you mentioned, Your Eminence, in 1821, the people of Greece proclaimed their independence, and they risked their lives to secure liberty. They knew that their land had been the home of the first democratic society, the first place in the world where people could choose their leaders, speak their minds, and freely explore the arts and the sciences.

These Greek patriots also knew that freedom and democracy were more than just a legacy, that they were their destiny. And they believed, like I believe, that freedom

is the hope of all mankind, not just a few people, but of all mankind.

And when they made their stand for freedom and independence, they found a lot of friends in this country: Americans who express their support by contributing funds, and some who volunteer to serve in the new Greek Army. Americans stood with Greece again after World War II, when violent Communist insurgents threatened Greece's free Government. As you mentioned, President Truman saw the danger, and he articulated a new and bold doctrine for our country. In an address to the United States Congress, he put it this way: "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Like democracy itself, the Truman Doctrine grew out of the experience of the Greek people and affirmed the desire for freedom for all people—not just a handful, not just some, but for all.

Today, Greece and the United States are allies in the cause of freedom, Madam Minister, and I want you to send thanks to your Government. In Afghanistan, a Greek engineering team provides support to the International Security Assistance Force; a Greek medical team provides emergency care to those who are wounded. And we thank you very much.

In Lebanon, Greek naval units are part of a UNIFIL force supporting the democratic Siniora Government. These Greek forces are serving with courage; they're helping young democracies who struggle against the forces of evil. And I appreciate your vision. I appreciate the good work that we're doing to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. It is hard work, Madam Minister, but it is necessary work.

I appreciate the important help Greece has provided to Americans who find themselves in danger overseas. Last summer, Greece was one of the first nations to offer ships to help evacuate Americans who

found themselves stranded in Lebanon following Hizballah's unprovoked terrorist attacks on Israel. We called for your help, and you delivered, and we appreciate that a lot. That's what friends do.

In January, the Greek Government responded quickly following a grenade attack on our Embassy in Athens. And we appreciate the determination of Greek authorities to bring those responsible for this attack to justice. We're grateful for the many messages of sympathy and support we've received after those attacks.

We also share with Greece important ties of faith, Your Eminence. The Greek Orthodox Church counts more than 1 million members in the United States, and it plays a vital role in the spiritual life of our Nation. Your Eminence, I thank you and congratulate you on 40 years of ministry as a bishop. You're providing necessary and important leadership here in the United States. You are a man of wisdom. You're a man of prayer. I appreciated your thoughtful response to me and Laura after the September the 11th attacks. These were tough times for our Nation, and your comforting call meant a lot to me.

I thank you for your determination to rebuild what was lost on that terrible day. On 9/11, the terrorists who struck Manhattan brought down not only magnificent skyscrapers but a humble house of worship. Before those attacks, St. Nicholas Church

stood just south of the second tower of the World Trade Center. Your vision is for a new St. Nicholas to rise just a few steps from its original site. And with your help, St. Nicholas will once again be a sanctuary of faith in New York's financial district and a new center of reconciliation for visitors from all over the world.

I thank you very much, Your Eminence, for gracing this house. This is the people's house. This belongs to everybody who's an American. I thank you for your vision of peace. I thank you for your spirituality. And I thank you for joining me as we celebrate Greek Independence Day.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America; Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakoyannis of Greece; Greece's Ambassador to the U.S. Alexandros P. Mallias; Cyprus's Ambassador to the U.S. Andreas S. Kakouris; Reverend Father Alex Karloutsos, assistant to the Archbishop for public affairs; and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon. The proclamation of March 21 on Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2007, is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Radio Address *March 24, 2007*

Good morning. The position of U.S. attorney is one of the most important jobs in the Justice Department. U.S. attorneys are appointed by the President, and they play a leading role in prosecuting crime and protecting the public.

In recent months, the Justice Department determined that new leadership in

several of these positions would better serve the country. I strongly support the Attorney General in this decision. I also appreciate the hard work and service of the U.S. attorneys who resigned, and I regret that their resignations have turned into a public spectacle.

Earlier this week, my administration presented to Congress a reasonable way forward that balances the constitutional prerogatives of the Presidency with Congress's interest in learning more facts behind the decision to replace 8 of the 93 U.S. attorneys. Members of Congress now face a choice, whether they will waste time and provoke an unnecessary confrontation or whether they will join us in working to do the people's business. We have many important issues before us, so we need to put partisan politics aside and come together to enact important legislation for the American people.

One of the most urgent legislative priorities is to fund our troops fighting the war on terror. I've asked Congress to pass an emergency war spending bill that gives our troops what they need, without strings and without delay. Instead, a narrow majority in the House of Representatives decided yesterday to make a political statement. The emergency war spending bill they voted for would cut the number of troops below the level our military commanders say they need to accomplish the mission. It would set an artificial timetable for withdrawal that would allow the enemy to wait us out. And it would require an army of lawyers to meet the conditions imposed by politicians in Washington who are substituting their own judgment for that of our generals in Iraq. I have made it clear that I will veto any such bill, and it is clear that my veto would be sustained.

To get the votes they needed to pass the bill, the Democrats who control the House also included billions of dollars in domestic and porkbarrel spending for local congressional districts. This spending includes things like \$74 million for peanut storage, \$25 million for spinach growers, and a host of other spending items that have nothing to do with the war. Even with all this extra spending tacked on, the vote in the House was very close. This means

that the Democrats do not have enough votes to override my veto.

By choosing to make a political statement and passing a bill they know will never become law, the Democrats in Congress have only delayed the delivery of the vital funds and resources our troops need. The clock is running. The Secretary of Defense has warned that if Congress does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April 15th, our men and women in uniform will face significant disruptions, and so will their families. April 15th is also about the same time that Congress returns from its Easter vacation. Members of Congress need to put our troops first, not politics. They need to send me a clean bill, without conditions, without restrictions, and without pork.

This is an important moment for our Nation, and it is an important moment for the new Congress. My administration has presented a reasonable way forward on the matter of U.S. attorneys and on ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the funds and the flexibility they need to win in Iraq. It is not too late for us to work together. For the good of our Nation, I ask the Democratic leaders in Congress to seize the opportunity before us and move beyond political statements to bipartisan action.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1 p.m. on March 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 23, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Automobile Makers March 26, 2007

*The President.* I've just spent quite a while talking to our CEOs of American automobile companies. And I was interested in their take on my goal of reducing gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

I found it very interesting that by 2012, 50 percent of the automobiles in America will be flex-fuel vehicles. That means that the American consumer will be able to either use gasoline or ethanol, depending upon, obviously, price and convenience. That's a major technological breakthrough for the country. If you want to reduce gasoline usage, like I believe we need to do so for national security reasons as well as for environmental concerns, the consumer has got to be in a position to make a rational choice. And so I appreciate very much the fact that American automobile manufacturers recognize the reality of the world in which we live and are using new technologies to give the consumers different options.

Right now most of our ethanol is made from corn. But the Federal Government is spending a lot of money to try to develop new technologies that will mean that ethanol could be made from wood chips or switchgrass. Part of that request is embedded in a request to the Congress, and I would hope that Congress would move expeditiously on our plan to reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. It's in our national security interest that we do this, it's in economic security interest we do it, and, all at the same time, it will help us be better stewards of the environment.

And now I'd like to ask these gentlemen to make a few comments. Go ahead, Rick.

*G. Richard Wagoner, Jr.* Yes, I'd just—from General Motors' perspective, we very much share the President's vision, and we definitely see a path through to both lower

oil consumption, lower amounts of imported oil, and fewer carbon emissions. And obviously, near-term opportunity that we are moving on right now, as the President cited, is flex-fuel vehicles that are powered by E-85 ethanol. There are millions on the road today. As a group, we've agreed to double our production by the year 2010 and then have 50 percent of our production E-85 capable by the year 2012. This makes a big difference, and there's nothing that can be done which can reduce the curve of growth in imported oil and actually turn it down like using E-85, taking advantage of what's there today.

So we look forward to the opportunity to work closely with the administration, the Congress to increase the production of ethanol and to improve the distribution. And on the manufacturer's side, we look very, very much forward to playing our role in that process as well.

*The President.* Thank you. Alan.

*Alan Mulally.* Well, I might add to what Rick said, that we at Ford absolutely are supportive of the President's goal, both for energy efficiency and independence and to be good stewards of our environment.

One of the neat things about the conversation, again, today, on the continuing dialog that we've had, is being able to—for the United States system to have options and have flexibility. And the fact that we have ethanol solutions today, hybrids coming along, and plus hydrogen and fuel cells and new battery technology, gives some great options to satisfy our need for flexibility, as well as being good stewards of the environment.

So, Mr. President, we appreciate the leadership, and we look forward to working with you going forward.

*Thomas W. LaSorda.* Well, DaimlerChrysler, which includes the Mercedes Car Group, the Freightliner, and



other truck divisions in the Chrysler Group, we've committed as well, by 2012, to have 50 percent of our production not only in E-85 but biodiesel. This Jeep Grand Cherokee here today is going into production as we speak, being shipped from the factory with B-5.

So we're very committed to this as well, and we think this is the answer for America to lower our dependence on foreign oil.

Thank you.

*The President.* One of the things that I think it's important for the American taxpayer to understand is that we're using some of their dollars to promote new technologies, and we're working with these CEOs and their respective companies to advance new technologies. They're on the

leading edge of technological change, and it's in our interest to help promote these new technologies that are coming to the market.

And I'm excited about the future. I'm optimistic we can meet our goal. I look forward to working with Congress to do so. And I appreciate you all coming today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Participating in the meeting were G. Richard Wagoner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, General Motors Corp.; Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co.; and Thomas W. LaSorda, president and chief executive officer, Chrysler Group, DaimlerChrysler.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Executives of Large Vehicle Fleet Operations *March 27, 2007*

Mr. Secretary, thank you. I want to thank you all very much.

Yesterday I talked with the chief executive officers of U.S. auto companies about what they're doing to help us meet the goal of reducing gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years. Today I've had the honor of visiting with private sector companies: "Big Brown," FedEx, the Metro bus line, as well as the postal office folks, and DaimlerChrysler as well to talk about how we are using new technologies to convert truck fleets, bus fleets to vehicles that will be able to help meet the goal of reducing gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years.

The reason I've come is, I want the American people to understand that there are new technologies on the market that are being used every single day, but there's more we can do. I'm looking forward to working with Congress to meet this goal. And they need to pass meaningful energy legislation as soon as possible, all aiming

at making sure that we promote technologies that, for the sake of our national security and for the sake of good environmental policy, we reduce the usage of gasoline.

The goal I laid out of reducing gasoline by 20 percent over 10 years is a realistic goal. In other words, this isn't a pipedream; this is something that our Nation can accomplish. It's going to take more research dollars; it's going to take working with the private sector; and it's going to take innovative leadership. And I thank the folks here who are representing companies that have got innovative leadership, people willing to make use of technologies that change the way we drive and will change the way we live.

So I appreciate you all being with me. It's an honor to be with you. Thank you for your time.



NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. at the U.S. Postal Service Vehicle Maintenance

Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman.

## Remarks on White House Press Secretary Tony Snow *March 27, 2007*

This morning I got a phone call from Tony Snow. He called me from the hospital. He told me that when they went in and operated on him, they found cancer. It's a recurrence of the cancer that he thought that he had successfully dealt with in the past. His attitude is, one, that he is not going to let this whip him, and he's upbeat. My attitude is, is that we need to pray for him and for his family.

Obviously, a lot of folks here in the White House worry a lot about their friend, as do Laura and I. And so my message

to Tony is, stay strong; a lot of people love you and care for you and will pray for you. And we're hoping for all the best. I'm looking forward to the day that he comes back to the White House and briefs the press corps on the decisions that I'm making and why I'm making them. In the meantime, I hope our fellow citizens offer a prayer to he and his family.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

## Remarks to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association *March 28, 2007*

All right. Thanks for having me. Thank you. Please be seated. Not a bad introduction by a cowboy. *[Laughter]* Thanks for having me. Welcome to Washington. I'm glad to be with you. I was telling Laura this morning, "I'm really looking forward to going over to talk to the Nation's cattlemen." I appreciate being with people who understand the importance of faith, family, hard work, good values. I like to remind people, every day is Earth Day if you make a living off the land. It's good to be with fellow conservationists.

I'm going to talk a little bit about two big priorities: One, how to keep this economy strong so people can make a living; and secondly, how this country needs to stay resolved and firm in protecting the security of our country. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come over and visit.

I do want to thank John Queen. I want to thank the board of directors. Thanks for being here and making your voices heard. You can influence the debate in Washington. And this is a town where people do listen to other people's voices. I've got a few suggestions for you when you go up to Capitol Hill. *[Laughter]* But before I give them, I do want to recognize Senator Craig Thomas from the State of Wyoming and Marilyn Musgrave from Colorado. Appreciate you both being here.

Let me talk about how to keep this economy growing. You know, one of the main jobs of government is to create the conditions for economic growth. A main job of government is not to try to create wealth. In other words, the fundamental question we've got to ask here in Washington is,

what do we need to do to encourage investment and risk takers and to encourage entrepreneurship? And I believe the heart of good economic policy is keeping people's taxes low.

You know, I—[*applause*]. The reason I say that is, there's a fundamental debate in Washington, when you really get down to it, and the debate is who best to spend your money. [*Laughter*] And I believe a cattleman can spend their money better than the government can. Now, obviously, we need some amount of money here, and that's called setting priorities. But beyond that, the best way to keep this economy growing is to let you keep more of your own tax money. The tax cuts we passed are working.

You know, when you cut the individual tax rates, you affect farmers and ranchers. Many farmers and ranchers are subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships or sole proprietorships, which means you pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And if you're worried about a vibrant agricultural economy, it makes sense to let those who work the land keep more of their own money so they can invest, so they can make the necessary changes so that their businesses can remain vibrant.

I say, the tax cuts work. Since we enacted major tax reform in 2003, in response to recession and a terrorist attack, this economy of ours has created more than 7 million jobs, new jobs, and it's expanded 13 percent. The tax cuts are working, and the United States Congress needs to make those tax cuts permanent.

Now, one of the taxes that concerns you a lot, I know, is the death tax. It should. You get taxed while you're living, and then you get taxed after you die. It's double taxation at its worst. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. Notice I didn't say, "It is going to be extinct." Under current law, it will come back into effect in 2011, which puts people in an awkward position in 2010. [*Laughter*]

I really believe Congress needs to pay attention to the effects of the death tax on our farmers and ranchers. If people are concerned about keeping land in the hands of the family rancher, the best way to do so is to get rid of the death tax for those who ranch the land, once and for all.

When you're working the Halls of Congress, I hope you work hard on the death tax issue. There's no excuse not to get rid of it. Now, you'll hear people say, "We don't want to give tax relief to the billionaires." Okay, fine, but let's put a bill on the President's desk that respects the ranchers of the United States of America and the farmers and the small-business owners, and I'll sign it.

To keep the economy growing, we've got to be wise about our budgets. Now what you'll hear here in Washington is, we have got to raise your taxes in order to balance the budget. That's not the way Washington, DC, works. They will raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money. [*Laughter*] All I do is ask you to look at the budget that the Senate just recently passed. You know, we changed hands here in Washington in the Senate and the House. And the new leadership there in the Senate passed a new budget which raises taxes so they can increase spending, and the House is looking at the same type of approach.

I have a different view. My attitude is, keep the taxes low so the economy grows to generate more tax revenues, and don't overspend; to set priorities with the people's money, not try to be all things to all people. And so I submitted a budget to the House and the Senate that balances the budget in 5 years without raising one dime on the working people of the United States of America.

I'm looking forward to working with you on a farm bill that's good and decent and fair. I just put up a—submitted some ideas through our Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns. I want to remind you that in the bill we've submitted to Congress, we asked

for a \$17 billion increase in conservation spending over a 10-year period. That's an increase over the last farm bill. That includes money for CRP and a 30-percent increase for equip, plus one point three-quarters billion dollars on water conservation programs. I think this is a wise use of our money.

I'm interested in a farm bill that enhances conservation, that recognizes the contribution our ranchers make, that is fair, that is reform oriented, and helps us compete in the global marketplace. I appreciate your efforts to work on a good farm bill. I'm looking forward to working with you on it.

Finally, to keep the economy growing, we ought to open up markets for U.S. goods and services. If you're interested in economic vitality and growth, the way to encourage that growth is to find new markets for U.S. products. And I want to spend a little time talking about trade today.

Last year, the United States exported \$1.4 trillion worth of goods and services. That makes us the largest exporter in the world. To me, that says, is that when we have opportunities that are fair, we produce the kinds of goods and services people want to buy. Every time we break down a barrier to trade, it makes it more likely somebody who's raising a cow will have an opportunity to sell that cow into a better market. Free trade lowers consumer prices. In other words, when you open up trade, it's good for consumers.

Trade is good for people working. I don't know if you realize this or not, but jobs exported by—supported by exports pay wages that are 13 to 18 percent higher than the average. If you manufacture a good that is sold overseas, you're making more money than somebody who's not exporting. Isn't that an interesting fact?

I happen to believe competition is good. I believe competition brings out the best in everybody. So I don't mind competition, so long as the playing rules are fair. My attitude on trade is, you treat us the way

we treat you, and then let's compete. America is 5 percent of the world's population, which means 95 percent of the rest of the world are potential customers for things that we grow or manufacture.

I think it's good business to open up trade agreements. When I came into office, we only had trade agreements with 3 nations; now we have 11 of them in force and more on the way. The countries that America has free trade agreements with represent 7 percent of the world's GDP, yet they account for 43 percent of our exports. The reason I bring this up to you is, there's a lot of room for expansion when it comes to trade. There's a lot of opportunity.

And so this administration is committed to open up markets. And there's a vital vote getting ready to come up in front of the—up to the Congress, and that is agreements that we have cut with Peru, Colombia, and Panama. I believe these are important markets for you and important markets for U.S. goods and services. Congress needs to make sure that they send an affirmative message when it comes to trade on these three agreements.

Now, trade obviously creates issues. We end up with disputes and opportunities for people to make mischief when it comes to trade, people to use excuses for not opening up markets. And we went through one of those periods with you all, and that is with the BSE issue. BSE was discovered in 2003, and we worked with our cattle folks aggressively to address the issue, to prevent further introduction and spread of the disease. In other words, there was a proactive effort by government and the cattle raisers to address the issue.

During the last 3 years, we've conducted over 800,000 tests to assess the health of our cattle herds. Thanks to these and other science-based measures, we've helped the farmers and ranchers manage any possible BSE risk in the cattle population. And today, because of our collaborative efforts and a strong scientific approach to dealing

with BSE, we can say to global consumers with complete assurance, "American beef is safe, and it is good to eat."

And the word is getting out. In 2006, exports of beef and beef products totaled more than \$2 billion. That's a—nearly a 50-percent increase from 2005. It's not at the levels we want, but there has been some improvement in sales. And that's important for you. The more markets there are that are open for your product, the easier it's going to be for you to make a living. And I understand that, and it's important for Congress to understand that as well.

Today, more than 100 countries have fully or partially opened their markets to U.S. beef. The objective of this administration, however, is to make sure that they're better than partially opened; they're fully opened, including to countries like Japan and Korea. We're also working to open up markets that have still got a ban on our imports. In other words, this is an important part of our foreign policy. When I'm talking to leaders and they've got an issue with American beef, it's on the agenda. I say, "If you want to get the attention of the American people in a positive way, you open up your markets to U.S. beef." People understand that, when it comes to being treated fairly in the world marketplace.

We got an opportunity to expand further—open up further markets by expanding trade through the Doha round of the World Trade Organization. It gives us a chance to level the playing field. It gives us a chance so that I can say to our cattle raisers and others that, "You'll be treated fairly." Now, you got to compete; you got to grow some product that somebody wants. But you should be treated fairly. The rules will treat you fairly. That's all you can expect.

And so I want you to know that we're going to work hard to bring Doha to a successful conclusion. It's hard work. This weekend, the President of Brazil is coming to see me, and we'll be talking about how

we can work together to open up markets, and at the same time, address their concerns about our farm issues.

The only way that we can complete Doha and make headway on other trade agreements, however, is for Congress to extend trade promotion authority. This authority allows the President to negotiate complicated trade deals and then send them to the United States Congress for an up-or-down vote on the whole agreement. Presidents of both parties have considered this a incredibly important tool for completing trade agreements. In other words, our trade partners have got to say, "If that's the deal we negotiate, that's the one that somebody is going to have to vote up or down on." You can't negotiate a deal in fairness with the United States if you think it's going to be changed on the floor of the Congress. So the up-or-down vote is important to get, and that's what you get when you get trade promotion authority.

And yet this authority will expire on July the 1st unless Congress acts. And I want to thank the National Cattlemen's Beef Association for joining with the administration and other organizations in urging the Congress to renew trade promotion authority.

Look, there's going to be a vigorous debate about trade in Congress, and I thank you for engaging in that debate. And you know, trashing trade will make a good sound bite on the evening news—[laughter]—but walling off America from the rest of the world would harm this economy, and it would harm our cattle raisers. The road to protectionism may seem broad and inviting, yet it ends in danger and decline. So I urge Congress to reject protectionism and to keep this economy open to tremendous opportunities that the world has to offer for our ranchers and farmers and entrepreneurs.

Just as our prosperity depends on rejecting economic isolationism, so too our security depends on rejecting calls for America to abandon its leadership in this world.

September the 11th is an important moment in this country's history. It's a sad moment, but it should serve as a wakeup call to the realities of the world in which we live.

On September the 11th, we saw problems originating in a failed state some 7,000 miles away that affected how we live. See, September the 11th was not only a day we were attacked, it is a day that our country must never forget. And the lessons of that day must never be forgot, that what happens overseas matters here at home. It may be tempting to say, "Oh, just let it run its natural course." But for me, allowing the world to run its natural course, which could lead to more violence and hatred, would end up reducing the security of the United States, not enhancing the security. And our biggest job in America, the biggest job of this government is to protect you from harm.

I think about it every day, and so do a lot of other good, decent citizens of this country. The best way to protect this country is to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. And for the long-term peace and security of this country, we must advance an ideology that stands in stark contrast to the ideology of the killers. The best way to secure this homeland is to stay on the offense, and in the meantime, encourage the spread of liberty as an alternative to tyranny.

And it's hard work, but it is necessary work. We went into Afghanistan, and we did so to remove a vicious tyranny that had harbored terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks on our country. Our message was, if you provide safe haven, if you provide comfort to an enemy, you're just as guilty as the enemy. And so, along with allies, we captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida and Taliban fighters; we closed down their training camps; we helped the people of Afghanistan replace the Taliban regime with a democratic government. And it's in our Nation's long-term interests that we help the people of Afghanistan survive

the threats and onslaughts by people who want to reinstate tyranny.

And then we went into Iraq, and we removed the dictator who was a threat to the United States and to the world. And now we're undertaking the difficult and dangerous work of helping the Iraqi people establish a functioning democracy that can protect their own people and serve as an ally in this global war against those who would do America harm.

In 2005—I want you to remember—in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections. Oh, it seems like a decade ago, doesn't it? And yet in the march of history, it's not all that long ago that the Iraqi people showed up at the election box, after having lived under the thumb of a brutal and murderous tyrant, to express their will about the future of their country. They chose a transitional government. They adopted the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world, and then they elected a government underneath that constitution. Despite the endless threats from killers, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote, in a show of hope and solidarity that the United States should never forget.

A thinking enemy watched all this. See, there are some who can't stand the thought of a free society emerging in their midst. And this enemy escalated attacks. Al Qaida is very active in Iraq. And they and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam: the Golden Mosque of Samarra. Why did they do that? They did that to provoke retaliation. They did that to cause people to take up—arm themselves. And they succeeded. Radical Shi'a elements, some of whom have received support from Iran, increased their support of death squads, and then the situation began to escalate.

And so I had a choice to make. Last fall, I looked at the facts; I consulted with a lot of folks in Congress and our military commanders. And my choice really boiled down to this: Do we withdraw our troops



and let violence spiral out of control, let this young democracy fail? Or do I send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the violence and secure their capital? In other words, do we give them breathing space to get on the path of reconciliation so that this young democracy could survive?

Well, I weighed the options, and the military commanders and I concluded that the consequences of withdrawal would be disastrous for the United States of America. And let me tell you why. If we were to step back from Baghdad before it was more secure, before the Government could secure its own capital, it would leave a security vacuum. And into that vacuum could quickly come Sunni and Shi'a extremists, bolstered by outside forces. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country, and, in time, the violence of these emboldened extremists could affect the entire region. The terrorists could emerge from chaos—see, they benefit when the situation is chaotic—with new safe havens to replace the one they had lost in Afghanistan.

There's no doubt in my mind that their intention is to try to strike us again, and they need the resources and the safe haven to do so. If we were to abandon this young democracy to chaos, it would embolden these extremists; it would enable them to be able to recruit more; it would give them new resources from which to plot and plan. I believe the consequences of failure in Iraq affect the security of the United States of America, and that's why I made the decision I made.

And so instead of retreating, we reinforced, troops led by a capable commander named General David Petraeus. The Iraqi Government saw our firm support, and they're now beginning to carry out an aggressive plan to secure their nation's capital. And the plan is still in the beginning stages. I mean, General Petraeus had been on the ground just for about 2 months. Only half of the reinforcements that he needs have arrived. And he says it's going

to be early June before all the troops that are dedicated to the operation are even in place. In other words, I've sent reinforcements into Baghdad with a new commander, with a plan to help the Iraqis secure the capital, a plan that we believe will be successful. He's been there for about 2 months. Half the troops that he needs have arrived.

And look, I recognize it's going to require a sustained, determined effort to succeed; I know that. And there are some early signs that are encouraging. I mean, for example, the Iraqi leader has appointed a commander for Baghdad who is working closely with our generals. The last of the nine Iraqi surge battalions arrived in the Iraqi capital. In other words, they said, "We're going to commit troops to this plan to secure the capital," and they're delivering. The Iraqis are showing up. Iraqi leaders have lifted restrictions that once prevented Iraqi and American forces from going into areas like Sadr City. You've been reading about Sadr City; well, my attitude is, murderers are murderers, and they ought to be brought to justice. And so any political restrictions preventing our people are being lifted. Iraqis are in the lead, and we're helping them.

We're now setting up checkpoints across Baghdad. When I say "we," that is the Iraqis with American help. They're hardening perimeters around markets and areas that have been targets for these spectacular attacks, all aimed at shaking the confidence of the American people and shaking the confidence of the Iraqi people. We've got joint security stations throughout the Iraqi capital. In the past, we would clear an area, and then we'd go home, and then the insurgents or killers would move back in. Now we've got a strategy of clear, hold—and that's what that means—and then using money to help reconstruct Iraq. By the way, most of the money is coming from the Iraqis; he's put out a \$10 billion reconstruction budget. That's what we expect. A government of and by the people should



be spending the people's money to help rebuild their country.

American forces are now deployed 24 hours in these neighborhoods, and guess what's happening? The Iraqi people are beginning to gain confidence. Support from the Iraqi people can be measured by the tips our people are getting—in other words, people saying, “So-and-so is over here, a cache of weapons over there.” And we're using the tips to aggressively pursue. We've launched successful operations against Shi'a extremists. We've captured hundreds of fighters that are spreading sectarian violence. In other words, we're after killers. We're after—we don't say, this religious group or this religious group. We're saying, if you're trying to destabilize this young democracy, the Iraqis, with coalition help, are coming after you.

Last week, we captured a Shi'a extremist leader and his associates who were implicated in the kidnaping and murder of five U.S. soldiers in Karbala. Last month, American and Iraqi forces uncovered more than 400 weapons caches. We're conducting dozens and dozens of operations on a daily basis throughout that country with the Iraqi forces.

See, ultimately, the Iraqis are going to have to defend themselves. Ultimately, it is their responsibility. That's what the 12 million people who voted want. We just need to give them some breathing space so they can gain their confidence and have the capabilities necessary to protect this country.

We're destroying bomb factories. Just last week, we captured the head of the Al Qaida bomb network, responsible for some of the most horrific bombings in Baghdad. It's interesting; I mentioned Al Qaida. Al Qaida wants us to fail in Iraq. This is what their leaders have clearly said, and they're willing to kill innocent women and children to achieve their objectives.

The missions I described are only the opening salvos in what is going to be a sustained effort. Yet the Iraqi people are

beginning to say—see positive changes. I want to share with you how two Iraqi bloggers—they have bloggers in Baghdad, just like we've got here—[laughter]—describe: “Displaced families are returning home. Marketplaces are seeing more activity. Stores that were long shuttered are now reopening. We feel safer about moving in the city now. Our people want to see this effort succeed. We hope the Governments in Baghdad and America do not lose their resolve.”

I want to read something that Army Sergeant Major Chris Nadeau says; the guy is on his second tour in Iraq. He says: “I'm not a Democrat or a Republican. I'm a soldier. The facts are the facts. Things are getting better. We're picking up momentum.”

These are hopeful signs, and that's positive. Yet at the very moment that General Petraeus' strategy is beginning to show signs of success, the Democrats in the House of Representatives have passed an emergency war spending bill that undercuts him and the troops under his command. This bill would damage our effort in Iraq three ways.

First, the House bill would impose restrictions on our commanders in Iraq, as well as rigid conditions and arbitrary deadlines on the Iraqi Government. It would mandate a precipitous withdrawal of American forces if every one of these conditions is not met by a date certain. Even if they are met, the bill would still require that most American forces begin retreating from Iraq by March 1st of next year, regardless of conditions on the ground. It's unclear what the military significance of this date is. What is clear is that the consequences of imposing such a specific and random date for withdrawal would be disastrous.

If the House bill becomes law, our enemies in Iraq would simply have to mark their calendars. They'd spend the months ahead picking how to use their new—plotting how to use their new safe havens once we were to leave. It makes no sense for

politicians in Washington, DC, to be dictating arbitrary timelines for our military commanders in a war zone 6,000 miles away.

I want to read to you what a major newspaper editorial page said—and by the way, this editorial page, like, generally is not singing my praises—[*laughter*]—“Imagine if Dwight Eisenhower had been forced to adhere to a congressional war plan in scheduling the Normandy landings—or if, in 1863, President Lincoln had been forced by Congress to conclude the Civil War the following year. This is the worst kind of congressional meddling in military strategy.”

Second, the House bill also undermines the Iraqi Government and contradicts the Democrats’ claim that they simply want to help the Iraqis solve their own problems. For example, the House bill would cut funding for the Iraqi security forces if Iraqi leaders did not meet arbitrary deadlines.

The Democrats cannot have it both ways. They can’t say that the Iraqis must do more and then take away the funds that will help them do so. Iraq is a young democracy. It is fighting for its survival in a region that is vital to our security. The lesson of September the 11th must not be forgot. To cut off support for the security forces would put our own security at risk.

Third, the House bill would add billions of dollars in domestic spending that is completely unrelated to the war. For example, the bill includes \$74 million for peanut storage, \$25 million for spinach growers. These may be emergencies, they may be problems, but they can be addressed in the normal course of business. They don’t need to be added on to a bill that’s supporting our troops. There’s \$6.4 million for the House of Representatives salaries and expenses account. I don’t know what that is—[*laughter*]—but it is not related to the war and protecting the United States of America.

This week, the Senate is considering a version that is no better. The Senate bill

sets an arbitrary date for withdrawal. It also undermines the Iraqi Government’s ability to take more responsibility for their own country by cutting funds for Iraqi reconstruction and law enforcement. And just like their colleagues in the House, Senate Democrats have loaded their bill with special interest spending.

The bill includes \$40 million for tree assistance. You know, all these matters may be important matters; they don’t need to be loaded on to a bill that is an emergency spending bill for our troops. There’s \$3.5 million for visitors to tour the Capitol and see for themselves how Congress works. [*Laughter*] I’m not kidding you. [*Laughter*]

Here’s the bottom line: The House and Senate bills have too much pork, too many conditions on our commanders, and an artificial timetable for withdrawal. And I have made it clear for weeks, if either version comes to my desk, I’m going to veto it. It is also clear from the strong opposition in both Houses that my veto would be sustained. Yet Congress continues to pursue these bills, and as they do, the clock is ticking for our troops in the field. Funding for our forces in Iraq will begin to run out in mid-April. Members of Congress need to stop making political statements and start providing vital funds for our troops. They need to get that bill to my desk so I can sign it into law.

Now some of them believe that by delaying funding for our troops, they can force me to accept restrictions on our commanders that I believe would make withdrawal and defeat more likely. That’s not going to happen. If Congress fails to pass a bill to fund our troops on the frontlines, the American people will know who to hold responsible. Our troops in Iraq deserve the full support of the Congress and the full support of this Nation.

I know when you see somebody in the uniform, you praise them, and I thank you for that. And we need to praise those military families, too, that are strong, standing by their loved one in this mighty struggle

to defend this country. They risk their lives to fight a brutal and determined enemy, an enemy that has no respect for human life.

We saw that brutality in a recent attack. Just 2 weeks ago, terrorists in Baghdad put two children in the back of an explosive-laden car, and they used them to get the car past a security checkpoint. And once through, the terrorists fled the vehicle and detonated the car with the children inside. Some call this civil war; others call it emergency. I call it pure evil. And that evil that uses children in a terrorist attack in Iraq is the same evil that inspired and rejoiced in the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. And that evil must be defeated overseas so we don't have to face them here again.

If we cannot muster the resolve to defeat this evil in Iraq, America will have lost its moral purpose in the world and we will endanger our citizens, because if we leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy will follow us here. Prevailing in Iraq is not going to be easy. Four years after this war began, the nature of the fight has changed, but this is a fight that can be won. We can have confidence in the outcome, because this Nation has done this kind of work before.

You know, following World War II, after we fought bitter enemies, we lifted up the defeated nations of Japan and Germany and stood with them as they built their representative governments. We committed years and resources to this cause, and the effort has been repaid many times over in three generations of friendship and peace. After the Korean war, had you predicted that Korea would have been a major trading partner in the world, or Japan would have been a major trading partner and vibrant economy, or China would be developing an open market and the Far East would be relatively peaceful: they'd have called you a hopeless idealist. And yet, because of American presence and influence,

the Far East has emerged as I've described it.

The stakes are high in the efforts we're undertaking in Iraq. It's a part of a long ideological struggle against those who spread hatred and lack of hope and lack of opportunity. But I believe, with patience and resolve, we will succeed. The efforts we're undertaking today will affect a generation of Americans who are coming up in our society.

You know, it's important for you to understand that the Iraqi people want to live in freedom and peace. I believe strongly in the universality of liberty. I believe people want to be free, and, if given a chance, they will take the risks necessary to be free. And that's what's happened in Iraq. We see the desire for liberty in Iraqi soldiers who risk their lives every day. We see the desire in the shopkeepers and civic leaders who are working to reform their neighborhoods. We see it in the desire of Iraqi moms and dads who want the same thing for their children that we want for our children.

If we stand by the Iraqi people today and help them develop their young Iraqi-style democracy, they're going to be able to take responsibility for their own security. And when that day comes, our forces can come home, and that we will leave behind a stable country that can serve as an example for others and be an ally in this global struggle against those who would do us harm. It's tough work, but it's necessary work, work the United States has done before, and work the United States will complete now.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. at the Holiday Inn on the Hill. In his remarks, he referred to John M. Queen III, president-elect, National Cattlemen's Beef Association; President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Lt. Gen.

Abdoud Gambar, Iraqi commander of Baghdad, Iraqi Army; Qais Khazali, member, Khazali network; and Haytham Kazim

Abdallah Al-Shimari, head of the Rusafa Al Qaida-Iraq bomb network.

## Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents' Association Dinner March 28, 2007

Thank you, Brian. Laura and I are happy to be here. I'd like to thank the Radio and TV Correspondents' Association for providing dinner tonight. And I'd like to thank Senator Webb for providing security. [Laughter]

I'm glad to see everybody here is enjoying themselves. Don't think I haven't noticed all the drinking that's been going on. [Laughter] In my State of the Union Address, I said we needed to increase the use of ethanol. [Laughter]

Well, where should I start? A year ago, my approval rating was in the thirties; my nominee for the Supreme Court had just withdrawn; and my Vice President had shot someone. [Laughter] Ah, those were the good old days. [Laughter] Sorry the Vice President couldn't be here. [Laughter] He's had a rough few weeks. To be honest, his feelings are kind of hurt. He said he was going on vacation to Afghanistan, where people like him. [Laughter]

You in the press certainly have had a lot to report lately. Take the current controversy. I have to admit, we really blew the way we let those attorneys go. You know you've botched it when people sympathize with lawyers. [Laughter]

Speaking of subpoenas, it's good to see Speaker Pelosi tonight. [Laughter] You know, some have wondered how the two of us would get along. Some say she's bossy; she's opinionated; she's not to be crossed—hey, I get along with my mother. [Laughter]

But between the Congress and the press, there is a lot of scrutiny in this job. Not a day goes by that I don't get scrutineered

one way or the other. [Laughter] The press is a lot tougher the second term. It's reached the point I sometimes call on Helen Thomas just to hear a friendly voice. [Laughter]

No matter how tough it gets, however, I have no intention of becoming a lame-duck President, unless, of course, Cheney accidentally shoots me in the leg. [Laughter] Hey, I have 664 days left in the White House, so technically, I'm a temporary guest-worker. [Laughter]

I'm considering what's next. President Clinton, of course, wrote a very successful Presidential memoirs, with 10,000 pages or something. [Laughter] I'm thinking of something really fun and creative for mine—you know, maybe a popup book. [Laughter] I'm considering a number of titles. Which do you like: "How W Got His Groove Back"—[laughter]—"Who Moved My Presidency?" or "Tuesdays With Cheney"? [Laughter]

By the way, I'm not sure whether or not Senator Obama is here. The last I heard, he was not coming to the Radio and TV Correspondents' dinner—not enough press. [Laughter] People Magazine recently had a photo of the Senator there on the beach in Hawaii—his sleek, hairless pecs glistening in the surf. [Laughter] It shows how biased the press is. Have you ever seen a shot like that of Denny Hastert? [Laughter]

Before I do sit down, I do want to say a couple of things. I'm very happy one person who could not be here last year is here tonight, and that's Bob Woodruff.

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



why African American men would fight for a country that treated them so unfairly. Yet the Tuskegee Airmen were eager to join up.

You know, I'm interested in the story about a young man who was so worried that the Army might change its mind about allowing him to fly, that he drove immediately to the train station. He left his car, as well as \$1,000 worth of photography equipment. He never saw his car, he never saw his camera, but he became a flyer.

These men in our presence felt a special sense of urgency. They were fighting two wars: One was in Europe, and the other took place in the hearts and minds of our citizens. That's why we're here. The white commander of the Tuskegee airfield was once asked, with all seriousness, "How do African Americans fly?" Kind of reflecting the ignorance of the times, they said, "How do African Americans fly?" He said, "Oh, they fly just like everybody else flies—stick and rudder." *[Laughter]*

Soon, Americans in their kitchens and living rooms were reading the headlines. You probably didn't realize it at the time, but you were making headlines at home, headlines that spoke about daring pilots winning a common battle.

And little by little, every victory at war was translated to a victory here in the United States. And we're in the presence of men who are earning those victories, important victories, leaders who pierced the unquestioned prejudices of a different society. You gave African Americans a sense of pride and possibility.

You saw that pride and awe—I'm sure you remember—in the faces of young children who came up to you right after the war and tugged on your uniforms and said, "Mister, can you really fly an airplane?" Some of you have been in Germany and Iraq, and you still see that sense of pride.

I appreciate your going. I appreciate the fact that one of our young soldiers today took pictures for a—of you for a scrapbook for his children. I appreciate the fact that one of our soldiers today said: "It is not often that you get a chance to meet the guys who have paved the path for you."

The Tuskegee Airmen helped win a war, and you helped change our Nation for the better. Yours is the story of the human spirit, and it ends like all great stories do—with wisdom and lessons and hope for tomorrow. And the medal that we confer today means that we're doing a small part to ensure that your story will be told and honored for generations to come.

And I would like to offer a gesture to help atone for all the unreturned salutes and unforgivable indignities. And so, on behalf of the Office I hold and a country that honors you, I salute you for the service to the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks During a Visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center *March 30, 2007*

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you all for joining me. Every time I come to Walter Reed, my spirits are lifted. They're first lifted by the soldiers and marines who

are recovering from some very tough wounds. I had the honor of pinning the Purple Heart on quite a few people today, and I am always impressed by their resolve

and their commitment to the country. Every time I come to Walter Reed, I'm also impressed by the caregiver: the docs, the nurses, the people who spend many hours trying to heal those who have been wounded in service to our country.

The soldiers and marines stay here only for a few months, but the compassion they receive here stays with them for a lifetime. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I do want to thank our docs and our nurses and caregivers for providing extraordinary health care to the people who wear the uniform. I know full well that the work you do is behind the scenes. In other words, you don't get a lot of glory for what you do, but you certainly do from the family members who first come here, and they see their loved one on a bed, wondering whether or not that person will ever walk again. And then, 6 months later, the body is returning, and the spirit is strong; the person is up and moving around. The family and the soldier is impressed by that care.

Americans must understand that the problems recently uncovered at Walter Reed were not the problems of medical care. The quality of care at this fantastic facility is great, and it needs to remain that way. Independent analysis have given extremely high marks for the quality of care here. In other words, this isn't my assessment, nor is it the assessment of people I have talked to, the families; although that's what they believe. It is also the assessment of a joint commission, which accredits thousands of American hospitals. And this commission has given Walter Reed the highest possible rating, a gold seal of approval.

Recently, the commission performed a surprise inspection. In other words, they didn't give a bunch of notice; they showed up and verified the high quality of care here. I want to congratulate you for what you're doing.

The problems at Walter Reed were caused by bureaucratic and administrative

failures. The system failed you, and it failed our troops. And we're going to fix it.

I met some of the soldiers who had been housed in Building 18. I was disturbed by their accounts of what went wrong. It is not right to have someone volunteer to wear our uniform and not get the best possible care. I apologize for what they went through, and we're going to fix the problem.

And that's exactly what this Government is going to do. We're not going to be satisfied until everybody gets the kind of care that their folks and families expect. And that's what I expect. And we've taken important steps to achieve the objective.

First, Defense Secretary Gates has insisted on accountability in the military command. He made changes in leadership. He made tough decisions, because he, like me, demands results. I welcome General Schoomaker, but I also welcome General Tucker. Tucker is not a doc. As General Schoomaker informed me, he is a "bureaucracy buster." His job is to make sure that the bureaucracy does not get in the way of making sure every soldier, marine, and their families get the best possible care. And I welcome you to the command, and thank you.

Secretary Gates, as I said, has approved a nonmedical deputy commander; that's Tucker. Building 18 has been closed. We're fixing that which needs to be fixed, including, interestingly enough, putting a new roof on it. The patients from Building 18 have been transferred into Abrams Hall, and I'm pleased to report that living conditions there are of high quality.

We have formed three working groups to help address problems that may exist and may arise. I want to share some of what the—the strategy behind the working groups is, and that is, first, Gates established—Secretary Gates established an independent review group, and that was

primarily to examine the conditions at Walter Reed and Bethesda. The group will recommend ways to ensure you have what you need to improve medical care.

I heard one recommendation. In other words, one of the care providers said: "Make sure we always have the best possible equipment; we want to be on the leading edge of technology, not the trailing edge." I agree completely. Those are the kinds of things that Secretary Gates's commission is going to be looking into.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Nicholson is leading a task force of Cabinet officers to identify potential gaps in the services our wounded troops receive as they return from the battlefield. In other words, we want all hands on deck here at the Federal level to make sure that health care is as good as it possibly can be. I'm not talking about the health care in the operating room; I'm talking about the bureaucracies that may prevent good health care from being delivered.

Finally, Bob Dole and Donna Shalala will chair a bipartisan Presidential commission on care for our wounded warriors. They will conduct a comprehensive view of the entire system for providing physical and emotional care to service men and women injured in this war. They will make sure that that person gets high-quality care from the time they suffer their wounds through their return to civilian life.

We want to make sure, for example, that any transfer from the Defense Department to the Veterans Affairs Department is smooth, and that there's not bureaucratic delay or obstacles in the way of making sure that we can report to our fellow citizens that people are getting the best possible health care.

I want to thank those who are working in these groups, and I'm looking forward to getting their recommendations, because I want to make sure our military families can be assured that their loved ones will get the very best.

This military system of ours—when you really think about it—just across the country, it's very complex, and it's large. Yet there's nothing complex about what we owe our troops; we owe them the best. That's what you believe here at Walter Reed. I have seen the care and dedication that you give on a daily basis. I just came from the therapy rooms, the physical therapy and the vocational therapy rooms. I see people patiently working with a wounded soldier on how to pick up cards and play cards with a new prosthesis. It's just hours of help, all because the people here recognize each human being matters; each person counts; and each person has endless possibilities, even though they may have received terrible wounds on the battlefield.

None of the problems that we have uncovered can overshadow the great work you do here. That's what you have to know. It's a special calling to serve those who serve our country. It requires a unique person to come here on a daily basis and to heal the hurts of those who served our country.

And so our Nation is grateful, and I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, USA, deputy commanding general, Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Notice of Intention To  
Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Panama  
*March 30, 2007*

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, (Public Law 107–210; the “Trade Act”), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a free trade agreement with the Republic of Panama.

The United States-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (the “Agreement”) will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and companies, help create jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them more choices. The Agreement will also benefit the people of Panama by

providing economic opportunity and by strengthening democracy.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the Agreement. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this Agreement.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President’s Radio Address  
*March 31, 2007*

Good morning. In recent days, the House and Senate each passed emergency war spending bills that undercut our troops in the field. Each of the Democrats’ bills would substitute the judgment of politicians in Washington for that of our generals on the ground. Each bill would impose restrictive conditions on our military commanders. Each bill would also set an arbitrary deadline for surrender and withdrawal in Iraq, and I believe that would have disastrous consequences for our safety here at home.

The Democrats loaded up their bills with billions of dollars in domestic spending completely unrelated to the war, including \$3.5 million for visitors to tour the Capitol, \$6.4 million for the House of Representatives salaries and expenses account, and \$74 million for secure peanut storage. I like peanuts as much as the next guy, but I

believe the security of our troops should come before the security of our peanut crop. For all these reasons, that is why I made it clear to the Democrats in Congress: I will veto the bill.

Democrats in the House and the Senate also recently passed their annual budget resolutions. Their budgets would raise your taxes and raise Government spending in Washington. And their budgets fail to address the most serious challenge to our Nation’s fiscal health: the unsustainable growth in entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Overall, the Democrats would raise taxes by a total of nearly \$400 billion over the next 5 years. To put this in perspective, this would be the largest tax increase in our Nation’s history, even larger than the

tax increase the Democrats passed the last time they controlled Congress.

Let me explain what it will mean for your annual tax bill if the Democrats get their way. If you have children, the Democrats would raise your taxes by \$500 for each child. If you're a family of four making \$60,000 a year, the Democrats would raise your taxes by more than \$1,800. If you're a single mother with two children working to make ends meet, the Democrats would raise your taxes by more than \$1,000. If you are a small-business owner working to meet a payroll, the Democrats would raise your taxes by almost \$4,000. And more than five million low-income Americans who currently pay no income taxes because of our tax relief would once again have to pay. Whether you have a family, work for a living, own a business, or are simply struggling to get by on a low income, the Democrats want to raise your taxes.

The Democrats plan to spend all those extra tax dollars. In the Senate, Democrats have passed a budget that would spend \$145 billion more than I have requested over the next 5 years. In the House, Democrats have passed a budget that would spend even more, \$213 billion above my request.

With their budgets, the Democrats have revealed their true intentions. During the last campaign, Democrats said that under their pay-as-you-go approach, they would pay for their new spending. Now we see what they meant by that. The Democrats have chosen a tax-as-you-go approach that requires you to cut your spending to pay higher taxes. And Democrats will use these higher taxes to spend more of your money on their special interest projects.

Our Nation cannot afford such reckless taxing and spending. Under my administration, we have kept your taxes low and restrained Government spending in Washington. Now America's economy is leading the world, with an economic expansion that has produced 42 months of uninterrupted job growth and created more than 7.5 million new jobs. The fastest way to stop this growth in its tracks would be to allow the Democrats in Congress to impose higher taxes on you so they can spend more of your money.

I believe there's a better way to balance our Federal budget. Last month, I sent Congress a plan that would eliminate the Federal deficit in 5 years, without raising your taxes. In the months ahead, I will work with Republicans and responsible Democrats in Congress to pass a disciplined budget and to stop the Democratic leadership from taking our Nation back to tax-and-spend policies of the past. By setting clear spending priorities and keeping taxes low, we can keep our economy growing, support our troops in the war on terror, and ensure our children and grandchildren inherit a more prosperous and hopeful America.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:15 a.m. on March 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 30, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## The President's News Conference With President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil at Camp David, Maryland

March 31, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. President, welcome to Camp David. Laura and I are delighted you're here. This is a special spot for Laura and me, and it was my honor to welcome you to this part of America. You come as a friend; we welcome you as a friend; and our discussions were very friendly.

We talked about a lot of areas of mutual concern. We talked about what I would call mutual opportunities. We talked about, of course, trade. Brazil and America trade a lot. Perhaps the most compelling part of the opportunity to work together is for the Doha round. It's in the U.S. interests that we complete the Doha round successfully. It is in—I think it's in Brazil's interests, at least that's the way the President has told me. I don't want to put words in his mouth. But it is in our interest to work together to make sure that we have a deal that treats Brazil fairly, the United States fairly, as well as other nations fairly.

I strongly believe that the best way to help alleviate world poverty is through trade. And so we had yet another constructive dialog. We had a good dialog there in Sao Paulo, and here in Camp David we have as well.

Interestingly enough, we announced the creation of a U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum. It's a opportunity for people in our respective countries to get to know each other better and to strengthen economic ties as well as social ties.

We talked about biofuels. I can remember very well, Mr. President, going to the Petrobras plant. It was an amazing facility, and it was exciting for me to see the realities of your biofuels industry firsthand. I'm a big believer in alternative fuels. There's a whole new industry here in the United States beginning to spring up. And I told the President that not only are we committed domestically to promoting a alter-

native fuel industry; we're committed to working with Brazil. And that's why we support the President's initiative on the International Biofuels Forum, as well as the initiative that we talked about in Sao Paulo, and signed a memorandum of understanding, and that is to help nations in our own hemisphere realize the benefits of ethanol and biodiesel.

I appreciate the President's very strong commitment to democracy. I also appreciate his very strong commitment to help nations, particularly on the continent of Africa. And one of the really exciting initiatives that we will work together on is an initiative to eradicate malaria in Sao Tome and Principe, two opportunities for Brazil and the United States to work together to improve somebody's life.

There is no excuse for malaria to continue to kill as many people as it does. Our great nations can work together to stop that death. There is a reasonable plan in place. It's a plan that I'm confident can achieve great success, and it makes a lot of sense for Brazil and the United States to work toward that plan.

As I said in Sao Paulo, Mr. President, I appreciate very much your leadership on Haiti. I appreciate the fact that you've led the U.N. stabilization force. We want to, of course, make sure that your efforts to bring security are followed up by opportunity for the people of Haiti. We don't want your force just to be there to simply stabilize; we want your force to leave—be a part of a constructive future, which is precisely your vision. And we want to work with you very closely to achieve that end.

We spent a lot of time talking about other parts of the world, and that's what you would expect when the United States and Brazil sit at the same table. Brazil is an influential nation, and it's an important



nation. And I really do appreciate so very much your sharing your strategic thoughts about not only our own neighborhood but other parts of the world.

And so, Mr. President, it's with great pleasure that I welcome you here. I'm looking forward to giving you a tour of Camp David. We've been spending too much time doing business; now we need to do a little pleasure. And after this press conference, you and I will take a little tour, and then I'll feed you a meal, if you're hungry. [Laughter]

Welcome.

*President Lula da Silva.* I hope that it's not too much work. [Laughter] Your Excellency, Mr. George W. Bush, the President of the United States; Madam First Lady Laura Bush; Madam Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; Ambassador Celso Amorim, and other ministers from Brazil; ladies and gentlemen; members of the Brazilian delegation and the U.S. delegation; newspaper representatives, press representatives: First of all, I would like to thank President Bush for the invitation. My visit to Camp David made it possible for us to cope with issues of global, regional, and bilateral interest.

I believe that on—the 21st century will be marked by changes that we will have to do—to undertake and also for the improvement of the things that we did right in the 20th century. We don't have anymore the cold war amongst us. We don't experience anymore the bipolarity that affected our lives during half a century. And so now we should try to do in the 21st century, make it the century of inclusion of those that are disfranchised in the 20th century—disenfranchised. And I am talking about the less-developed countries in Latin America, of South America, of Africa, and of Asia.

And we also have a subject matter that we have to cope in the 21st century that we did not cope well in the 20th century, and that could pervade our relations for the next years; that is the issue on climate

change that affects the planet Earth. Twenty years ago, when we were warned about the problems that we were causing to the world, we used to call—put the blame on those that were making this warning. We criticized them. We said that they were responsible. And we criticized, sometimes, minority groups that went to the streets with their banners and flags, advocating for environmental preservation.

Now has come the time for all the countries in the world to take very seriously climate change and environmental issues. Why so? Because humanity faces one of the major risks in its history. Global warming is a reality that threatens us by land, by the air, and by the water, a dilemma that ironically embraces all of us, no matter where in the planet Earth. The issue is frightening and very concrete and a problem of today. But its solution is still feasible, and part of the solution is in our reach.

We have talked already about this twice. We have talked about biofuels and about our determination in deepening the cooperation in this sector. The memorandum of understanding that was signed in Sao Paulo is the basis of an ambitious partnership that will make it possible for us to confront the major challenges of this century that is now beginning: First of all, the resolution of the energy crisis that affects almost all countries in the world; secondly, the environment protection threatened by the global warming of the planet; and finally, poverty relief and social exclusion with the creation of new jobs and expanding the workers' income and for the poorest workers in the world.

We intend to send our scientists and experts from Brazil to research centers in the U.S. and vice versa. We will create a fund with the support of international agencies, so that we can finance the cooperation with the most needy and interest—countries. We're also committed to the strengthening of the International Biofuel Forum. I invited the United States to participate in

an international conference on the issue that Brazil will host in the year 2008.

The concern with the environment is growing in Brazil and in the world and, above all, especially after the latest reports from the U.N. panel on climate change. The stimuli for sustainable production of biofuels is a decisive part of this endeavor to resolve this issue. The biofuels offer, equally, an unique opportunity for the energy democratization of the world to diversify sources of production. We also have obtained good results in different, various areas.

It's important to say to President Bush, here in Camp David, in his residence, that, for me, the biofuel issue is almost like an obsession. I don't know why, but we already have talked about—or heard about biofuels since 1925. Already was mentioned biodiesel in 1943 in Brazil. Nevertheless, since we didn't have the dimension, the scope of the evils that oil could cause, or any other kind of energy matrix to the world—because also, oil was very cheap in those days—this was not taken forward by any country, neither by the automobile industry of any country. And now we are facing a period, a moment, where this new energy matrix can make the world more independent.

It can make the world creating more wealth, because the experience that we have in Brazil is that for each worker that works in a biodiesel plant, it is necessary 1,000 workers in the countryside, which means that we can create millions of jobs for the less-developed countries in the world. That was not foreseen in any paper that was signed by us in the 20th century.

In Brazil, in the last 4 years, we managed to reduce the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest in 52 percent. More than 2 million hectares have been saved. Please pay attention—more than—and carbon gas emissions have been reduced in more than 400 tons, emissions to the atmosphere. And we know that the rainforests are amongst the great victims of climate change. In the

negotiations on the Convention on Climate Change, we proposed financial incentives to reduce carbon gas emissions per ton, resulting in further reductions of deforestation. We expect that our proposal would have the support of the international community and obviously—especially, and mainly from the U.S.

We first can establish a partnership either for promoting biofuels, as also in fighting the investigation of the global warming and of deforestation itself, with full respect to the sovereignty of each country.

Brazil has the largest and most important biodiversity on the planet. We have the consciousness of the value that this natural asset represents for our country and for the world. Brazil, with 383 million hectares of arable land, has the capacity to reconcile food production, biofuel production, and the defense of our forests.

Our well-known commitment to fight hunger does not allow us that any activity would cause damage to the food production. I should say—and President Bush knows very well, and I also know—and I believe that all rulers are aware that the world hunger does not result from a lack of food. Rather, it has more to do with the distribution of income and the lack of political will.

Talking with President Bush about the concern of my Government to fight hunger and poverty, I mentioned our concern with the Doha round of the WTO. It is central in our struggle against poverty. And I leave Camp David with the certainty that I've never seen. In all the previous conversations that I had with President Bush or with my Minister of Foreign Affairs—with Condoleezza, Madam Condoleezza Rice—I never have left a meeting between us with so much optimism as I am this way, that I believe that we're getting closer than we have ever been before to reach an agreement during the Doha round of the WTO.

We are trying to conclude with success these trade negotiations. We have urgency

in reach and ambitious and balanced agreements. The continuation of agriculture subsidies makes food more expensive and does not stimulate its production in the less-developed countries. Without eliminating subsidies, the opportunity of development represented by biofuels will be lost and, with that, the possibility of the improvement of living conditions of hundreds of millions of lives of men and women.

So that's why it's necessary to eliminate the trade barriers to ethanol, so that we can really reach a true energy commodity. I dream that, at the most, 15 to 20 years from now that the world will surrender to the biofuels. So those that believe in that, they start to invest today and now, because if they leave it for the future, they're going to lag behind and they're going to lose the train and, possibly, they will be lagging behind in the history of modernization.

Dear friends, naturally, I have spoken with President Bush about the Brazilian concern on the limited progress of the U.N. reform. This is where we have more divergence. But in politics, if there's no divergence, if it's not interesting to work with politics, to being politics, but I really wanted, truly, to say to President Bush what was Brazil's view. And President Bush told me what his vision was.

And we reached a conclusion, and certainly, it's not an agreement yet, that the U.N. reform still will have to undertake other reforms that we have to undertake within the U.N. itself so that we can guarantee the U.N. Security Council reform. Since I only have 61 years of age and I have another 4 years of my term, I am convinced that it won't take a long time for us to see this Council changed and the U.N. reformed. I know that it is a highly complex issue, but we cannot postpone it anymore. I am certain that the dialog between our countries will contribute to forward the issue in a much more faster and appropriate way.

We also talked about other issues on the international agenda, as the situation in the

Middle East, especially in Lebanon. And maybe many of you don't know—and I told President Bush that—that in Brazil, we have a community of more than 10 million inhabitants of Lebanese and Syrian ancestry. And so that's why we have been trying to attend all the fora that deal with this issue. And within our possibilities, we try to cooperate to rebuild Lebanon. We also have tried to help the construction of a viable Palestinian state while, at the same time, respect Israel's right to exist.

Ladies and gentlemen, we approached important issues in our regional agenda, and I told to President Bush that we have to do more for Haiti. And, in this case, it's interesting to remember that we have reached already agreements not only to work together with Haiti and in Haiti and work together with the Dominican Republic, and work together in countries like Sao Tome and Principe in Africa and in Guinea-Bissau in Africa. And if these experiments are successful, these joint partnerships, this joint work, I believe that we'll have much more room for us to build other projects between the U.S. and Brazil, so that we can help third party countries.

We also agreed that the cooperation with biofuels in Haiti could be decisive to that country. It's not suffice to be the armed forces from Brazil, Chile, Argentina in Haiti, leading the stabilization mission of the U.N. We need to guarantee democracy in Haiti, governance. It's necessary to guarantee their security. But if we don't have development and jobs, all of that will disappear very quickly.

I also told President Bush that Brazil invests firmly in South American integration. I should say, President Bush, this is another thing that I pursued since the first year of my term. If we want to guarantee democracy in South America, if we want to guarantee South American development, if we want to guarantee the strengthening of the institutions in South America, we have to have the consciousness that fiscal

integration is a basic addition for the development of the region. And maybe, who knows, the United States can be a partner of Brazil and of other countries in South America in the fiscal integration that we so much are in need. And we understand that this is what will guarantee development for the region and will guarantee democracy, and so will open the opportunities that we did not have years ago for us to develop ourselves.

We are obtaining extraordinary advances vis-a-vis integration, expanding trade, and making all the infrastructure work that we can develop. The bottom line is that we're getting closer ties to our people that were very much far away from each other in the past. And so now we're getting closer, and so that's why I invited President Bush from the U.S. to become a partner in this integration process and building the fiscal integration of our continent.

I also mentioned to President Bush an important role that the United States can play with South American countries that are living in special situations, especially those that need trade preferences. It is extremely important for the U.S. to support these countries that need these trade preferences. We need to support them because this will guarantee the regional stability that is the interest of—to Brazil and all the countries in South America, and certainly, this is the interest of the U.S. too.

Together, we can provide aid to those countries that are still needy, especially in Africa. I have already mentioned the agreement that we signed with Guinea-Bissau and for Sao Tome and Principe.

The challenge, President Bush, in the world of today in trade, in security, in the environment, and fighting poverty are immense. To resolve these issues, there is only one way—is through dialog, with a frank and mutually respectful dialog. That's the only way. With this objective, I have been saying to President Bush that I am willing to gather with him as many times it's necessary, and with all the heads of

government around the world as many times would be necessary, so that we can, in the 21st century, arouse a little bit of hope in part of the poorest population in the planet. We have in our hands and our reach the power to do so. We will not do it if we don't wish to do so.

So that's why, before we answer questions from the press with President Bush, I would like to convey to President Bush that, of all the meetings that I participated, meetings with the American Government, this was the meeting that was the most productive one. If someone asked me, "What are you taking back to Brazil," I would say, "Nothing. I'm not taking back anything to Brazil." But certainly, the agreements that we have signed today, the agreements that we can still sign from here onwards, can guarantee in a definite way that the relations between U.S. and Brazil, not only it's necessary, but it is strategic so that we can consolidate a new development model, a new trade policy, and, above all, a new way to cope with the very serious, severe issues that affect the planet.

So for all that, thank you very much.

#### *Department of Justice*

Q. Mr. President, the Attorney General's chief of staff testified that Gonzales knew more about the U.S. attorney firings than he let on. Now, how can the American people have confidence in an Attorney General who is not completely forthright? How long does he have to repair the damage? And can the damage be repaired?

*President Bush.* Attorney General Al Gonzales is an honorable and honest man, and he has my full confidence. He is providing documents for Congress to find the truth. He will testify in front of Congress, and he will tell the truth.

The U.S. attorneys serve at the pleasure of the United States President. I named them to 4-year terms; they served their 4-year terms. And I appreciate their service. I'm sorry that this—these hearings and all this stuff have besmirched their reputation.

That's certainly not the intent of anybody in this administration. But I will remind you, there is no credible evidence that there has been any wrongdoing.

### Trade

Q. The good will between you gentlemen is very evident. President Lula, it is also evident the effort to advance with the Doha round. If the Doha round has not reached its success, Brazil, does it have a B plan?

President Bush, what is the impediment—or what would be the impediment for the United States to have a bilateral agreement on trade with Brazil?

*President Lula da Silva.* Well, I have said to all the heads of state in government that I have been in contact and on—to President Bush, to Tony Blair, and to Chancellor Angela Merkel, to Prodi, Prime Minister Prodi, and to President Chirac—with all I have been talking to, I have said that the Doha round is not important only for Brazil; it's not important only for the United States; it's important so that we can guarantee hope around the world, and especially the certainty that we will have more peace in the world.

Brazil is a competitive country in agriculture. Brazil, today, exports—50 percent of its exports are semi-industrialized goods. And so we do have the conditions—competitiveness conditions. President Bush knows, and I know, and I believe that all the leaders know that when we talk about agreements at the WTO, we are making an endeavor at the Doha round—we are working especially so that the less-developed countries could have an opportunity, a chance. Of course, we can improve our relations when Brazil makes decisions about industrialized products or in the service industry. Of course, we could improve when the United States takes a position about what kind of subsidy will be reduced, or the European Union could say if they're going to accept or not agricultural goods—reduce the subsidy so that the markets of

the less-developed countries could have market access to Europe.

If we don't reach an agreement, Brazil will continue to follow the path that it's followed: working, producing more, and selling and also buying. But certainly, those that will suffer more will be those don't—that don't even have the opportunity to participate in the meetings that other countries have the power to do so.

I have made these appeals, and I believe that that's why I said, to leaving here, Camp David; I'm leaving here very satisfied because this was an extraordinary and productive meeting, because I heard from—the intention of the American Government on this issue. Our is—we have full willingness, and I believe that if we work together, the U.S. and Brazil, to try to convince our European partners—I believe that we can reach an agreement.

And I believe that, in this case, there's no B plan. Either we have the A plan, or there's no agreement. And if there's no agreement, certainly, we will not have winners or losers; everybody will lose. Everybody will lose, the rich, because they will be liable for what will happen in a poorest world.

*President Bush.* All our trade discussions have centered on completing Doha. It's the only discussions I've had with the President. I've been asked about plan B's before, on different subjects. And that kind of means you're willing to retreat. I'm a plan-A man, just like the President is. Let's get the job done.

And for the United States, we're willing to reduce our agricultural subsidies in a substantial way. We understand. On the other hand, we expect our goods and services—whether they be agricultural goods or manufactured goods and services—to be given access to markets. The interesting thing is, is that Brazil is a strong exporter, and it's in Brazil's interest that their goods and services be—have access to markets as well.



This is a difficult negotiations because there's a variety of interests. And step one is—to be successful in this complex negotiations, is there a genuine desire to succeed? In other words, are people just showing up for the sake of showing up, or are people actually coming to the table with a genuine desire to succeed? I assured the President again that the United States has a genuine desire to succeed in these talks. I do, because I believe that, one, I think the world has a tendency, at times, to become isolationist and protectionist. In other words, there's that movement, that isolationist movement can become prevalent. And if that were to happen, it would make the world a lot more unstable, and it would make the world more poor.

I'm going to repeat what I told you earlier: Ours is a very compassionate nation. We deeply care about the human condition around the world. And I firmly believe that the best way to alleviate world poverty is through trade. That's what I believe. It's not the only way, but it is the best start—let me put it to you that way—coupled with health initiatives that we're working on, food initiatives that the President described. But if you're genuinely interested in eliminating poverty—and I am—commerce, trade, opportunity, and hope will all flourish with a completion of the Doha round.

So we are seriously involved. Now, what we won't do is accept a unilateral deal. And the President has never asked us to do that; that's not his intention. His intention is, we want to work together to make sure all are treated fairly. I certainly hope that's the case with the rest of our potential trading partners and our negotiating partners, that they don't expect the United States to carry the entire load in making sure the agreement moves forward.

And so we strategized together. Our—the ministers will talk a lot. Ambassador Schwab stayed behind in Sao Paulo to converse with her counterparts. There is a lot of work going on. And I believe there's

a good chance we can complete the round. And so therefore, your plan B will be irrelevant—[laughter]—I hope.

*Environment/British Military Personnel  
Held in Iran*

Q. Jennifer Griffin of FOX News. Mr. President, the Iranian hostage crisis has just entered its ninth day—passed its ninth day. Would the British be within their rights to consider a military option if the crisis drags on? And would the U.S. have considered it an act of war if it had been U.S. sailors and marines who had been taken? And would you consider trading the five Iranians who were captured in Irbil back in January if it would help resolve the crisis?

And, Mr. President, did you see eye to eye with the President on global warming? Would you say that you two agree that global warming is a problem? Thank you.

President Bush. Let me start with global warming. One reason you promote alternative fuels is to be better stewards of the environment. Many of the greenhouse gases come from tailpipes of automobiles. And therefore, when you get away from gasoline and start using ethanol or biofuels, you make a significant step toward improving the environment—just to make sure I'm on the record here.

The Iranian issue is a serious issue. It's serious because—or the British hostages issue is a serious issue because the Iranians took these people out of Iraqi water. And it's inexcusable behavior. And I strongly support the Blair Government's attempts to resolve this peacefully, and I support the Prime Minister when he made it clear there were no quid pro quos. The Iranians must give back the hostages. They're innocent; they were doing nothing wrong; and they were summarily plucked out of water. And it is—as I say, it's inexcusable behavior.

President Lula da Silva. Well, I believe that we are in agreement in relationship to the policies that we have to undertake



so that we should be more careful and take better care of the environment. And on the climate change issues discussions, we have common interests. What happens is that—to know the timing and what to do. Now, in the case of Brazil, we already have 25 percent of ethanol—or better saying, 23 percent of ethanol blended, or as a blender, in gasoline for a long time. And now we have a flex-fuel engine, a car moved by flex-fuel engine that can use 100 percent of gas or 100 percent of ethanol or 50 percent of alcohol, 50 percent of ethanol as blender.

So this is the road that—where we can start to depollute. And then it's not only the ethanol issue or the biofuel issue; there is also the electrical hydropowerplants. We also have to have the responsibility on us to build thermal plants based on coke, moved by coke—moved by coal—I'm sorry. And so it's essential that the company should invest more in reducing gas emissions.

So the fact of the matter is the following: That the climate change issue today is a severe disease. There's no social sector that it doesn't reach. It will reach all the planet as a whole. There's no way for us to escape. So we have not managed yet to reach Mars, and Moon is not a proper place for us to live. So either we take care of planet Earth very carefully, as we take care of our sons, or all of us will regret that in the future. And although, those already my age—I'm with 61 years of age, but I have grandsons, and I want to have grand-grandsons, and so I want them to have the pride that their grandfather helped to build a better world, better than I received from my father.

So I believe that all of us will reach an agreement, that it's necessary and very much so the responsibility and liability, in the discussions on climate issues than we have had up until today. The evil is facing us, and we see the evil, and we feel the evil, but there's no way that we can turn our back to that.

## Iran

*Q.* The American Government, last week, have manifested a lot of concern with the investments of some foreign companies in the oil industry in Iran. And in this week, the American Ambassador in Brazil made it very clear that this concern also extends to Petrobras investments that Petrobras considers strategic. So I'd like to ask President Lula if, in his assessment, Petrobras should continue to make businesses with Iran or should get away from Iran, like the United States would like us all to do?

So—and I would like to ask President Bush, why does the United States want Petrobras to be out of Iran if the country has fulfilled all its sanctions that was approved—passed by the U.N.?

*President Lula da Silva.* Well, I am convinced that Petrobras will continue to invest in oil prospection in Iran. Iran has been an important trade partner for Brazil. They buy from us more than \$1 billion, and they don't almost sell anything to us. So I'm an advocate that trade, fair trade is the trade that you buy and sell. You sell and buy, you can't just sell.

And then there's also political issues in each country. Each country faces their own domestic issues. But up until now, Iran has not been a victim of any sanction that was proposed by the U.N. I know that there's political divergence on this between Iran and other countries, but with Brazil, we have no political divergence with them, so we will continue to work together with Iran on what is of the interest of Brazil. I don't see any major issue to do it in a different way.

*President Bush.* Every nation makes the decisions that they think is best in their interest. Brazil is a sovereign nation; he just articulated a sovereign decision. And as you mentioned, the trade that you were discussing was not in violation of any U.N.—in any U.N. mandate.

Our position is that we would hope that nations would be very careful in dealing

with Iran, particularly since Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon, and a major threat to world peace is if the Iranians had a nuclear weapon. And that is why there are sanctions imposed at the United Nations, as a result of collaboration between the United States, EU, China, and Russia, to make it clear to the Iranian regime that there is a better way forward other than isolation.

We have no problems with the Iranian people. As a matter of fact, the United States highly respects the people of Iran. We respect the history of Iran; we respect the rich traditions of Iran. We, however, are deeply concerned about an Iranian Government that is in violation of international accords in their attempt to develop a nuclear weapon. And therefore, whatever comments you hear reflect that concern. And we will continue to work with the international community to say that it is in the world's interest that Iran not develop a weapon. It is in the interest of peace that they not develop a weapon.

And I'm hopeful that the people of Iran will be tired of the isolation. I would hope that there would be some rationality amongst their leaders in choosing a better way forward for the people. They're depriving their people of a lot of opportunity.

Now, having said that, the United States does believe that it's in our interest that we have people-to-people exchanges. As I say, we have no problem with the Iranian people. As a matter of fact, we just sent a wrestling team to Iran, all attempting to make it clear to the Iranian people that we're interested in having a constructive relationship. And it is the decisions of their Government that are preventing that from happening.

Thank you. Good job.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. President Lula da Silva referred to Minister of External Relations Celso Amorim of Brazil; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy; and President Jacques Chirac of France. Reporters referred to former Chief of Staff to the Attorney General D. Kyle Sampson; and U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford M. Sobel. President Lula da Silva and some reporters spoke in Portuguese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## **Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Visit by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil to Camp David**

*March 31, 2007*

Presidents Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and George W. Bush resolved to continue deepening the strategic dialogue between Brazil and the United States, as reflected in the determination to increase bilateral cooperation based on the shared values of democracy, human rights, cultural diversity, trade liberalization, multilateralism, environmental protection, defense of international

peace and security, and promotion of development with social justice.

The Presidents welcomed the strengthening of the partnership between the two countries in the area of renewable energy with the Memorandum of Understanding to Advance Cooperation on Biofuels, signed in Sao Paulo on March 9, 2007. The Presidents noted with satisfaction the results of the meeting on implementation of the

Memorandum, held in Washington on March 29. They expressed their governments' intention to arrange for Brazilian scientists and researchers to visit state-of-the-art biofuels research laboratories in the United States, as well as visits to Brazil by senior officials of the United States Departments of Energy, State, and Agriculture in Spring 2007. The United States and Brazil recognized the support of institutions including the IDB, the United Nations Foundation, and the Organization of American States. Brazil and the United States plan to begin efforts to work together, initially, with Haiti, the Dominican Republic, St. Kitts and Nevis, and El Salvador, and to pursue consultations with other countries interested in participating in the cooperation program.

The Presidents noted with satisfaction the growth of bilateral trade and investments between the United States and Brazil. They reaffirmed their intention to use the ongoing "Commercial Dialogue" to seek ways to promote innovation and increase trade opportunities, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as to protect intellectual property rights. The Heads of State noted the formation of the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum to engage directly with leaders in the business community to discuss economic and trade-related topics. They applauded plans by United States Council on Competitiveness and Brazilian Competitiveness Movement to stage an "Innovation Summit" in Brasilia in July 2007 to support greater competitiveness and innovation. The Presidents agreed to direct their governments to explore initiatives in the area of tourism, including examining the possibility of increasing flights between Brazil and the United States, with particular attention to Northeast Brazil.

The Presidents applauded the March 20, 2007 signing in Brasilia of an Agreement for the Exchange of Information Relating to Taxes. The Presidents expressed hope that the signing of this Agreement will be

the first step toward cooperation between the Brazilian Federal Revenue Secretariat and the Internal Revenue Service. They pledged to redouble ongoing work toward the conclusion of an agreement on double taxation.

The Presidents noted with satisfaction the progress achieved since their November 2005 meeting in Brasilia, including the first-ever convening of the bilateral Joint Commission on Science and Technology on July 21, 2006; and the launch of a Commercial Dialogue between the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Presidents welcomed the strengthened partnership in education through the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding in this area. They applauded the immediate start-up of its implementation with the launch of a program targeting increased professional and technological education in Brazil and bilateral exchange in an effort to include increasing numbers of young people and adults in the labor market.

The Presidents expressed their support for cooperation with African countries. They applauded the trilateral cooperation to strengthen the Legislative Branch of Guinea-Bissau, as established in the March 30 Memorandum of Understanding. The Presidents also discussed the possible broadening of such cooperative efforts to include other interested African countries. The two Presidents announced a specific commitment to cooperate on a plan to eradicate malaria in Sao Tome and Principe. They also agreed to explore cooperation in combating malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected diseases, especially in Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa such as Angola and Mozambique, and to confront the threat of avian flu, building on their cooperation on HIV/AIDS in Mozambique and Angola.

The Presidents recognized that the success of international action in Haiti depends

on simultaneous activities to achieve security, political reconciliation, and socioeconomic development. They intend to act within the United Nations framework to increase multilateral cooperation in Haiti and welcomed efforts to identify areas of mutual cooperation in support of stability and economic development in Cite Soleil. They applauded the success of efforts by Brazil and the United States, in cooperation with other countries in the region, to secure United Nations Security Council renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) last February.

The Presidents sought to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the area of public safety, particularly in combating organized crime, drug trafficking, and money laundering, and in preventing terrorism and terrorism financing, with emphasis on information sharing between intelligence units and on the establishment of mechanisms for recovering assets resulting from transnational crimes.

The Heads of State reaffirmed global economic growth and development as the

main objectives of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They underscored the importance of continuing to constructively engage negotiators, which facilitated the resumption of the negotiations. The Presidents pledged to work together toward a successful conclusion, taking advantage of the window of opportunity opened in 2007. They emphasized that the agreement should be ambitious and balanced, with a view to both an appreciable increase in market access and in global trade flows, and a significant reduction in global poverty rates.

The Presidents reaffirmed the importance of reform of the United Nations to make the organization better able to deal with today's complex international agenda. They further reaffirmed their commitment to coordinate closely on the issue of Security Council reform.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Notice of Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Korea *April 1, 2007*

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, (Public Law 107-210; the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a free trade agreement with the Republic of Korea.

The United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (the "Agreement") will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and service suppliers, promote economic growth and the creation of better paying jobs in the United

States, and help American consumers save money while offering them greater choices. The Agreement will also further enhance the strong United States-Korea partnership, which has served as a force for stability and prosperity in Asia.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the Agreement. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this Agreement.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representa-

tives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 2. The notice of April 1 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Savings Accounts *April 2, 2007*

The cornerstone of good health care policy is to make sure that patients and docs are in charge of medical decisions. And therefore, one of the objectives of this administration has been to encourage the expansion of products like health savings accounts. And today I have met with some small-business owners, some employees of companies that have provided health savings accounts for them.

And I'm pleased to report that people have come to realize the benefits of health savings accounts, such as, one, health savings accounts are affordable for individuals and small businesses. In other words, if you're a small-business owner and you're worried about providing good health care for your employees, you ought to look into a health savings account as a way to provide that benefit to your employees.

Secondly, health savings accounts enable a person to save, tax free, for medical expenses. By making rational decisions about your life, you'll end up with more money in your health savings account, on a tax-free basis.

And thirdly, that savings account is something you can carry with you from job to job. A lot of people in America change jobs on a regular basis, and they are deeply concerned about whether or not they'll have a health care plan when they change jobs. And the health savings account enables you to carry your money that you've saved, on a tax-free basis, from one job to the next.

You know, 2 years ago there was—about a million of our citizens had health savings accounts. And today, over 5 million of people have health savings accounts—or nearly 5 million people have health savings accounts. It's up—actually, you can see from the chart the growth—4.5 million people. And that's a 43-percent increase, from last year to this year, in the number of people that are beginning to realize the benefits of health savings accounts.

And interestingly enough, of those who purchased—of individuals who purchased health savings accounts, about 25 percent of them were uninsured. In other words, health savings accounts enable someone who is uninsured to realize the benefits of private insurance, and in an affordable way.

I strongly believe that the United States Congress needs to strengthen health savings accounts, just like they need to make sure that the Tax Code treats every person in America fairly. And that's why I've suggested we change the Tax Code to enable the small-business owner, the self-employed, or the individual worker to be able to have more affordable insurance. There's a lot we can do together to empower the individual in this country to be in charge of his or her health care decisions.

So I want to thank my fellow Americans for joining us. I really appreciated the discussion we had. We've got people from Minnesota and Texas and Georgia and

Michigan. These are people who are beginning to realize the benefits of health savings, and I thank you for sharing your information with me. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Naval Academy Midshipmen

April 2, 2007

*The President.* Please be seated. Welcome to the Rose Garden. It seems to me that this is becoming a spring tradition. [Laughter] For the fourth year in a row, the football team from the Naval Academy is here to receive the Commander in Chief's Trophy—the Rose Garden should be called the Yard.

This year's team was among the Navy's best ever. That says a lot. This is a team that had the most rushing yards in the Nation. That says a lot. You had the highest graduation rate of any football team in the country. That says even more. You went 9 and 3. You made it to the bowl game. And you beat Army.

I thank you all for coming. I appreciate members of the administration who have joined us: Deputy Secretary of the VA Gordon Mansfield; Secretary Don Winter of the Navy; General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and, I might add, the first marine to serve in that capacity; Admiral G, Ed Giambastiani—that's hard for a Texan to say, but it's not hard to tell you how much I admire Admiral G and Pete Pace; Admiral Mike Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations, thank you for coming, Chief; General Jim Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps; and Ellen Moyer, the mayor of Annapolis. We are glad you all are here, and, Mayor, thanks for coming.

Vice Admiral Rod Rempt—Rod, I notice that you gathered up my speech. [Laughter] Just remember, page three follows

page two. [Laughter] But it's good to have you again.

*Vice Adm. Rodney P. Rempt.* Sir, it's a pleasure to be here.

*The President.* Coach Paul Johnson—you talk about a winner, this guy knows how to build winners. And, Coach, we're glad you're back. I'm proud to welcome you and your staff. I appreciate very much the members of the football team that have joined us, and I thank all of the Naval Academy supporters who are here.

The Navy's fourth consecutive winning season may not sound like much to people who don't follow football, but it's a remarkable feat considering that the team was 0 and 10, 6 years ago. They showed up 10 times, they played hard all 10 times, but they won 0 times. And here they are, standing in the Rose Garden with the Commander in Chief. It says a lot about resilience and a lot about determination and a lot about correcting past mistakes.

Coach Johnson has put together a really good coaching staff, and I appreciate very much, Coach, you motivating these players toward championship—toward the championships that you've earned. The season started with three wins in a row, including a blowout over Stanford. You beat Air Force in Colorado Springs. You beat Army by 12 points, the fifth win in a row for the Naval Academy. They tell me that's a pretty big deal.



You earned a spot in the Meineke Car Care Bowl—Meineke Car Care Bowl. Nevertheless, you played a big-time school: Boston College. Boston College is a football power, and it was a really great game. I watched it. I was impressed by the 322 yards you earned. I know you're disappointed with the one-point loss, but you can't be disappointed with the effort.

I appreciate the fact that your class is the first in school history to win four straight Commander in Chief trophies, the first to go 8 and 0 against Army and Air Force, and the first to play in four straight bowl games. That's a lot of firsts. Your class won 35 games in 4 years. The only Navy class to win more games graduated in 1909. I don't know whether William Howard Taft welcomed the team in 1909, but I can tell you, the 43d President is proud to welcome such champions here to the Rose Garden.

One of the reasons your team was so successful this year, of course, is because you had a captain from Texas. *[Laughter]* Five different Navy players rushed for more than 100 yards in a game this season. That's more than any other team in the Nation. That's called a well-balanced attack.

I appreciate the fact that one of your quarterbacks stepped in for an injured starter and went on to score four touchdowns in a single game. I would like to say his name; I'll probably bungle it. I'll just say, the guy is from Hawaii. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate the fact that Keenan Little became the first player in Navy history to score defensive touchdowns against Air Force and Army in the same season. I'm proud to be up here with a fellow Texan from Lewisville, Texas—the mascot of one of the high school teams in Lewisville, believe it or not, is the Fighting Farmers. *[Laughter]* This guy was your fullback, Adam Ballard. He gained 134 yards against Air Force. When he was named MVP, he wisely—wisely—gave the credit to his offensive line. Smart move, Adam. *[Laughter]*

You know, it's interesting—how would you like to be the punter on the Navy

team who went full—two full games without showing up on the field? *[Laughter]* Veteto—Greg is his first name—was, like, the punter on the team, and for two games in a row, he was never used. And yet I think he didn't mind.

The team had a special leader in Eddie Martin. I don't know if the country knows this, but he was diagnosed with cancer last year. He didn't play any games this year, but he always led the team out of the locker room for every home game. And so, Eddie, I appreciate the inspiration you've provided for your team and for the Academy. I know you're fighting a brave battle, and a lot of people will pray for your full recovery.

When you signed up for the Naval Academy, you signed up for more than playing football. I'm glad Coach Johnson—I'm sure Coach Johnson was glad that you said, "I want to be a football player at the Naval Academy." But you signed up to become officers in the finest military the world has ever known. And my job is to keep it that way, and I will. But you can't have the finest military the world has ever known without men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform, just like you've done.

You volunteered after September the 11th, 2001. That's a remarkable decision you have made. I vowed after September 11th, 2001, that I would use the full power of our Government to protect the American people from harm, and I meant what I said. And therefore, anybody who signed up afterwards knew what they were getting into. It's a remarkable country when people make such a noble decision to serve their country in a time of war. And I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of such decent, honorable, sacrificing men and women.

The lessons you have learned on the football field and at the Naval Academy will serve you well on the battlefield. You learned the importance of teamwork and leadership and strong personal character. And you're going to put those qualities to

the highest possible use, and that is to protect the American people and to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

The Navy and Marine Corps are on the frontline of fighting and winning the war against the extremists, radicals who would do this country harm. Every day we're on the offense against an enemy. My attitude is, I would rather defeat them over there so we do not have to face them here. And the Marine Corps and the Navy are helping to lead that charge. The sailors and marines on the high sea are sending a clear message to the world that we stand for strength, and we stand for peace.

Former Navy football players have distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Marine First Lieutenant Brian Stann comes to mind, the class of '03. He won the Silver Star. We also have some of the former Navy football players lose their lives: Ron Winchester of '01, J.P. Blecksmith of the class of '03. Another gave his life in flight

over the Pacific, Navy Lieutenant Commander Scott Zelle, the class of '91. The United States of America will not forget their sacrifices. We will complete our missions so that their sacrifices will not have gone in vain.

It is such an honor to welcome such fine men to the Rose Garden. I'm proud to be standing with you. I thank you for your service to our country. I appreciate the fact that you're good football players, but, more importantly, I appreciate the fact that you're good Americans.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Adm. Rodney P. Rempt, USN, superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy; and Kaipo-Noa Keheaku-Enhada, quarterback, Keenan O. Little, strong safety, and Eddie Martin, running back, U.S. Naval Academy football team.

## Message on the Observance of Passover, 5767 April 2, 2007

*This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.*

EXODUS 12:14

I send greetings to those celebrating Passover, beginning at sundown on April 2.

During Passover, Jews around the world gather with family and friends to remember God's deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage more than 3,000 years ago. To celebrate their Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people commemorate the Passover each year by reading the Haggadah, singing

traditional songs, and sharing the Seder meal. Through these traditions, the Jewish people express their gratitude for God's redemption and the blessings of freedom, and they ensure that their heritage is passed on to future generations. Passover is a time of hope and faith and a time to reflect on God's boundless love and endless mercy.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed Passover.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## The President's News Conference April 3, 2007

*The President.* Good morning. I've just had a good meeting with Secretary of Defense Bob Gates and General Pete Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary Gates and General Pace updated me on the deployment of American reinforcements to Iraq.

At this moment, two of the five additional U.S. Army brigades we are sending for this mission are operating in Baghdad. A third brigade is now moving from Kuwait and will be fully operational in Baghdad in the coming weeks. And the remaining two brigades will deploy in April and May. It will be early June before all U.S. forces dedicated to the operation are in place, so this operation is still in its beginning stages.

The reinforcements we've sent to Baghdad are having a impact. They're making a difference. And as more of those reinforcements arrive in the months ahead, their impact will continue to grow. But to succeed in their mission, our troops need Congress to provide the resources, funds, and equipment they need to fight our enemies.

It has now been 57 days since I requested that Congress pass emergency funds for our troops. Instead of passing clean bills that fund our troops on the frontlines, the House and Senate have spent this time debating bills that undercut the troops by substituting the judgment of politicians in Washington for the judgment of our commanders on the ground, setting an arbitrary deadline for withdrawal from Iraq, and spending billions of dollars on porkbarrel projects completely unrelated to the war.

I made it clear for weeks that if either the House or Senate version of this bill comes to my desk, I will veto it. And it is also clear from the strong support for this position in both Houses that the veto would be sustained. The only way the

Democrats were able to pass their bill in the first place was to load the bill with pork and other spending that has nothing to do with the war.

Here's what one leading Democrat in the House said, quote, "A lot of things had to go into that bill that certainly those of us who respect great legislation did not want there." That's an honest appraisal of the process that we just witnessed. Still, the Democrats in Congress continue to pursue their bills, and now they have left Washington for spring recess without finishing the work.

Democrat leaders in Congress seem more interested in fighting political battles in Washington than in providing our troops what they need to fight the battles in Iraq. If Democrat leaders in Congress are bent on making a political statement, then they need to send me this unacceptable bill as quickly as possible when they come back. I'll veto it, and then Congress can get down to the business of funding our troops without strings and without delay.

If Congress fails to act in the next few weeks, it will have significant consequences for our men and women in the Armed Forces. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace recently stated during his testimony before a House subcommittee, if Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-April, the Army will be forced to consider cutting back on equipment, equipment repair, and quality of life initiatives for our Guard and Reserve forces. These cuts would be necessary because the money will have to be shifted to support the troops on the frontlines.

The Army also would be forced to consider curtailing some training for Guard and Reserve units here at home. This would reduce their readiness and could delay their availability to mobilize for missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. If Congress

fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-May, the problems grow even more acute. The Army would be forced to consider slowing or even freezing funding for its depots, where the equipment our troops depend on is repaired. They will also have to consider delaying or curtailing the training of some active duty forces, reducing the availability of these forces to deploy overseas. If this happens, some of the forces now deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq may need to be extended because other units are not ready to take their places.

If Congress does not act, the Army may also have to delay the formation of new brigade combat teams, preventing us from getting those troops into the pool of forces that are available to deploy. If these new teams are unavailable, we would have to ask other units to extend in the theater.

In a letter to Congress, Army Chief of Staff General Pete Schoomaker put it this way: "Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly draconian measures, which will impact Army readiness and impose hardships on our soldiers and their families."

In a time of war, it's irresponsible for the Democrat leadership in—Democratic leadership in Congress to delay for months on end while our troops in combat are waiting for the funds. The bottom line is this: Congress's failure to fund our troops on the frontlines will mean that some of our military families could wait longer for their loved ones to return from the frontlines, and others could see their loved ones headed back to the war sooner than they need to. That is unacceptable to me, and I believe it is unacceptable to the American people.

Members of Congress say they support the troops. Now they need to show that support in deed as well as in word. Members of Congress are entitled to their views and should express them. Yet debating these differences should not come at the expense of funding our troops.

Congress's most basic responsibility is to give our troops the equipment and training they need to fight our enemies and protect our Nation. They're now failing in that responsibility, and if they do not change course in the coming weeks, the price of that failure will be paid by our troops and their loved ones.

I'll now answer some questions, starting with Jennifer Loven [Associated Press].

#### *Syria*

Q. Thank you, sir. You've agreed to talk to Syria in the context of these international conferences on Iraq—

*The President.* Excuse me?

Q. You've agreed to talk to Syria in the context of the international conferences on Iraq. What's so different or wrong about Speaker Pelosi having her own meetings there? And are you worried that she might be preempting your own efforts?

*The President.* We have made it clear to high-ranking officials, whether they be Republicans or Democrats, that going to Syria sends mixed signals—signals in the region and, of course, mixed signals to President Asad. And by that, I mean, photo opportunities and/or meetings with President Asad lead the Asad Government to believe they're part of the mainstream of the international community, when, in fact, they're a state sponsor of terror; when, in fact, they're helping expedite—or at least not stopping the movement of foreign fighters from Syria into Iraq; when, in fact, they have done little to nothing to rein in militant Hamas and Hizballah; and when, in fact, they destabilize the Lebanese democracy.

There have been a lot of people who have gone to see President Asad—some Americans, but a lot of European leaders, high-ranking officials. And yet we haven't seen action; in other words, he hasn't responded. It's one thing to send a message, it's another thing to have the person receiving the message actually do something. So the position of this administration is that

the best way to meet with a leader like Asad or people from Syria is in the larger context of trying to get the global community to help change his behavior. But sending delegations hasn't worked. It's just simply been counterproductive.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

#### *British Military Personnel Held in Iran*

Q. Thank you, sir. Would the U.S. be willing to give up 5 Iranians held in Iraq if it would help persuade Iran to give up the 15 British sailors?

*The President.* Steven, I said the other day that—first of all, the seizure of the sailors is indefensible by the Iranians and that I support the Blair Government's attempts to solve this issue peacefully. So we're in close consultation with the British Government. I also strongly support the Prime Minister's declaration that there should be no quid pro quos when it comes to the hostages.

Let's see here—Baker, Baker [Peter Baker, Washington Post]. Are you here? Yes, there you are.

#### *Department of Justice*

Q. Sir, your administration evaluated all 93 U.S. attorneys, in part on the basis of loyalty. That was one of the criteria that was used. What role should loyalty to you play in the evaluation of those charged with administering justice and enforcing the law?

*The President.* Peter, obviously, when you name a U.S. attorney, you want somebody who can do the job. That's the most important criterion, somebody who is qualified, somebody who can get a job done. The President names the U.S. attorneys, and the President has the right to remove U.S. attorneys. And on this particular issue, the one you're referring to, I believe it's the current issue of the U.S.—eight U.S. attorneys. They serve at my pleasure. They have served 4-year terms, and we have every right to replace them. And—

Q. And what—

*The President.* Let me finish, please. I am genuinely concerned about their reputations, now that this has become a Washington, DC, focus. I'm sorry it's come to this. On the other hand, there had been no credible evidence of any wrongdoing. And that's what the American people have got to understand. We had a right to remove them; we did remove them. And there will be more hearings to determine what I've just said, no credible evidence of wrongdoing.

Bill [Bill Plante, CBS News].

#### *Iraq/Situation in Baghdad*

Q. Mr. President, a lot of the disagreement over—

*The President.* Wrong Bill.

Q. Which one—him?

*The President.* No, you. The cute-looking one. [Laughter]

Q. Thanks so much. A lot of the disagreement, sir, over the way you're handling Iraq, disagreements from the public and Congress, stems from the belief that things are not working, despite the surge. The Iraqis have met few, if any, of the benchmarks that were laid down for them so far. Senator McCain walked in the Baghdad marketplace with air cover and a company of troops. But people don't believe that this can work, and they question the continued sacrifice of U.S. troops to help make it work.

*The President.* Yes. Bill, I'm very aware that there are a group of people that don't think we should be there in the first place. There are some who don't believe that this strategy will work. I've listened carefully to their complaints. Obviously, I listened to these concerns prior to deciding to reinforce. This is precisely the debate we had inside the White House: Can we succeed? I know there are some who have basically said, it is impossible to succeed. I strongly disagree with those people. I believe not only can we succeed; I know we must succeed.



And so I decided to, at the recommendation of military commanders, decided to send reinforcements. As opposed to leaving Baghdad and watching the country go up in flames, I chose a different route, which is to send more troops into Baghdad. And General Petraeus, who is a reasoned, sober man, says there is some progress being made. And he cites murders and—in other words, there's some calm coming to the capital. But he also fully recognizes, as do I, it's still dangerous. In other words, suiciders are willing to kill innocent life in order to send the projection that this is an impossible mission.

The whole strategy is to give the Iraqi Government time to reconcile, time to unify the country, time to respond to the demands of the 12 million people that voted.

You've said the Iraqis haven't met any obligations; I would disagree with your characterization. They have said that they will send Iraqi forces into Baghdad to take the lead, along with U.S. troops, to bring security to Baghdad, and they've done that. They said they'd name a commander for Baghdad; they have done that. They said they'd send up—they'd send troops out into the neighborhoods to clear and hold and then build; they're doing that. They said they would send a budget up that would spend a considerable amount of their money on reconstruction; they have done that. They're working on an oil law that is in progress.

As a matter of fact, I spoke to the Prime Minister yesterday about progress on the oil law. He reminded me that sometimes the legislature doesn't do what the executive branch wants them to do. I reminded him, I understand what he's talking about. But, nevertheless, I strongly agree that we've got to continue to make it clear to the Iraqi Government that this is—the solution to Iraq, an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself, is more than a military mission, precisely the reason why I sent more troops into Baghdad, to

be able to provide some breathing space for this democratically elected Government to succeed. And it's hard work, and I understand it's hard work.

Secondly, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, Bill, there's only 40 percent of our troops that are there on the ground. And that's why I find it somewhat astounding that people in Congress would start calling for withdrawal even before all the troops have made it to Baghdad.

Let's see here—Rutenberg. Jim Rutenberg [New York Times].

#### *Public Opinion/War in Iraq*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Matthew Dowd, your chief campaign strategist in 2004, kind of issued a strong critique of you and your administration this weekend. I'm wondering if you were personally stung, and if you worry about losing support of people—of him and people like him?

*The President.* First of all, I respect Matthew. I've known him for awhile. As you mentioned, he was an integral part of my 2004 campaign. I have not talked to Matthew about his concerns. Nevertheless, I understand his anguish over war. I understand that this is an emotional issue for Matthew, as it is a lot of other people in our country. Matthew's case, as I understand it, is obviously intensified because his son is deployable. In other words, he's got a son in the U.S. Armed Forces, and, I mean, I can understand Matthew's concerns.

I would hope that people who share Matthew's point of view would understand my concern about what failure would mean to the security of the United States. What I'm worried about is that we leave before the mission is done—and that is a country that is able to govern, sustain, and defend itself—and that Iraq becomes a cauldron of chaos, which will embolden extremists, whether they be Shi'a or Sunni extremists; which would enable extremists to have safe



haven from which to plot attacks on America; which could provide new resources for an enemy that wants to harm us.

And so, on the one hand, I do fully understand the anguish people go through about this war. And it's not just Matthew; there's a lot of our citizens who are concerned about this war. But I also hope that people will take a sober look at the consequences of failure in Iraq. My main job is to protect the people, and I firmly believe that if we were to leave before the job is done, the enemy would follow us here. And what makes Iraq different from previous struggles is that September the 11th showed that chaos in another part of the world—and/or safe haven for killers, for radicals—affects the security of the United States.

Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

*Iran*

Q. Back to Iran, sir. ABC has been reporting that Iran will be capable of building a nuclear bomb within 2 years. Have you seen evidence that Iran is accelerating its nuclear program?

*The President.* I haven't seen the report that you just referred to. I do share concerns about Iranian intention to have a nuclear weapon. I firmly believe that if Iran were to have a nuclear weapon, it would be a seriously destabilizing influence in the Middle East. And therefore, we have worked to build a international coalition to try to convince the Iranians to give up their weapon, to make it clear that they have choices to make—whether the choice be isolation or missed opportunity to grow their economies. And so we take your—we take seriously the attempts of the Iranians to gain a nuclear weapon.

Q. Have you seen evidence of an acceleration, though?

*The President.* You know, I'm not going to talk about any intelligence that I've seen, one way or the other. But I do want you to know how seriously we take the Iranian nuclear issue. As a matter of fact, it is

the cornerstone of our Iranian policy. It is—and that's why we spend a lot of time in working with friends, allies, concerned people to rally international support, to make it clear to the Iranian people that there is a better option for them.

Now, we have no problem, no beef with the Iranian people. We value their history; we value their traditions. But their government is making some choices that will continue to isolate them and deprive them of a better economic future. So we take the issue very seriously.

Ken Herman [Cox News].

*Price of Gasoline/Alternative Fuel Sources*

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, are you aware of the current price of a gallon of gas? Can you explain why it's gone up so sharply in recent weeks? And is there anything in the near future indicating the prices might start coming down again before the heavy summer driving season?

*The President.* About 2.60 plus. Gas—

Q. Where are you shopping, sir? [Laughter]

*The President.* Nationwide average. The price of gasoline obviously varies from region to region for a variety of reasons. Some has to do with the amount of taxation at the pump, some of it has to do with the boutique fuels that have been mandated on a State-by-State basis, but a lot of the price of gasoline depends on the price of crude oil.

And the price of crude oil is on the rise, and the price of crude oil is on the rise because people get spooked, for example, when it looks like there may be a crisis with a crude oil-producing nation like Iran. But the whole point about rising crude oil prices and rising gasoline prices is that this country ought to work hard to get off our addiction to oil—all the more reason why Congress ought to pass the mandatory fuel standards that I set forth, which will reduce our use of gasoline by 20 percent over the next 10 years. And there's two reasons why: One is for national security concerns, and

two is for environmental concerns. And I hope that we can get this done with the Congress, get it out of the Congress to my desk as quickly as possible.

Dancer. Dancing man. That would be David Gregory [NBC News]. For those of you not aware, Gregory put on a show the other—

*Congressional Action on Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

Q. Everybody's aware, Mr. President, thank you. [Laughter]

The President. Well, maybe the listeners aren't.

Q. Yes, that's all right.

The President. That was a beautiful performance—seriously.

Q. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [Laughter] Mr. President, you say the Democrats are undercutting troops, the way they have voted. They're obviously trying to assert more control over foreign policy. Isn't that what the voters elected them to do, in November?

The President. I think the voters in America want Congress to support our troops in—who are in harm's way. They want money to the troops, and they don't want politicians in Washington telling our generals how to fight a war. It's one thing to object to the policy, but it's another thing when you have troops in harm's way not to give them the funds they need.

And no question there's been a political dance going on here in Washington. You've followed this closely; you know what I'm talking about. Not only was there a political dance going on—in other words, people were trying to appeal to one side of their party or another—but they then had to bring out new funding streams in order to attract votes to a emergency war supplemental.

And my concern, David, is several: One, Congress shouldn't tell generals how to run the war; Congress should not shortchange our military; Congress should not use a emergency war spending measure as a vehi-

cle to put pet spending projects on that have nothing to do with the war.

Secondly, as I mentioned in these remarks, delays beyond mid-April and then into May will affect the readiness of the U.S. military. So my attitude is, enough politics. They need to come back, pass a bill. If they want to play politics, fine. They continue to do that; I will veto it. But they ought to do it quickly. They ought to get the bill to my desk as quickly as possible, and I'll veto it. And then we can get down to the business of funding our troops without strings and without withdrawal dates.

It is amazing to me that, one, the United States Senate passed a—confirmed General Petraeus overwhelmingly, after he testified as to what he thinks is necessary to succeed in Iraq, and then won't fund him. Secondly, we have put 40 percent of the reinforcements in place, and yet people already want to start withdrawing before the mission has had a chance to succeed.

They need to come off their vacation, get a bill to my desk, and if it's got strings and mandates and withdrawals and pork, I'll veto it. And then we can get down to the business of getting this thing done, and we can do it quickly. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. And we can get the bill—get the troops funded, and we go about our business of winning this war.

McKinnon [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

*Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On climate change and the decision that was issued yesterday by the U.S. Supreme Court, what's your reaction to that decision? And don't you think that this makes some kind of broad caps on greenhouse gas emissions more or less inevitable?

The President. First of all, the decision of the Supreme Court is—we take very seriously. It's the new law of the land. And secondly, we're taking some time to fully understand the details of the decision. As

you know, this decision was focused on emissions that come from automobiles. My attitude is, is that we have laid out a plan that will affect greenhouse gases that come from automobiles by having a mandatory fuel standard that insists upon 35—using 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels by 2017, which will reduce our gasoline usage by 20 percent and halt the growth in greenhouse gases that emanate from automobiles. In other words, there is a remedy available for Congress, and I strongly hope that they pass this remedy quickly.

In terms of the broader issue, first of all, I've taken this issue very seriously. I have said that it is a serious problem. I recognize that man is contributing greenhouse gases, that—but here are the principles by which I think we can get a good deal. One, anything that happens cannot hurt economic growth. And I say that because, one, I care about the working people of the country, but also because, in order to solve the greenhouse gas issue over a longer period of time, it's going to require new technologies, which tend to be expensive. And it's easier to afford expensive technologies if you're prosperous.

Secondly, whatever we do must be in concert with what happens internationally because we could pass any number of measures that are now being discussed in the Congress, but unless there is an accord with China, China will produce greenhouse gases that will offset anything we do in a brief period of time.

And so those are the principles that will guide our decisionmaking. How do you encourage new technology? How do you grow the economy? And how do you make sure that China is—and India are a part of a rational solution?

Let's see here—how about Bret Baier [FOX News]?

### *Homosexuals in the Military*

Q. Mr. President, thank you. Since General Pace made his comments that got a lot of attention about homosexuality, we

haven't heard from you on that issue. Do you, sir, believe that homosexuality is immoral?

*The President.* I will not be rendering judgment about individual orientation. I do believe the “don't ask, don't tell” policy is good policy.

Sammon [Bill Sammon, Washington Times], yes.

### *Congressional Action on Emergency Supplemental Appropriations/War on Terror*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* You're standing out there; I can see you.

Q. When Congress has linked war funding with a timetable, you have argued micromanagement. When they've linked it to unrelated spending, you've argued porkbarrel. But now there's talk from Harry Reid and others that if you veto this bill, they may come back and just simply cut off funding. Wouldn't that be a legitimate exercise of a congressional authority, which is the power of the purse?

*The President.* The Congress is exercising its legitimate authority as it sees fit right now. I just disagree with their decisions. I think setting an artificial timetable for withdrawal is a significant mistake. It is a—it sends mixed signals, bad signals to the region and to the Iraqi citizens.

Listen, the Iraqis are wondering whether or not we're going to stay to help. People in America wonder whether or not they've got the political will to do the hard work—that's what Plante was asking about. My conversations with President [Prime Minister]\* Maliki, he seems dedicated to doing that, and we will continue to work with him to achieve those objectives. But they're wondering whether or not America is going to keep commitments. And so when they hear withdrawal and timetables, it, rightly so, sends different kinds of signals.

---

\* White House correction.

It's interesting that Harry Reid, Leader Reid, spoke out with a different option. Whatever option they choose, I would hope they get home, get a bill, and get it to my desk. And if it has artificial timetables of withdrawal or if it cuts off funding for troops or if it tells our generals how to run a war, I'll veto it. And then we can get about the business of giving our troops what they need—what our generals want them to have, and give our generals the flexibility necessary to achieve the objectives that we set out by reinforcing troops in Iraq.

You know, what's interesting is, you don't hear a lot of debate about Washington as to what will happen if there is failure. Again, Plante mentioned that people don't think we can succeed; in other words, there's no chance of succeeding. That's a part of the debate. But what people also have got to understand is what will happen if we fail. And the way you fail is to leave before the job is done; in other words, just abandon this young democracy, say, "We're tired; we'll withdraw from Baghdad," and hope there's not chaos.

I believe that if this capital city were to fall into chaos, which is where it was headed prior to reinforcing, that there would be no chance for this young democracy to survive. That's why I made the decision I made. And the reason why I believe it's important to help this young democracy survive is so that the country has a chance to become a stabilizing influence in a dangerous part of the world.

I also understand that if the country—if the experience were to fail, radicals would be emboldened. People that had been—that can't stand America would find new ways to recruit. There would be potentially additional resources for them to use at their disposal.

The failure in Iraq would endanger American security. I have told the American people often: It is best to defeat them there so we don't have to face them here, fully recognizing that what happens over

there can affect the security here. That's one of the major lessons of September the 11th. In that case, there was safe haven found in a failed state, where killers plotted and planned and trained and came and killed 3,000 of our citizens. And I vowed we weren't going to let that happen again.

Secondly, the way to defeat the ideology that these people believe is through a competing ideology, one based upon liberty and human rights and human dignity. And there are some who, I guess, say that's impossible to happen in the Middle East. I strongly disagree. I know it is hard work. I believe it is necessary work to secure this country in the long run.

Ed [Ed Henry, Cable News Network].

#### *Cooperation With Congress/Legislative Agenda*

*Q.* Mr. President, the conservative newspaper columnist, Robert Novak, recently wrote that in 50 years of covering Washington, he's never seen a President more isolated than you are right now. What do you say to critics like Novak who say that you are more isolated now than Richard Nixon was during Watergate?

*The President.* How did he define isolated?

*Q.* He said you're isolated primarily from your own party, that Republican leaders on the Hill were privately telling him that, on the Gonzales matter in particular, you're very isolated.

*The President.* I think you're going to find that the White House and the Hill are going to work in close collaboration, starting with this supplemental. When I announced that I will veto a bill with—that withdrew our troops, that set artificial timetables for withdrawal or micromanaged the war, the Republicans strongly supported that message. I think you'll find us working together on energy. They know what I know, that dependence on oil will affect the long-term national security of the country. We'll work together on No Child Left

Behind. We'll work together on immigration reform. We'll work together, most importantly, on budget, to make sure this budget gets balanced without raising taxes.

The other day, the Democrats submitted budgets that raised taxes on the working people, in order to increase the amount of money they have available for spending. That is a place where the Republicans and this President are going to work very closely together. I adamantly oppose tax increases, and so do the majority of Members in the United States Congress.

Ed [Edwin Chen, Los Angeles Times].

### *Homeland Security*

Q. Mr. President, good morning. You've talked——

*The President.* Good morning. Good morning, that's a good way to start.

Q. You've talked about the consequences of failure in Iraq, and you've said that enemies would follow us home. I wonder, given that, it seems like that's not exactly a ringing endorsement of people who are charged with the responsibility of keeping America safe. So what——

*The President.* What was that again, Ed?

Q. Well, you say that the enemies would follow us home if——

*The President.* I will—that's what they'll do, just like September the 11th. They plotted, planned, and attacked.

Q. So I wonder, in your own mind, how does that vision play out? How do they follow us home? Because we've spent so much money and put so much resources into making this country safer.

*The President.* Ed, I'm not going to predict to you the methodology they'll use. Just you need to know they want to hit us again. We do everything we can here at the homeland to protect us. That's why I've got a Homeland Security Department. That's why we are inconveniencing air traffickers, to make sure nobody is carrying weapons on airplanes. That's why we need border enforcement, with a comprehensive immigration bill, by the way, to make sure

it's easier to enforce the border. I mean, we're doing a lot. That's why we need to make sure our intelligence services coordinate information better.

So we spend a lot of time trying to protect this country. But if they were ever to have safe haven, it would make the efforts much harder. That's my point. We cannot let them have safe haven again. The lesson of September the 11th is, if these killers are able to find safe haven from which to plot, plan, and attack, they would do so.

So, Ed, I don't know what methodology they'll use. We're planning for the worst. We cover all fronts. And it's hard to protect a big country like this, and I applaud those who have done a fantastic job of protecting us since September the 11th. But make no mistake about it: there's still an enemy that would like to do us harm. And I believe, whether it be in Afghanistan or in Iraq or anywhere else, if these enemy is able to find safe haven, it will endanger the lives of our fellow citizens.

I also understand that the best way to defeat them in the long run is to show people in the Middle East, for example, that there is a better alternative to tyrannical societies, to societies that don't meet the hopes and aspirations of the average people. And that is through a society that is based upon the universal concept of liberty.

Iraq is a very important part of securing the homeland, and it's a very important part of helping change the Middle East into a part of the world that will not serve as a threat to the civilized world, to people like—or to the developed world, to people like—in the United States.

So thank you all very much for your interest. I hope you have a nice holiday. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:09 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Prime



Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, Iraqi commander of

Baghdad, Iraqi Army; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks to Military Personnel and Their Families at Fort Irwin, California April 4, 2007

*The President.* Thank you, all. I've been waiting all day to say, "Hooah!"

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* Thank you for greeting me. General Cone, thanks. I appreciate your service to our country, and thanks for leading these men and women. I'm honored also to be with Jill. Thank you for joining us today for lunch. Command Sergeant Kim Boyink has been a generous host. Sarge, I appreciate being with you. Thank you for your service. Thanks for setting such a good example for the enlisted folks.

I often tell people that the backbone of the Army is the sergeant.

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* And I appreciate you sergeants who have joined us here, and I appreciate you serving.

I want to thank two Members of the United States Congress who have traveled with me today, men who have concerns about Fort Irwin and have reflected those concerns in different appropriations measures in the United States Congress. In other words, they understand the importance of this mission, and they understand the importance of making sure the folks who are stationed here have the best possible housing and food—could work a little bit on it, but—[laughter]. But I do want to introduce to you the Congressmen from this district, Congressman Buck McKeon. Where are you, Buck? There he is. Thanks, Buck. And Congressman Jerry Lewis, ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

I'm proud to be here with Mayor Dale of the city of Barstow. I appreciate you coming, Mr. Mayor. It's nice of you to be here. Thanks for being here.

I appreciate not only those who wear the uniform who are here today; I want to thank your families, too, for coming. It means a lot to me to be with our military families. I'll say a word about our military families here in a minute.

I do want to thank those who have just returned from Afghanistan, the 699th Maintenance Company.

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* I guess the best words I can say are, welcome—I mean, thanks, and welcome back. We're glad you're here.

I appreciate those of you who are about to deploy in an important theater in this war against radicals and extremists, this war on terror: the "Red Devils" of the 58th Engineers, the "Renegades" of the 557th Maintenance Company, the "Super HET" of the 2d Transportation Company. I appreciate you—[applause].

Ours is a remarkable country when people volunteer to serve our country in a time of war. The amazing thing about our United States military is, thousands and thousands have signed up knowing full well that we're a nation at war. The Government didn't say: You have to do this; you choose—you chose to do it on your own. You decided to put your country ahead of self in many ways. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of such decent people, such honorable people, and such noble



people. And I'm proud to be in your presence today.

I also want to thank the families. I understand how difficult this war is on America's military families. I understand the rotations are difficult for the moms and husbands and sons and daughters. I understand that when a loved one is deployed, it creates anxiety. I also understand our military families are very supportive of those who wear the uniform. And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I say thanks to the families who are here and all across the United States of America. You're an integral part of making sure this volunteer army is as successful as it is today.

This country's life changed on September the 11th, 2001, and my attitude about the world changed that day too. I decided that I—that our most important task in Washington was to protect you, protect the American people. And I decided that I would use all the resources at our disposal to do that. Like many Americans, we struggle with understanding with what this attack meant. But if you think about the leadup to the attack, you think about the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 or the extremist attack on our troops in Lebanon or the Embassies in Africa, Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, or the USS *Cole*.

In other words, the attack on September the 11th wasn't the first move by the extremists. As a matter of fact, they conducted their acts of murder believing that there wouldn't be a response. They became convinced that free nations were weak, and they grew bolder believing that history was on their side.

After the attacks of September the 11th, I vowed to our country that we wouldn't tire, that we would use whatever it took to protect us. And so we changed our strategy. The strategy is to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. The strategy is to find those who would kill Americans and bring them to justice. So for those of you in—who have

been in Afghanistan, you're helping this young democracy recover from a period of time in which brutal extremists provided safe haven to an enemy which attacked the United States. Part of our doctrine is, if you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists.

Another part of the doctrine is, when you see a threat, we must take threats seriously, before they come here to hurt us. See, what changed on September the 11th is, oceans can no longer protect the people in the United States from harm. I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power, and so are the citizens of Iraq.

In the long term, we must remember that freedom is universal, and the best way to defeat an ideology. And make no mistake about it, these extremists believe things. For example, they don't believe you can worship freely; they don't believe you should speak your mind; they don't believe in dissent; they don't believe in human rights. We believe in the right for people to worship. We believe in the dignity of each human being. Our ideology is based on the universality of liberty. Their dark ideology is based upon hatred. And the way to defeat—ultimately defeat those who would do harm to America is, give people a chance to live in a free society. And that's the work we're doing, whether it be in Afghanistan or in Iraq. And I want to thank you for your sacrifice and service.

Iraq obviously has got the attention of the United States, as it should. It's a tough war. The American people are weary of this war. They're wondering whether or not we can succeed. They're horrified by the suicide bombings they see.

I analyzed all the situation here this fall. I listened to the advice from the military; I listened to the advice from the political people, all in reaction to the fact that Al Qaida and the extremists bombed a sacred place, which caused sectarian violence to begin to rage. And it looked like that if action wasn't taken, the capital of this

young democracy would be overwhelmed by chaos.

And I had a choice to make, and that is whether or not to pull back and hope that chaos wouldn't spread, or to do something about the sectarian violence that was taking place and to help the Iraqis bring order to their capital in order to give them breathing space, time to reconcile their differences after having lived under the thumb of a tyrant for years.

In weighing the options, I thought about the consequences of a country that could sustain itself and defend itself and serve as an ally in the war on terror. And those consequences will have profound impact over the next years, over the decades, to know that in the midst of the Middle East, there can flourish free societies, societies where people can live together, societies where people can express their opinions, societies where people can live a free life. That's important because history has proven, has shown that free societies don't war with each other. But it's also important to have allies in this war against the extremists who would do us harm.

I've also thought about the consequences of failure and what it would mean to the American people. If chaos were to reign in the capital of that country, it could spill out to the rest of the country. It could then spill out to the region, where you would have religious extremists fighting each other with one common enemy: the United States of America or our ally, for example, like Israel.

The enemy that had done us harm would be emboldened. They would have seen the mighty United States of America retreat before the job was done, which would enable them to better recruit. They have made it clear—"they" being people like Usama bin Laden or Zawahiri—have made it clear they want to drive us from Iraq to establish safe haven in order to launch further attacks. In my judgment, defeat—leaving before the job was done, which I would call

defeat—would make this United States of America at risk to further attack.

In other words, this is a war in which, if we were to leave before the job is done, the enemy would follow us here. That's the lesson of September the 11th. It's an integral part of my thinking about how to secure this country, to do the most important job that the Government must do, and that is to protect the American people.

So I made a decision, in consultation with our military commanders, people of sound military judgment, people who have made a career about how to set strategies in place to achieve military victories. And the new strategy we developed was to, rather than retreat, reinforce; rather than pull back, was to go in with additional troops to help this young democracy do the job that the 12 million people who voted in free elections want them to do, which is to provide security so a mother can raise her child the way we would want our mothers to be able to raise our children, to provide security so that the political reconciliation necessary can go forward in a more secure environment.

As I made the decision to send in more troops, I also made the decision to send in a new commander, General David Petraeus. He's an expert on counterinsurgency. Right now about half of the reinforcements that are expected to go to Baghdad have arrived. American and Iraqi troops are, however, on the move. They're rounding up both Shi'a and Sunni extremists; they're rounding up those who would do harm to innocent people.

We're after Al Qaida. After all, Al Qaida wants us to fail because they can't stand the thought of a free society in their midst. We're destroying car bomb factories, killing and capturing hundreds of insurgents, and neighborhoods are being reclaimed. There is progress, but the enemy sees that progress, and they're responding in a brutal way.

I was amazed by the story of the extremists who put two children into a automobile

so that they could make it into a crowded area. Then they got out of the car and blew up the car with the children inside. It only hardens my resolve to help free Iraq from a society in which people can do that to children. And it makes me realize the nature of the enemy that we face, which hardens my resolve to protect the American people. The people who do that are not people. You know, it's not a civil war, it is pure evil. And I believe we have an obligation to protect ourselves from that evil. So while we're making progress, it also is tough. And so the way to deal with it is to stay on the offense, is to help these Iraqis.

I had a meeting, a SVTS—what they call a SVTS, it's a real-time video conference—with Prime Minister Maliki. I urged him, of course, to continue making the actions necessary to reconcile in their society: pass an oil law, a de-Ba'athification law. It's interesting to watch a government emerge. It's interesting to watch this new democracy begin to take on responsibilities, and they are. They said they would commit additional troops into Baghdad; they have. They said they'd name a commander for the city of Baghdad; they did. They said they would man checkpoints; they are. They said they'd spend a significant amount of their own money for their reconstruction; they have budgeted \$10 billion.

And there's more work to be done, and I reminded the Prime Minister of that. And I reminded him that our patience is not unlimited. I also reminded him that we want him to succeed, that it's in the interest of the United States that this young democracy succeed. It's in the interest we gain a new ally in the war on terror in the midst of a part of the world that produced 19 kids that came and killed 3,000 of our citizens.

Just as the strategy is starting to make inroads, a narrow majority in the Congress passed legislation they knew all along I would not accept. Their bills impose an artificial deadline for withdrawal from Iraq.

Their bills substitute the judgment of Washington politicians for the judgment of our military commanders. Their bills add billions of dollars in porkbarrel spending, spending that is unrelated to the war that you're engaged in. Then, instead of sending an acceptable bill to my desk, they went on spring break.

In the meantime, the clock is ticking for our military. The Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Chief of Staff of the Army have warned that if Congress delays these funds past mid-April, we'll have significant consequences for our Armed Forces. Army Chief of Staff says this: "Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly draconian measures, which will impact Army readiness and impose hardship on our soldiers and their families."

For example, the Army says that without these funds, it will be forced to consider cutting back on training for Guard and Reserve units and, eventually, for active duty personnel. The folks at Fort Irwin know firsthand how important training is. Washington has a responsibility to ensure that you have the resources you need to keep this training going.

Soon Congress will return from its break. I urge them to work on legislation to fund our troops but that does not tell our military how to conduct war and sets an artificial timetable for withdrawal. The enemy does not measure the conflict in Iraq in terms of timetables. They plan to fight us, and we've got to fight them, alongside the Iraqis. A strategy that encourages this enemy to wait us out is dangerous. It's dangerous for our troops; it's dangerous for our country's security. And it's not going to become the law.

There are fine, fine people debating this issue in Washington, DC. They're patriotic. They're people who have got passionate points of view about this war, and I understand that. Yet we cannot allow honest differences in Washington to harm our troops

in battle or their families here at home. Members of Congress have sent their message. Now they need to send me a war spending measure that I can sign into law, so we can provide our troops and their families with the funds and support they deserve and they need.

I spent some time with the soldiers out in the field, and I want to share with you what I told them. The work that you have volunteered to do will have a lasting impact on the world in which we live. When we succeed in helping this Iraqi Government become a country that can sustain itself, defend itself, govern itself, and serve as an ally in the war on terror, we will have delivered a significant blow to those who have designs on harming the American people, because they can't stand the thought of free societies in their midst. They can't stand the thought of people being able to have a government of, by, and for the people. It is the opposite of what they view.

But we have done this kind of work before. The United States of America has done the kind of work that spread liberty in parts of the world where people never thought liberty could take hold. For example, after World War II, after we had a brutal war with the Japanese and Nazi Germany, our troops stayed behind and helped these societies recover and grow and prosper. And now we're reaping the benefits of helping our former enemies realize the blessings of liberty. Europe is free and at peace.

You know, after the Korean war, if you had asked somebody: "Can you imagine an American President being able to stand up in front of some troops and say, 'The Far East is peaceful; a part of the world where we lost thousands of our troops in World War II and Korea is now a relatively peace-

ful part of the world.'?" They would have said, "What a hopeless idealist that person is." And yet I can report to you that. And I believe it is because our troops not only helped in Korea and helped rebuild Japan, but I believe it's because the presence of the United States gave breathing space to people to realize the blessings of liberty.

I believe liberty is universal. I don't believe it is just for the United States of America alone. I believe there is an Almighty, and I believe the Almighty's gift to people worldwide is the desire to be free. And I think, if given a chance, people will seize that moment. And that's the work you're doing.

And so that's why I report to our citizens that the hard work we're doing today is laying the foundation of peace for generations to come. And it gives me great confidence to know that standing with the President of the United States is a fantastic military: well-trained, courageous, and dedicated to protecting this country.

I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Robert W. Cone, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army National Training Center and Fort Irwin, and his wife Jill; Command Sgt. Maj. Kim D. Boyink, USA, U.S. Army National Training Center and Fort Irwin; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, Iraqi commander of Baghdad, Iraqi Army; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

## Statement on the Death of Edward G. Robinson *April 4, 2007*

Laura and I are saddened to learn of the death of Eddie Robinson. Eddie Robinson was a football legend who compiled an amazing record as the coach at Grambling State University. He will be remembered for his passion for the game and

his dedication to helping his players better themselves on the field, in the classroom, and in their communities. Laura and I extend our deepest sympathies to the Robinson family, the players he inspired, and Grambling State University.

## Message on the Observance of Easter 2007 *April 6, 2007*

*"Rejoice!"*

MATTHEW 28:9

Laura and I send greetings to all those celebrating the glorious Easter holiday.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event of the Christian faith. Easter morning holds wonder and promise, and it is a chance for people everywhere to gather with family and friends to celebrate the power of love conquering death. In this season of renewal, we can rejoice in Christ's rising, draw strength and inspiration from His example, and remember that in the end, even death itself will be defeated.

This Easter we pray for all our men and women in uniform and for the military families whose loved ones are deployed on important missions in distant lands. We remember especially those who have given their lives in freedom's cause.

On this powerful day, let us join together and give thanks to the Almighty for the glory of His grace.

Happy Easter, and may God bless you.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## The President's Radio Address *April 7, 2007*

Good morning. This week, people around the world celebrate Passover and Easter. These holy days remind us of the presence of a loving God who delivers His people from oppression and offers a love more powerful than death. We take joy in spending this special time with family and friends, and we give thanks for the many blessings in our lives.

One of our greatest blessings as Americans is that we have brave citizens who step forward to defend us. Every man or woman who wears our Nation's uniform is a volunteer, a patriot who has made the noble decision to serve a cause larger than self. This weekend, many of our service men and women are celebrating the holidays far from home. They are separated from their families by great distances, but

they are always close in our thoughts. And this Passover and Easter, I ask you to keep them in your prayers.

Our men and women in uniform deserve the gratitude of every American. And from their elected leaders, they deserve something more: the funds, resources, and equipment they need to do their jobs.

Sixty-one days have passed since I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill to provide the funds our troops urgently need. But instead of approving that vital funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 61 days working to pass legislation that would substitute the judgment of politicians in Washington for the judgment of our generals in the field.

In both the House and Senate, Democratic majorities have passed bills that would impose restrictions on our military commanders, set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq, and fund domestic spending that has nothing to do with the war. The Democrats who passed these bills know that I will veto either version if it reaches my desk, and they know my veto will be sustained. Yet they continue to pursue the legislation. And now the process is on hold for 2 weeks, until the full Congress returns to session.

I recognize that Democrats are trying to show their current opposition to the war in Iraq. They see the emergency war spending bill as a chance to make that statement. Yet for our men and women in uniform, this emergency war spending bill is not a political statement, it is a source of critical funding that has a direct impact on their daily lives.

When Congress does not fund our troops on the frontlines, our military is forced to make cuts in other areas to cover the shortfall. Military leaders have warned Congress about this problem. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pete Pace, recently testified that if Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-April, the Army will be forced to consider cutting back on training, equipment repair, and

quality of life initiatives for our Guard and Reserve forces. In a letter to Congress, Army Chief of Staff Pete Schoomaker put it this way: "Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly draconian measures, which will impact Army readiness and impose hardships on our soldiers and their families."

If Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-May, the problems grow even more acute. The Army will be forced to consider slowing or even freezing funding for depots where pivotal equipment is repaired, delaying or curtailing the training of some active duty forces, and delaying the formation of new brigade combat teams. The bottom line is that Congress's failure to fund our troops will mean that some of our military families could wait longer for their loved ones to return from the frontlines, and others could see their loved ones headed back to war sooner than they need to. That is unacceptable to me, and I believe it is unacceptable to the American people.

The full Congress will not be back from spring vacation until the week of April 16th. That means the soonest the House and Senate could get a bill to my desk will be sometime late this month, after the adverse consequences for our troops and their families have already begun. For our troops, the clock is ticking. If the Democrats continue to insist on making a political statement, they should send me their bill as soon as possible. I will veto it, and then Congress can go to work on a good bill that gives our troops the funds they need, without strings and without further delay.

We have our differences in Washington, DC, but our troops should not be caught in the middle. All who serve in elected office have a solemn responsibility to provide for our men and women in uniform. We need to put partisan politics aside and do our duty to those who defend us.

Thank you for listening.



NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on April 6 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 6, but

was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks to Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas April 8, 2007

*Easter*

*The President.* Laura and I just had the honor of celebrating Easter Sunday with members of our Armed Forces. I had a chance to reflect on the great sacrifice that our military and their families are making. I prayed for their safety, I prayed for their strength and comfort, and I prayed for peace.

This is a joyous day for many people around the world, and it's a day for us

to reflect on the many blessings in our lives. And we thank the General and the troops at Fort Hood for welcoming me and Laura, and Mother and Dad, and my mother-in-law. We wish all Americans a peaceful weekend, and we wish our troops all the very best.

Thank you.

*The First Lady.* Happy Easter.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the 13th Sustainment Command Chapel.

## Remarks During a Tour of the Border and an Exchange With Reporters in Yuma, Arizona April 9, 2007

*The President.* You know, it's interesting, this is the spot I came to in May of 2006. Colburn told me then that we were in the process of developing a modernization strategy. None of this existed prior to my arrival in May. And they told me they were developing a strategy that would prevent people from charging across to try to get to the neighborhood over here, and that strategy has been implemented.

It is a combination of roads, lighting, and fencing, all aiming at making sure that we have a border that's protected. And it's amazing the progress that's been made. And we have come back to this spot because it's where I was the last time. And I was most impressed by your strategy,

even more impressed by the fact that it's now being implemented. And the men have reported that the number of arrests are down, which is an indication that fewer people are trying to cross the border at this part of—along the border. And so we're making some pretty good progress.

And the reason we've come here is to show the American people that the plan that we've announced is now being implemented. And there is still more work to be done, but nevertheless, a lot of progress is being made. I'm going to talk a little bit later about making sure that we complete the strategy by having a comprehensive immigration bill. I will save my words until then. But in the meantime, I wanted

you to see the progress—see firsthand the progress that we’re making here on the border.

Anyway, thank you for your time.

*U.S. Border Patrol*

*Q.* What most impresses you, Mr. President?

*The President.* The hard work being done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. at the Yuma Sector, U.S. Border Patrol. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald S. Colburn, chief patrol agent, Yuma Sector, U.S. Border Patrol. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Remarks in Yuma

*April 9, 2007*

*The President.* Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the warm weather. [*Laughter*]

*Audience member.* Twenty-eight degrees in Washington.

*The President.* Yes, 28 degrees in Washington; that’s right. I appreciate you sharing that with me. [*Laughter*] Sometimes it’s a little hotter than that in Washington. [*Laughter*] But I’m glad to be back here in Yuma. Thank you so very much for your hospitality. Thanks for your service to the country. I appreciate so very much the work you’re doing day and night to protect these borders. And the American people owe you a great debt of gratitude.

The Border Patrol is really an important agency. I know some people are wondering whether or not it makes sense to join the Border Patrol. My answer is, I’ve gotten to know the Border Patrol; I know the people serving in this fine agency; I would strongly urge our fellow citizens to take a look at this profession. You’re outdoors; you’re working with good people; and you’re making a solid contribution to the United States of America. And I want to thank you all for wearing the uniform and doing the tough work necessary, the work that the American people expect you to do.

Last May, I visited this section of the border, and it was then that I talked about the need for our Government to give you the manpower and resources you need to do your job. We were understaffed here. We weren’t using enough technology to enable those who work here to be able to do the job the American people expect. I returned to check on the progress, to make sure that the check wasn’t in the mail; it, in fact, had been delivered.

I went to a neighborhood that abuts up against the border when I was here in May. It’s the place where a lot of people came charging across. One or two agents would be trying to do their job and stopping a flood of folks charging into Arizona, and they couldn’t do the job—just physically impossible. Back at this site, there’s now infrastructure; there’s fencing. And the amount of people trying to cross the border at that spot is down significantly.

I appreciate very much Ron Colburn and Ulay Littleton. They gave me the tour. Colburn, as you know, is heading up north. He’s going to miss the weather. [*Laughter*] More importantly, he’s going to miss the folks he worked with down here. I appreciate both of their service; I appreciate the tour. The efforts are working. This border is more secure, and America is safer as a result.

Securing the border is a critical part of a strategy for comprehensive immigration reform. It is a important part of a reform that is necessary so that the Border Patrol agents down here can do their job more effectively. Congress is going to take up the legislation on immigration. It is a matter of national interest, and it's a matter of deep conviction for me. I've been working to bring Republicans and Democrats together to resolve outstanding issues so that Congress can pass a comprehensive bill and I can sign it into law this year.

I appreciate the hard work of Secretary Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. I appreciate Commissioner Ralph Basham. He's the main man in charge of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. David Aguilar, Chief of the Border Patrol, is with us. David, thank you for the job you're doing. Lieutenant General Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau—I want to thank the Governor of the State of Arizona, Janet Napolitano. I appreciate you being here, Governor. Thank you for taking time from the session to be down here. And it means a lot when the Governors take a active interest in what's going on in the borders of their respective States.

I appreciate so very much Senator Jon Kyl. Kyl is one of the most respected United States Senators, and I'm proud to be with him today and glad to give him a ride back to Washington, I might add. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate members of the congressional delegation who have joined us: John Shadegg; Jeff Flake, from Snowflake, Arizona; I want you to know—*[laughter]*—and I appreciate you working on this immigration issue, Congressman Trent Franks and Congressman Harry Mitchell. I appreciate you all taking time for being here with me today. It means a lot that you've come.

I want to thank Senator Tim Bee—he's the president of the Arizona State Senate—for being here. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Larry Nelson, the mayor of Yuma,

Arizona, I appreciate you being here, Mr. Mayor.

I do want to thank Major General David Rataczak. He's the Adjutant General of the State of Arizona. Thank all the local and State officials. Most importantly, I want to thank the Border Patrol agents, and I want to thank the National Guard folks for wearing the uniform. I am proud to be the Commander in Chief of all these units here today, and I appreciate your service to the United States of America.

I hope by now the American people understand the need for comprehensive immigration reform is a clear need. Illegal immigration is a serious problem—you know it better than anybody. It puts pressure on the public schools and the hospitals, not only here in our border States but States around the country. It drains the State and local budgets. I was talking to the Governor about how it strained the budgets. Incarceration of criminals who are here illegally strains the Arizona budget. But there's a lot of other ways it strains the local and State budgets. It brings crime to our communities.

It's a problem, and we need to address it aggressively. This problem has been growing for decades, and past efforts to address it have failed. These failures helped create a perception that America was not serious about enforcing our immigration laws and that they could be broken without consequence. Past efforts at reform did not do enough to secure our Nation's borders. As a result, many people have been able to sneak into this country.

If you don't man your borders and don't protect your borders, people are going to sneak in, and that's what's been happening for a long time. Past efforts at reform failed to address the underlying economic reasons behind illegal immigration. People will make great sacrifices to get into this country to find jobs and provide for their families.

When I was the Governor of Texas, I used to say, family values did not stop at

the Rio Grande River. People are coming here to put food on the table, and they're doing jobs Americans are not doing. And the farmers in this part of the world understand exactly what I'm saying. But so do a lot of other folks around the country. People are coming to work, and many of them have no lawful way to come to America, and so they're sneaking in.

Past efforts at reform also failed to provide sensible ways for employers to verify the legal status of the workers they hire. It's against the law to knowingly hire an illegal alien. And as a result, because they couldn't verify the legal status, it was difficult for employers to comply. It was difficult for the government to enforce the laws at the worksite, and yet it is a necessary part of a comprehensive plan. You see, the lessons of all these experiences—the lesson of these experiences is clear: All elements of the issue must be addressed together. You can't address just one aspect and not be able to say to the American people that we're securing our borders.

We need a comprehensive bill, and that's what I'm working with Members of Congress on, a comprehensive immigration bill. And now is the year to get it done. The first element, of course, is to secure this border. That's what I'm down here for, to remind the American people that we're spending their taxpayer—their money, taxpayers' money, on securing the border. And we're making progress. This border should be open to trade and lawful immigration and shut down to criminals and drug dealers and terrorists and *coyotes* and smugglers, people who prey on innocent life.

We more than doubled the funding for border security since I've been the President. In other words, it's one thing to hear people come down here and talk; it's another thing for people to come down and do what they say they're going to do. And I want to thank Congress for working on this issue. The funding is increasing manpower. The additional funding is increasing

infrastructure, and it's increasing technology.

When I landed here at the airport, the first thing I saw was an unmanned aerial vehicle. It's a sophisticated piece of equipment. You can fly it from inside a truck, and you can look at people moving at night. It's the most sophisticated technology we have, and it's down here on the border to help the Border Patrol agents do their job. We've expanded the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to 13,000, and by the end of 2008, we're going to have a total of more than 18,000 agents.

I had the privilege of going to Artesia, New Mexico, to the training center. It was a fantastic experience to see the young cadets getting ready to come and to wear the green of the Border Patrol. By the time we're through, we will have doubled the size of the Border Patrol. In other words, you can't do the job the American people expect unless you got enough manpower, and we're increasing the manpower down here.

This new technology is really important to, basically, leverage the manpower. Whether it be the technology of surveillance and communication, we're going to make sure the agents have got what is necessary to be able to establish a common picture and get information out to the field as quickly as possible so that those 18,000 agents, when they're finally on station, can do the job the American people expect.

But manpower can't do it alone. In other words, there has to be some infrastructure along the border to be able to let these agents do their job. And so I appreciate the fact that we've got double fencing, all-weather roads, new lighting, mobile cameras. The American people have no earthly idea what's going on down here. One of the reasons I've come is to let you know—let the taxpayers know—the good folks down here are making progress.

We've worked with our Nation's Governors to deploy 6,000 National Guard members to provide the Border Patrol with

immediate reinforcements. In other words, it takes time to train the Border Patrol, and until they're fully trained, we've asked the Guard to come down. It's called Operation Jump Start, and the Guard down here is serving nobly.

I had the chance to visit with some of the Guard, and, Mr. Mayor, you'll be pleased to hear, they like being down here in Yuma, Arizona. [Laughter] They like the people, and they like the mission. More than 600 members of the Guard are serving here in the Yuma Sector. And I thank the Guard, and equally importantly, I thank their families for standing by the men and women who wear the uniform during this particular mission. And you e-mail them back home and tell them how much I appreciate the fact they're standing by you.

I appreciate very much the fact that illegal border crossings in this area are down. In the months before Operation Jump Start, an average of more than 400 people a day were apprehended trying to cross here. The number has dropped to fewer than 140 a day. In other words, one way that the Border Patrol can tell whether or not we're making progress is the number of apprehensions. When you're apprehending fewer people, it means fewer are trying to come across. And fewer are trying to come across because we're deterring people from attempting illegal border crossings in the first place.

I appreciate what Colburn says. He puts it this way: "They're watching. They see us watching them"—that's what he said—"and they have decided they just can't get across." And that's part of the effort we're doing. We're saying, we're going to make it harder for you, so don't try in the first place.

We're seeing similar results all across the southern border. The number of people apprehended for illegally crossing our southern border is down by nearly 30 percent this year. We're making progress. And thanks for your hard work. It's hard work but necessary work.

Another important deterrent to illegal immigration is to end what was called catch-and-release. I know how this discouraged some of our Border Patrol agents; I talked to them personally. They worked hard to find somebody sneaking in the country; they apprehended them. The next thing they know, they're back in society on our side of the border.

There's nothing more discouraging than have somebody risk their life or work hard and have the fruits of their labor undermined. And that's what was happening with catch-and-release. In other words, we'd catch people, and we'd say, "Show up for your court date," and they wouldn't show up for their court date. That shouldn't surprise anybody, but that's what was happening. And the reason why that was happening is because we didn't have enough beds to detain people.

Now, most of the people we apprehend down here are from Mexico. About 85 percent of the illegal immigrants caught crossing into—crossing this border are Mexicans—crossing the southern border are Mexicans. And they're sent home within 24 hours. It's the illegal immigrants from other countries that are not that easy to send home.

For many years, the government didn't have enough space, and so Michael and I worked with Congress to increase the number of beds available. So that excuse was eliminated. The practice has been effectively ended. Catch-and-release for every non-Mexican has been effectively ended. And I want to thank the Border Patrol and the leaders of the Border Patrol for allowing me to stand up and say that's the case.

And the reason why is, not only do we have beds; we've expedited the legal process to cut the average deportation time. Now, these are non-Mexican, illegal aliens that we've caught trying to sneak into our country. We're making it clear to foreign governments that they must accept back their citizens who violate our immigration laws. I said we're going to effectively end



catch-and-release, and we have. And I appreciate your hard work in doing that.

The second element of a comprehensive immigration reform is a temporary-worker program. You cannot fully secure the border until we take pressure off the border. And that requires a temporary-worker program. It seems to make sense to me that if you've got people coming here to do jobs Americans aren't doing, we need to figure out a way that they can do so in a legal basis for a temporary period of time. And that way our Border Patrol can chase the criminals and the drug runners, potential terrorists, and not have to try to chase people who are coming here to do work Americans are not doing.

If you want to take the pressure off your border, have a temporary-worker program. It will help not only reduce the number of people coming across the border, but it will do something about the inhumane treatment that these people are subjected to. There's a whole smuggling operation; you know this better than I do. There's a bunch of smugglers that use the individual as a piece of—as a commodity. And they make money off these poor people, and they stuff them in the back of 18-wheelers, and they find hovels for them to hide in. And there's a whole industry that has sprung up. And it seems like to me that since this country respects human rights and the human condition, that it be a great contribution to eliminate this thugery, to free these people from this kind of extortion that they go through. And one way to do so is to say: "You can come and work in our country for jobs Americans aren't doing, for a temporary period of time."

The third element of a comprehensive reform is to hold employers accountable for the workers they hire. In other words, if you want to make sure that we've got a system in which people are not violating the law, then you've got to make sure we hold people to account, like employers. Enforcing immigration is a vital part of any

successful reform. And so Chertoff and his Department are cracking down on employers who knowingly violate the law.

But not only are there *coyotes* smuggling people in; there are document forgers that are making a living off these people. So, in other words, people may want to comply with the law, but it's very difficult at times to verify the legal status of their employees. And so to make the worksite enforcement practical on a larger scale, we have got to issue a tamper-proof identification card for illegal—for legal foreign workers. And we must create a better system for employers to verify the legality of the workers. In other words, we got work to do. And part of a comprehensive bill is to make sure worksite enforcement is effective.

Fourth, we've got to resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants already here in the country. People who entered our country illegally should not be given amnesty. Amnesty is the forgiveness of an offense without penalty. I oppose amnesty, and I think most people in the United States Congress oppose amnesty. People say, "Why not have amnesty?" Well, the reason why is because you—10 years from now, you don't want to have a President having to address the next 11 million people who might be here illegally. That's why you don't want amnesty. And secondly, we're a nation of law, and we expect people to uphold the law.

And so we're working closely with Republicans and Democrats to find a practical answer that lies between granting automatic citizenship to every illegal immigrant and deporting every illegal immigrant. It is impractical to take the position that, oh, we'll just find the 11 million or 12 million people and send them home. That's just an impractical position; it's not going to work. It may sound good. It may make nice sound-bite news. It won't happen.

And therefore, we need to work together to come up with a practical solution to this problem, and I know people in Congress



are working hard on this issue. Illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and want to stay should have to pay a meaningful penalty for breaking the law and pay their taxes and learn the English language and show work—show that they’ve worked in a job for a number of years. People who meet a reasonable number of conditions and pay a penalty of time and money should be able to apply for citizenship. But approval would not be automatic, and they would have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law. What I’ve described is a way for those who’ve broken the law to pay their debt to society and demonstrate the character that makes a good citizen.

Finally, we have got to honor the tradition of the melting pot and help people assimilate into our society by learning our history, our values, and our language. Last June, I created a new task force to look for ways to help newcomers assimilate and succeed in our country. Many organizations, from churches to businesses to civic associations, are working to answer this call, and I’m grateful for their service.

And so here are the outlines for a comprehensive immigration reform bill. It’s an emotional issue, as I’m sure you can imagine. People have got deep convictions. And my hope is that we can have a serious and civil and conclusive debate. And so we’ll continue to work with members of

both political parties. I think the atmosphere up there is good right now. I think people generally want to come together and put a good bill together, one, by the way, that will make your job a lot easier.

It’s important that we address this issue in good faith. And it’s important for people to listen to everybody’s positions. And it’s important for people not to give up, no matter how hard it looks from a legislative perspective. It’s important that we get a bill done. We deserve a system that secures our borders and honors our proud history as a nation of immigrants.

And so I can’t think of a better place to come and to talk about the good work that’s being done and the important work that needs to be done in Washington, DC, and that’s right here in Yuma, Arizona, a place full of decent, hard-working, honorable people. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. at the Yuma Sector Headquarters, U.S. Border Patrol. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald S. Colburn, chief patrol agent, Yuma Sector, U.S. Border Patrol; and Brig. Gen. Ulay W. Littleton, Jr., USAF, chief of staff, Headquarters, Arizona Air National Guard, and Arizona joint task force commander, Operation Jump Start. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax, Virginia *April 10, 2007*

Thank you all. Good morning. Please be seated. Thank you for your warm hospitality. It’s a pleasure to be here at Legion Post 177, Fairfax, Virginia. I appreciate you inviting me. And I’ve come to share some thoughts about service to our country, this war we face, and the need for the United States Congress to make sure our troops

have what is necessary to complete their mission.

Bob Sussan greeted me coming in. I appreciate you, Commander, greeting a fellow from Post 77; we dropped the “1” in Houston. [*Laughter*] He not only presented me with a cake; he gave me a chance to express my gratitude to the Legion, its

members, and the service you provide for those who wear the uniform today.

I appreciate the example you have set. You know, there's something to be said for a country where people serve something greater than themselves, where people in this era volunteer in the face of danger to defend the United States of America. And those who have worn the uniform in the past have set such a powerful example for our brave men and women who wear the uniform today, and I thank you for that a lot. I don't know if you know that or not, but the example of our veterans have inspired many to wear the uniform today.

I find the history of this post interesting. Bob. In November of 1944, a group of World War I veterans gathered here in Fairfax to form an organization to help the troops returning from the battlefield in World War II. Veterans said, "What can I do to help a fellow veteran?" The founders rallied support for the soldiers and the sailor and the airmen and the marines. In other words, these veterans understood what it meant to be in war, what it meant to be far from home, and they provided necessary support for our troops.

And when they came back from war, they helped make the transition to civilian life. In other words, there was somebody there available to help them, somebody to say: "Brother or sister, how can I help you? What can I do to help you after you have served our country?" It's a proud American tradition and a tradition being carried on here at Post 177, and I thank you for that a lot.

Today, the men and women at this post visit the wounded in our military hospitals, and I thank you for going to Walter Reed in Bethesda. You know, we're going to make sure that the care is superb care. I went over there the other day, and I made it clear to the caregivers that there were some bureaucratic snafus that were unacceptable. Secretary Gates and our military folks will clean that up. But the care

that our troops get from the doctors and nurses is superb care, and we owe those people in the frontlines of providing care for the wounded a real debt of gratitude, just like we owe the families and the soldiers the best health care possible.

I appreciate very much the ROTC scholarships you provide, particularly for George Mason University students. I'm a big believer in education; I know you are as well. But rather than talking on the subject, you're acting, and I appreciate that a lot. But, more importantly, the students do too.

And thanks for sending the care packages to our troops. It matters. Iraq and Afghanistan are far away from home—a little different from the wars you fought, however; there is e-mail today—[laughter]—and cell phones. But nevertheless, there is a sense of loneliness that can sometimes affect our troops, and the fact that you would take time to send them care packages to remind those who wear the uniform that you support them, a stranger reaches out to them and offers support—I thank you a lot for that.

This is an unusual era in which we live, defined on September the 11th, 2001. See, that's a date that reminded us the world had changed significantly from what we thought the world was. We thought that oceans and friendly neighbors could protect us from attack. And yet, on that day, less than 20 miles from this post, an airplane crashed into the Pentagon and killed 184 men, women, and children. An airplane driven by fanatics and extremists and murderers crashed into the Pentagon. And as you know, on that day nearly 3,000 people died in New York that day. And more would have died had not the people on United Flight 93 showed incredible courage and saved no telling how many lives here in Washington, DC, by taking that plane to the ground.

My attitude about the world changed, and I know the attitude about the world from a lot of folks here in—America's attitude changed. It reminded me that the

most solemn duty of your Federal Government is to protect the American people from harm. The most solemn duty we have is to protect this homeland. I vowed that day that we would go on the offense against an enemy, that the best way to defeat this enemy is to find them overseas and bring them to justice so they will not hurt the folks here at home.

In other words, we don't have the luxury of hoping for the best, of sitting back and being passive in the face of this threat. In the past we would say, oceans would protect us, and, therefore, what happened overseas may not matter here at home. That's what changed on September the 11th. What happens overseas affects the security of the United States. And it's in this Nation's interest that we go on the offense and stay on the offense. We want to defeat them there so we don't have to face them here.

On 9/11, we saw that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state 7,000 miles away can bring death to our citizens. I vowed that if you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist. That's a doctrine. In order for this country to be credible, when the President says something, he must mean it. I meant it, and the Taliban found out that we meant what we said. And therefore, we ended Al Qaida's safe haven in a failed state.

The two points I want to make is, doctrine matters, and, secondly, a failed state can lead to severe consequences for the American people. And therefore, it's in our interests not only to pursue the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here; it's in our interest to spread an alternative ideology to their hateful ideology.

These folks do not believe in the freedom to worship. They don't believe that women have got an equal place in society. They don't believe in human rights and human dignity. We believe that people have the right to worship the way they see fit. We believe all humans are created equal. We believe in dissent. We believe

in public discourse. Our ideology is based upon freedom and liberty; theirs is based upon oppression.

And the best way to secure this country in the long run is to offer up an alternative that stands in stark contrast to theirs. And that's the hard work we're doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, the Taliban that ran that country and provided safe haven to Al Qaida—where thousands of people were able to train in order to be able to launch attacks on innocent people, innocent Americans, for example—that Taliban no longer is in power.

And in fact, there is a young, struggling democracy in Afghanistan. The people in Afghanistan went to the polls and voted. President Karzai is now representing a government of and by and for the people. It's an unimaginable sequence of events. Had you asked people in the mid-1990s: "Is it possible for there to be a democracy in Afghanistan?"—of course not. But there is a democracy in place, and it's in our interest to deny Al Qaida and the Taliban and the radicals and the extremists a safe haven. And it's in our interest to stand with this young democracy as it begins to spread its wings in Afghanistan.

And then we're doing the hard work in Iraq. I made a decision to remove a dictator, a tyrant who was a threat to the United States, a threat to the free world, and a threat to the Iraq people. And the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And now we're undertaking the difficult and dangerous work of helping the Iraqi people establish a functioning democracy. I think it's necessary work to help them establish a functioning democracy. It's necessary because it is important for the moderate people—people who want to live in peace and security—to see what is possible in the Middle East. It is hard work because we face an enemy that understands the consequences of liberty taking root and are willing to kill innocent lives in order to achieve their political objectives.

A minority—and I emphasize “minority”—of violent extremists have declared that they want to turn that country into a terrorist base from which to launch an ideological war in the Middle East and attacks on the United States of America. That is the stated objective of Al Qaida in Iraq. It’s important that we listen to the enemy. It’s important we take their threats seriously.

In contrast, however, the vast majority of Iraqis have made it clear they want to live in peace. After all, about 12 million of them went to the polls, a feat that was, again, unimaginable in the mid-1990s. If you had said, “Can you imagine Iraqis being able to vote for a Constitution and then a Government under that Constitution?” in the mid-1990s, they would have said, “You’re too idealistic, that’s impossible.” And yet that’s what happened.

The terrorists, recognizing that this country was headed toward a society based upon liberty, a society based upon an ideology that is the opposite of what they believe, struck. And they struck by blowing up the Golden Mosque of Samarra, which is a holy shrine, a holy site. It’s a site that a lot of people hold dear in their heart. And they were attempting to provoke retaliation by a segment of that society: the Iraqi Shi’a. And they succeeded, and the result was a tragic escalation of violence.

And in the face of the violence—in other words, there was reprisal, people said: “We’re going to get even; how dare these people do this.” And in the face of this violence, I had a choice to make. See, we could withdraw our troops from the capital of Iraq and hope that violence would not spiral out of control, or we could send reinforcements into the capital in the hopes of quelling sectarian violence, in order to give this young democracy time to reconcile, time to deal with the politics necessary for a government that can sustain itself and defend itself to emerge.

I made the decisions after—to reinforce, but I didn’t do it in a vacuum. I called

in our military commanders and experts, and I listened to a lot of opinions—and there’s a lot of opinions in Washington, DC, in case you hadn’t noticed. [*Laughter*] The opinions that matter a lot to me are what our military folks think. After all, this is a military operation, and as the Commander in Chief, you must listen to your military and trust their judgment on military matters. And that’s what I did.

They recognized what I recognized, and it’s important for the American citizen to recognize this, that if we were to have stepped back from Baghdad before the Iraqis were capable of securing their capital, before they had the troops trained well enough to secure the capital, there would have been a vacuum that could have easily been filled by Sunni and Shi’a extremists, radicals that would be bolstered by outside forces. In other words, the lack of security would have created an opportunity for extremists to move in. Most people want to live in peace in Iraq. There are extremists who can’t stand the thought of a free society, that would have taken advantage of the vacuum. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country, and in time, the violence could affect the entire region.

What happens in the Middle East matters here in America. The terrorists would have emerged under this scenario more emboldened. They would have said: Our enemy, the United States, the enemy that we attacked, turns out to be what they thought—weak in the face of violence, weak in the face of challenge. They would have been able to more likely recruit. They would have had new safe haven from which to launch attacks. Imagine a scenario in which the extremists are able to control oil revenues to achieve economic blackmail, to achieve their objectives. This is all what they have stated. This is their ambition.

If we retreat—were to retreat from Iraq, what’s interesting and different about this war is that the enemy would follow us here. And that’s why it’s important we succeed in Iraq. If this scenario were to take place,

50 years from now people would look back and say: "What happened to those folks in the year 2007? How come they couldn't see the danger of a Middle East spiraling out of control where extremists competed for power but they shared an objective which was to harm the United States of America? How come they couldn't remember the lesson of September the 11th, that we were no longer protected by oceans, and chaos and violence and extremism could end up being a serious danger to the homeland?"

That's what went through my mind as I made a difficult decision, but a necessary decision. And so rather than retreat, I sent more troops in. Rather than pull back, I made the decision to help this young democracy bring order to its capital so there can be time for the hard work of reconciliation to take place after years of tyrannical rule, brutal tyrannical rule.

And now it's time for these Iraqis, the Iraqi Government to stand up and start making some strong political moves, and they're beginning to. I speak to the Prime Minister quite often and remind him that here at home we expect them to do hard work; we want to help, but we expect them to do some hard work. And he reminds me: Sometimes legislative bodies and parliaments don't move as quickly as the executive branch would like. *[Laughter]* But he understands.

He understands we expect them to spend money on their reconstruction, and they've committed \$10 billion to do so. They understand that when we said, "We were going to send more troops in, you need to send more troops into Baghdad," that we expect them to, and they have. They understand that when we work together to set up a security plan where there is a top military figure in charge of Baghdad's security from the Iraq side, that we expect somebody there who is going to be non-sectarian and implement security for all the people of Baghdad, they responded. See, they understand that.

And now we expect them to get an oil law that helps unify the country, to change the de-Ba'athification law so that, for example, Sunni teachers that had been banned from teaching are allowed back in the classroom, and that there be Provincial elections. And we'll continue to remind them of that. In sending more troops—in other words, in sending troops in, it is—I recognize that this is more than a military mission. It requires a political response from the Iraqis as well.

The Iraqi people, by the way, have already made a political response: they voted. *[Laughter]* I also sent a new commander in, General David Petraeus. He is an expert in counterinsurgency warfare. He's been in Baghdad 2 months. A little less than half of—only about half of the reinforcements that he's asked for have arrived. In other words, this operation is just getting started. There's kind of, I guess, a knowledge or a thought in Washington that all you got to say is, "Send 21,000 in," and they show up the next day. That's not the way it works. *[Laughter]* It takes a while for troops to be trained and readied and moved into theater, and that's what our military is doing now.

And there are some encouraging signs. There's no question it's violent; no question the extremists are dangerous people. But there are encouraging signs. Iraqi and American forces have established joint security stations across Baghdad. As you might remember, we had a strategy of clear, hold, and build. Well, because we didn't have enough troops nor did the Iraqis have enough troops, we would do the clear part, but we didn't do the hold part, and so it made it hard to do the build part.

And now because of our presence and more Iraqi troops along with coalition troops, they're deployed 24 hours a day in neighborhoods to help change the psychology of the capital that, for a while, was comfortable in its security, and then violence began to spiral out of control. That's



the decision point I had to make: Do you try to stop it? And what I'm telling you is, according to David Petraeus, with whom I speak on a weekly basis, we're beginning to see some progress toward the mission—toward completing the mission.

Our troops are also training Iraqis. In other words, part of the effort is not only to provide security to neighborhoods, but we're constantly training Iraqis so that they can do this job. The leaders want to do the job. Prime Minister Maliki makes it clear he understands it's his responsibility. We just want to make sure that when they do the job, they've got a force structure that's capable of doing the job. So that's why I rely upon our commanders like General Petraeus that let me know how well the Iraqis are doing. So it's the combination of providing security in neighborhoods through these joint security stations and training that is the current mission we're going through, with a heavy emphasis on security in Baghdad.

Iraqis see our forces out there, joint forces, both coalition and Iraqi forces, and they have confidence. And as a result of the confidence, they're now cooperating more against the extremists. Most people want to live in peace. Iraqi mothers, regardless of their religious affiliation, want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. They want there to be opportunities. They don't want their children to be subject to random murder. They expect their government to provide security, and when the government doesn't provide security, it causes a lack of confidence. And they're beginning to see more security, and so people are coming into the stations and talking about different—giving different tips about where we may be able to find the extremists or radicals who kill innocent people to achieve political objectives.

We're using the information wisely. And I say "we"—every time I say "we"—it's just not American troops, there are brave Iraqi troops with us. Our forces have launched successful operations against ex-

tremists, both Shi'a and Sunni. My attitude is, if you're a murderer, you're a murderer and you ought to be held to account. Recently, Iraqi and American forces captured the head of a Baghdad car bomb network that was responsible for the attacks that you see on your TV screens—some of the attacks you see on your TV screen.

Look, these people are smart people—these killers. They know that if they can continue the spectacular suicide bombings, they will cause the American people to say, "Is it worth it? Can we win? Is it possible to succeed?" And that really speaks to the heart of the American people, I think. I mean, we are a compassionate people. We care about human life. And when we see the wanton destruction of innocent life, it causes us to wonder whether or not it is possible to succeed. I understand that.

But I also understand the mentality of an enemy that is trying to achieve a victory over us by causing us to lose our will. Yet we're after these car bombers. In other words, slowly but surely, these extremists are being brought to justice by Iraqis, with our help. Violence in Baghdad, sectarian violence in Baghdad, that violence that was beginning to spiral out of control, is beginning to subside. And as the violence decreases, people have more confidence, and if people have more confidence, they're then willing to make difficult decisions of reconciliation necessary for Baghdad to be secure and this country to survive and thrive as a democracy.

The reinforcements are having an impact, and as more reinforcements go in, it will have a greater impact. Remember, only about half of the folks we've asked to go in are there.

It's now been 64 days since I have requested that Congress pass emergency funding for these troops. We don't have all of them there. About half more are going to head in. We're making some progress. And 64 days ago, I said to the United States Congress: "These troops need funding." And instead of providing



that vital funding, the Democrat leadership in Congress has spent the past 64 days pushing legislation that would undercut our troops, just as we're beginning to make progress in Baghdad. In both the House and the Senate, majorities have passed bills that substitute the judgment of politicians in Washington for the judgment of our commanders on the ground. They set arbitrary deadlines for withdrawal from Iraq, and they spend billions of dollars on porkbarrel projects and spending that are completely unrelated to this war.

Now, the Democrats who pass these bills know that I'll veto them, and they know that this veto will be sustained. Yet they continue to pursue the legislation. And as they do, the clock is ticking for our troops in the field. In other words, there are consequences for delaying this money. In the coming days, our military leaders will notify Congress that they will be forced to transfer \$1.6 billion from other military accounts to cover the shortfall caused by Congress's failure to fund our troops in the field. That means our military will have to take money from personnel accounts so they can continue to fund U.S. Army operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

This \$1.6 billion in transfers come on top of another \$1.7 billion in transfers that our military leaders notified Congress about last month. In March, Congress was told that the military would need to take money from military personnel accounts, weapons and communications systems so we can continue to fund programs to protect our soldiers and marines from improvised explosive devices and send hundreds of mine-resistant vehicles to our troops on the frontlines. These actions are only the beginning, and the longer Congress delays, the worse the impact on the men and women of the Armed Forces will be.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, recently testified that if Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-April, the Army will be forced to consider cutting back on equipment re-

pair and quality of life initiatives for our Guard and Reserve forces. The Army will also be forced to consider curtailing some training for Guard and Reserve units here at home. This would reduce their readiness and could delay their availability to mobilize for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-May, the problems grow even more acute. The Army will be forced to consider slowing or even freezing funding for its depots, where the equipment our troops depend on is repaired. They will have to consider delaying or curtailing the training of some active duty forces, reducing the availability of those forces to deploy overseas. And the Army may also have to delay the formation of new brigade combat teams, preventing us from getting those troops into the pool of forces that are available to deploy.

So what does that mean? These things happen. Some of our forces now deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq may need to be extended because other units are not ready to take their places. In a letter to Congress, the Army Chief of Staff, Pete Schoomaker, recently warned: "Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly draconian measures, which will impact Army readiness and impose hardships on our soldiers and their families."

The bottom line is this: Congress's failure to fund our troops will mean that some of our military families could wait longer for their loved ones to return from the frontlines. Others could see their loved ones headed back to war sooner than anticipated. This is unacceptable. It's unacceptable to me, it's unacceptable to our veterans, it's unacceptable to our military families, and it's unacceptable to many in this country.

The United States Senate has come back from its spring recess today. The House will return next week. When it comes to funding our troops, we have no time to waste. It's time for them to get the job

done. So I'm inviting congressional leaders from both parties—both political parties—to meet with me at the White House next week. At this meeting, the leaders in Congress can report on progress on getting an emergency spending bill to my desk. We can discuss the way forward on a bill that is a clean bill, a bill that funds our troops without artificial timetables for withdrawal and without handcuffing our generals on the ground.

I'm hopeful we'll see some results soon from the Congress. I know we have our differences over the best course in Iraq. These differences should not prevent us from getting our troops the funding they need without withdrawal and without giving our commanders flexibility.

The Democrat leaders in—Democratic leaders in Congress are bent on using a bill that funds our troops to make a political statement about the war. They need to do it quickly and get it to my desk so I can veto it, and then Congress can get down to the business of funding our troops, without strings and without further delay.

We are at war. It is irresponsible for the Democratic leadership in Congress to delay for months on end while our troops in combat are waiting for the funds they need to succeed. As the national commander of the American Legion Paul Morin recently put it: "The men and women of the Armed Forces in the theater of operations are dependent on this funding to sustain and achieve their military missions. This funding is absolutely critical to their success and individual well-being"—end quote. I thank the commander and the American Legion for their strong support on this issue. You do not make a political statement; you're making a statement about what is necessary for our troops in the field, and I am grateful.

I'm always amazed at the men and women who wear our uniform. Last week, before I went down to Crawford—for a snowy Easter, I might add—[laughter]—I

was in California at Fort Irwin. And I had a chance to visit with some who had just come back from Iraq and some who were going over to Iraq, and it just amazes me that these young men and women know the stakes, they understand what we're doing, and they have volunteered to serve. We're really a remarkable country and a remarkable military, and, therefore, we owe it to the families and to those who wear the uniform to make sure that this remarkable group of men and women are strongly supported, strongly supported, by the way, during their time in uniform and then after their time in uniform, through the Veterans Administration.

I tried to put this war into a historical context for them. In other words, I told them that they're laying the foundation of peace. In other words, the work we're doing today really will yield peace for a generation to come. And part of my discussion with them was I wanted them to think back to the work after World War II. After World War II, we defeated—after we defeated Germany and Japan, this country went about the business of helping these countries develop into democracies. Isn't it interesting a country would go to—have a bloody conflict with two nations, and then help democracy succeed. Why? Because our predecessors understood that forms of government help yield peace. In other words, it matters what happens in distant lands.

And so today I can report to you that Japan is a strong ally of the United States. I've always found that very ironic that my dad, like many of your relatives, fought the Japanese as the sworn enemy, and today, one of the strongest allies in keeping the peace is the Prime Minister of Japan. Something happened between when old George H.W. Bush was a Navy fighter pilot and his boy is the President of the United States. Well, what happened was the form of government changed. Liberty can transform enemies into allies. The hard work

done after World War II helped lay the foundation of peace.

How about after the Korean war? Some of you are Korean vets, I know. I bet it would have been hard for you to predict, if you can think back to the early fifties, to predict that an American President would say that we've got great relations with South Korea, great relations with Japan, that China is an emerging market-place economy, and that the region is peaceful. This is a part of the world where we lost thousands of young American soldiers, and yet there's peace.

I believe that U.S. presence there has given people the time necessary to develop systems of government that make that part of the world a peaceful part of the world, to lay the foundation for peace. And that's the work our soldiers are doing in the Middle East today, and it's necessary work. It is necessary because what happens in the Middle East, for example, can affect the security of the United States of America. And it's hard work, and we've lost some fantastic young men and women, and we pray for their families, and we honor their service and their sacrifice by completing

the mission, by helping a generation of Americans grow up in a peaceful world.

I cannot tell you how honored I am to meet with the families of the fallen. They bear an unbelievable pain in their heart. And it's very important for me to make it clear to them that I believe the sacrifice is necessary to achieve the peace we all long for.

I thank you for supporting our troops. I thank you for setting such a fantastic example for a great group of men and women who have volunteered to serve our country, and thanks for being such fine Americans.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Bob Sussan, commander, American Legion Post 177; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, Iraqi commander of Baghdad, Iraqi Army; Haytham Kazim Abdallah Al-Shimari, head of the Rusafa Al Qaida-Iraq bomb network; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

## Statement on Senate Passage of the “Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007” and the “Hope Offered through Principled and Ethical Stem Cell Research Act”

*April 11, 2007*

Scientists believe that stem cells have the potential for medical breakthroughs in treating debilitating medical diseases and disorders. However, the advancement of science and medicine need not conflict with the ethical imperative to protect every human life. I am a strong supporter of scientific research, which is why I authorized the first Federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells, under careful safeguards, starting in 2001.

My policy unleashed an unprecedented scientific effort using the stem cell lines my policy approved for funding. While encouraging—not banning—research, my policy also ensures that Federal funds are not used to create incentives to destroy or harm or create living human embryos for purposes of research.

The Senate today voted in support of legislation to overturn these safeguards. I believe this will encourage taxpayer money

to be spent on the destruction or endangerment of living human embryos, raising serious moral concerns for millions of Americans.

Research using human embryonic stem cells is still at an early stage, and it will be years before researchers know how much promise lies in therapeutic applications. I believe this early stage is precisely when it is most important to develop ethically responsible techniques, so the potential of stem cells can be explored without violating human dignity and life.

S. 5 is very similar to legislation I vetoed last year. This bill crosses a moral line that I and many others find troubling. If it advances all the way through Congress to my desk, I will veto it.

Meanwhile, exciting and significant scientific advances have been reported over

the past few years on uses of stem cells that do not involve the destruction of embryos. These advances using adult and other forms of stem cells are exciting. Some have even produced effective therapies and treatments for disease, all without the destruction of human life.

The second bill that passed the Senate today, the Hope Act, builds on this ethically appropriate research by encouraging further development of these alternative techniques for producing stem cells without embryo creation or destruction. I strongly support this bill, and I encourage the Congress to pass it and send it to me for my signature, so stem cell science can progress, without ethical and cultural conflict.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 5 and S. 30.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on the No Child Left Behind Act Reauthorization

*April 12, 2007*

I have just had what I consider to be not only a fascinating meeting but an important meeting about the No Child Left Behind Act with leaders of the civil rights movement, education leaders from around our country, business leaders who are concerned about America's competitiveness.

There is a universal belief that the No Child Left Behind Act needs to be reauthorized, and I want to thank you all for working with us to get this piece of legislation reauthorized.

I believe the No Child Left Behind Act needs to be reauthorized because it's working. It's a piece of legislation which believes in setting high standards and using accountability to make sure that every single child gets a good education. I strongly support the notion that when we find a child falling behind that there ought to be extra Federal

help so that child can catch back up early, before it's too late.

I strongly condemn an achievement gap that exists in this country. It's a gap between Anglo students and Latino students or white students and black students, and it's not in our country's interest to allow an education system to continue to foster that difference in achievement. The No Child Left Behind Act is beginning to close that gap. It's the impetus necessary to cause the reforms, curriculum changes necessary to make sure every child has a chance of realizing the great hopes of our country.

Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind Act is an important statement, an important move; it's an important piece of legislation necessary to keep this country not only competitive, but also a country of great

hope. And so I want to thank you all for joining us.

I also want to comment on today's bombing of the Iraqi Parliament. First of all, I strongly condemn the action. It reminds us, though, that there is an enemy willing to bomb innocent people in a symbol of democracy. In other words, this assembly is a place where people have come to represent the 12 million people who voted. And there is a type of person that would walk in that building and kill innocent life, and that is the same type of person that is willing to come and kill innocent Americans. And it is in our interest to help this

young democracy be in a position so it can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself against these extremists and radicals.

Our hearts go out to those who suffered as a result of this bombing. My message to the Iraqi Government is: We stand with you as you take the steps necessary to not only reconcile politically but also put a security force in place that is able to deal with, you know, these kinds of people.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Remarks at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast April 13, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Good morning. Good morning. Thank you. It's good to be with you. You know how to make a Methodist feel right at home. [Laughter] I noticed that this year's breakfast was the Friday after Lent—[laughter]—you can eat your bacon in good conscience—[laughter]—and the priests can relax. [Laughter]

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you; I really do. I thank you for having this prayer breakfast. Prayer breakfasts show the true strength of our Nation. I am honored that people say to me and Laura, "We pray for you." It means a lot. A prayerful nation is a strong nation. A prayerful nation is a nation the true strength of which lies in the hearts of the men and women of our Nation.

Our Declaration of Independence states that our freedom rests on self-evident truths about the dignity of the human person. Throughout our Nation's history, Catholic Americans have embraced, sustained, and given their lives to defend these truths. This morning we give thanks for the blessings of freedom, and we ask Al-

mighty God to guide us as we renew our founding promise of liberty and justice for all.

I'm sorry Laura couldn't be here. She is by far the best representative of our family. Thank you for praying for her.

I appreciate my friend Leonard Leo for inviting me. I thank the leaders of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast. I'm honored to be in the presence of Archbishop Donald Wuerl. I have known the Archbishop for quite a while. I appreciate his strong and firm dedication to making sure every child in America gets a good education. I am proud to be here with Archbishop Sambhi, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States. I appreciate the members of the Catholic clergy. I am honored to be here with two members of our Supreme Court, the Chief Justice, John Roberts, and Justice Sam Alito.

I thank the members of my administration who have joined us, particularly our Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson, and Suzanne. Thank you for joining us.



I am in awe of people like Corporal Michael Blair, United States Marine Corps. I thank the members of our Armed Services who are here today. I appreciate the Members of Congress who have joined us. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello. [Laughter]

Of the 56 men who signed our Declaration of Independence, only one was a Catholic: Charles Carroll. In 1776, Carroll was one of the wealthiest men in America. But because he was a Catholic, he could not vote or hold public office in his native Maryland. John Adams noted that Carroll's wealth and patriotism marked him for special vengeance if the Revolution were to fail. That is why when Carroll added his name to the Declaration, one bystander quipped, "There goes a few million." [Laughter]

Carroll was willing to risk those millions because he knew that something far more precious was at stake: freedom. He believed that the self-evident truths of our Declaration would lead to religious as well as civil liberty. He knew that an America where people were free to worship God as they saw fit would be a land where Catholics would flourish and prosper. And he understood that whatever America's failings, our founding promise would always be a source of hope and renewal for our country. And at this breakfast, we commit ourselves to renewing that promise in our time.

Renewing the promise of America begins with upholding the dignity of human life. In our day, there is a temptation to manipulate life in ways that do not respect the humanity of the person. When that happens, the most vulnerable among us can be valued for their utility to others, instead of their own inherent worth. We must continue to work for a culture of life, where the strong protect the weak and where we recognize in every human life the image of our Creator.

Renewing the promise of America requires good citizens who look out for their neighbors. One of the reasons that I am

such a strong believer in the power of our faith-based institutions is that they add something the government never can, and that is love. Pope Benedict the XVI put it this way in his first letter as a Pope: "There is no ordering of the state so just that it can eliminate the need for a service of love." In parishes and neighborhoods across our Nation, Catholics take this call to heart, and that is why we find so many of you leading the armies of compassion. You are changing America one heart, one soul at a time, and I thank you.

Renewing the promise of America also includes ensuring a sound education for every single child. America's Catholic schools play a vital role in our Nation. The schools were built by poor immigrants. They were staffed by legions of dedicated nuns and brothers and priests, and they have given millions of Americans the knowledge and character they need to succeed in life. Today, these schools are also serving thousands of non-Catholic children in some of our Nation's poorest neighborhoods. I appreciate the tremendous sacrifices that many dioceses are making to keep their inner-city schools going. I am worried that too many of these schools are closing, and our Nation needs to do something about it.

This afternoon I'll hold a meeting at the White House to discuss the difference America's parochial schools are making in the lives of some of our neediest children. We see that difference right here in the Nation's Capital. Pam Battle sat with Laura during my State of the Union Address. She's a mom of two: Carlos and Calvin. A few years ago, these boys were in a public school that was not meeting Pam's expectations. We passed what's called the DC School Choice Incentive Act. Many of you in this room helped get that act passed. As a result of that act, her boys were able to transfer to Assumption Catholic School, a parochial school that serves an almost entirely African American student body.



Carlos became an A-student and president of his eighth grade class. He now attends high school at Georgetown Day. Calvin is a fifth-grader at Assumption; I'm told that he's running for "Student of the Month." [Laughter] Something I never achieved. [Laughter]

Pam has a big smile on her face when she comes to talk about the education her boys are receiving. "The main benefit of this program is that I can drop off my sons at school with peace of mind. It's safe, and I know they are working up to their level." That's what Pam said. I believe every parent in America should have that same peace of mind and every school in America should ensure that its students are working up to their fullest of potentials. I applaud our Nation's Catholic schools. I will continue to work to help these schools reach more children in need so that our children have the skills they need to realize the full promise of the United States of America.

Finally, to realize the promise of America, we must have comprehensive immigration reform that enforces our laws and upholds the dignity of every single person in the United States. And now is the time for the United States Congress to get a bill to my desk that I can sign.

I thank you for your fine tradition. I applaud you for the love you—of neighbor you show through your organizations and your churches. I ask that you pray for our soldiers and their families in harm's way. And I ask that you pray that in a troubled world, America may always remain a beacon of hope and of freedom.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Leonard A. Leo, member, Board of Directors, National Catholic Prayer Breakfast; and Archbishop of Washington Donald W. Wuerl.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Parochial Education Leaders and Parents

*April 13, 2007*

Secretary Spellings and I have just had the privilege of talking to some of our country's leading educational entrepreneurs. We had the privilege of talking to parents whose lives have been positively affected by our Catholic school system. One of the great assets in the United States is the Catholic schools, which oftentimes educate the so-called "hard to educate." And they do so in such a spectacular way.

The question is, how do we make sure that this important asset is sustainable? How do we make sure that our Catholic schools meet the needs of parents like Patricia, meet the expectations of some of our educational leaders like Ben. And one way is for the Federal Government to pro-

vide opportunity scholarships for parents, so that they can redeem that scholarship at a school of their choice.

We've got such a program like that here in Washington, DC. It's been a very successful program, and Congress needs to make sure it gets fully funded. If any Congressman doubts the utility of a program, all they've got to do is speak to Wendy Cunningham, whose daughter takes advantage of this special funding for people, that enables her to say, "My school isn't meeting the needs, and therefore, I'd like to make another choice." A parental choice is a very important part of educational excellence. And one way to make sure that that's the case is not only to fully fund

the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship but to provide these kinds of scholarships for school systems outside of Washington.

For example, we've just heard from Margaret Dames, who has got a marvelous school program in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And it seems like it makes sense to me for a parent in Bridgeport to be able to have the same kind of opportunity that a parent here in Washington, DC, has. Congress needs to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act as well. We want all schools to be excellent. We want every school, public or parochial, to meet expectations and to give our children the skill sets necessary to realize the great promise of the country.

One thing is for certain: If you're interested in educational excellence, you can look at the Catholic schools in the United States of America, because they provide it, and for that, this country is very grateful.

Thank you all for coming; appreciate your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill, superintendent of Catholic schools, Archdiocese of Washington, DC; Ben Ketchum, assistant principal, St. Ann's Academy; and Margaret A. Dames, superintendent of schools and director of the Office for Education, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT.

## The President's Radio Address *April 14, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I extended an invitation to congressional leaders of both parties to come to the White House so we can discuss the emergency war funding our troops are waiting for. When we meet on Wednesday, I look forward to hearing how Members of Congress plan to meet their responsibilities and provide our troops with the funding they need.

Supporting our troops is a solemn responsibility of all elected officials in Washington, DC. So 68 days ago, I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill that would provide the vital funds needed for our troops on the frontlines. But instead of approving this funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 68 days pushing legislation that would undercut our troops. They passed bills that would impose restrictions on our military commanders and set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq, giving our enemies the victory they desperately want.

The Democrats' bills also spend billions of dollars on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war, such as funding for tours of the United States Capitol and for peanut storage. And after passing these unacceptable bills in the House and Senate, Democratic leaders then chose to leave town without sending any legislation to my desk.

The Senate came back to Washington earlier this week, but the House is still on its Easter recess. Meanwhile, our troops are waiting for the funds. And to cover the shortfall, our military may be forced to consider what Army General Pete Schoomaker has called "increasingly draconian measures."

In the next few days, our military leaders will notify Congress that they will be forced to transfer \$1.6 billion from other military accounts to make up for the gaps caused by Congress's failure to fund our troops in the field. That means our military will

have to take money from personnel accounts so they can continue to fund U.S. Army operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

This \$1.6 billion in transfer comes on top of another \$1.7 billion in transfers that our military leaders notified Congress about last month. In March, Congress was told that the military would need to take money from personnel accounts, weapons, and communications systems, so we can continue to fund programs that protect our troops from improvised explosive devices and send hundreds of mine-resistant vehicles to the frontlines. These actions are only the beginning, and the longer Congress delays, the worse the impact on the men and women of the Armed Forces will be.

I recognize that Republicans and Democrats in Washington have differences over the best course in Iraq, and we should vigorously debate those differences. But our troops should not be trapped in the middle. They have been waiting for this money long enough. Congress must now work quickly and pass a clean bill that funds our troops, without artificial timelines for withdrawal, without handcuffing our generals on the ground, and without extraneous domestic spending.

When you live in Washington, it's easy to get caught up in the complexities of legislative procedure. But for the American people, this is not a complicated debate. When Americans went to the polls last November, they did not vote for politicians

to substitute their judgment for the judgment of our commanders on the ground. And they certainly did not vote to make peanut storage projects part of the funding for our troops.

The American people voted for change in Iraq, and that is exactly what our new commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, is working to achieve. And they expect their elected leaders to support our men and women on the frontlines, so they have every resource they need to complete their mission.

We owe it to the American people and to our troops and their families to deliver our full support. I will continue working with Republicans and responsible Democrats to do just that. I call on Members of Congress to put partisanship on hold, resolve their differences, and send me a clean bill that gets our troops the funds they need.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on April 13 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 13, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on Jackie Robinson *April 14, 2007*

On April 15, 1947, an African American wearing the number 42 broke baseball's color barrier. Jackie Robinson's courage and skill convinced players, coaches, and fans to judge an athlete by his performance and not the color of his skin. His leadership

strengthened America's pastime and strengthened America. Sixty years later, our Nation celebrates Jackie Robinson's accomplishments and his legacy, and we give thanks for his extraordinary life.

## Remarks to Members of Armed Forces Service Organizations *April 16, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. You know, I get to welcome a lot of guests here. I don't think there's a more important guest than a veteran or the family of a service man or woman or the families of those whose loved one has given their life to the country. And so I welcome an incredibly important group of guests. And thank you for coming, and thank you for your time.

I appreciate very much to be in the presence of moms and dads, husbands and wives, sons and daughters of some of the finest citizens our Nation has ever produced. I want to thank the leaders of organizations that support our military families. I appreciate your tireless work to send a clear signal that many in the United States of America support our troops. Each of you knows what is stake—what is at stake in this war on terror. And I appreciate your efforts to rally our Nation to support our troops and to support the mission for which they have risked and, in some cases, have given their lives. I thank you for coming. Thanks for your service to the United States of America.

Many of the families here today have relatives serving in harm's way. Others have lost loved ones in the struggle. They have come here to Washington with a message for their elected leaders in our Nation's Capital: Our troops need the resources, equipment, and weapons to fight our enemies. Congress needs to pass an emergency war spending bill, without strings and without further delay.

On Wednesday, I will meet with congressional leaders from both parties right here at the White House. I'm going to pass on your message to them.

I appreciate members of the Families United for Our Troops and Their Mission. Thanks for doing what you do. I want to thank the members of the Armed Forces

Foundation and those who serve with our veterans service organizations.

A time of war is a time of sacrifice for our Nation, but especially for our military families. Being left behind when a loved one goes to war is one of the hardest jobs in our military. The families here today inspire our Nation—inspire them with their sense of duty and with their deep devotion to our country.

The families gathered here understand that we are a nation at war. Like me, they wish we weren't at war, but we are. They know that the enemies who attacked us on September the 11th, 2001, want to bring further destruction to our country. They know that the only way to stop them is to stay on the offense, to fight the extremists and radicals where they live so we don't have to face them where we live.

The families gathered here understand that our troops want to finish the job. Today, because of e-mail and instant messaging and other modern technologies, our military families are able to stay in contact with their loved ones overseas. I see some baby boomers out there and—who wore our uniform. You never would have imagined e-mailing a loved one in the midst of your time overseas, but that's what's happening today. Families here know what our troops are seeing and hearing on the ground; they get instant feedback from the—as a result of modern technologies. And they know better than anyone our troops' desire to succeed and their determination to prevail.

Families gathered here understand that America is not going to be safe until the terrorist threat is defeated. If we do not defeat the terrorists and extremists in Iraq, they won't leave us alone; they will follow us to the United States of America. That's what makes this battle in the war on terror so incredibly important. One of the lessons

of September the 11th is, what happens overseas matters to the security of the United States of America, and we must not forget that lesson.

The consequences of failure in Iraq would be death and destruction in the Middle East and here in America. To protect our citizens at home, we must defeat the terrorists. We defeat them by staying on the offense, and we defeat them by helping young democracies defeat their ideology of hate. And it's hard work, but it is necessary work, and thousands of men and women who wear our uniform understand the stakes.

It's a remarkable country—isn't it?—where people stand up and volunteer to serve the United States in uniform during a time of war. And yet that's who we honor here today.

We must give our men and women in uniform the tools and resources they need to prevail. Providing these resources is the responsibility of the United States Congress. And that is why, 70 days ago, I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill that would provide the vital funds our troops urgently need. But instead of approving this funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 70 days pushing legislation that would undercut our troops.

They passed bills in the House and the Senate that would impose restrictions on our military commanders. They set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq. And they spend billions of dollars on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war. After passing these unacceptable bills, House and Senate leaders then chose to leave town for spring recess without resolving their differences or sending any legislation to my desk.

As Congress delays, the clock is ticking for our troops. Last week, Secretary of Defense Gates wrote to Congress, laying out the consequences of their failure to pass emergency spending for our troops on the frontlines. He warned that because Congress has not acted, quote, "The Army will

soon begin reducing quality of life initiatives, reducing the repair and maintenance of equipment necessary for deployment training, and curtailing the training of Army Guard and Reserve units within the United States, reducing their readiness levels." He continued that if emergency funding is not received by mid-May, quote, "The Army will have to consider further actions to include reducing the pace of equipment overhaul work at Army depots, curtailing training rotations for brigade combat teams currently scheduled for overseas deployment," a step that the Secretary said "would likely require the further extension of currently deployed forces." In other words, there are consequences for Congress's delay in getting our troops the money that the Defense Department has requested.

Congress's failure to fund our troops will mean that the readiness of our forces will suffer. This is unacceptable to me, it's unacceptable to you, and it's unacceptable to the vast majority of the American people.

Listen, I understand Republicans and Democrats in Washington have differences over the best course in Iraq. That's healthy. That's normal. And we should debate those differences. But our troops should not be caught in the middle.

Last week, the Senate returned to Washington, and this week, the House has returned as well. I've invited congressional leaders of both parties to meet me at the White House 2 days from today. That's what we're supposed to do; we're supposed to talk out our differences. I'm looking forward to the meetings. I hope the Democratic leadership will drop their unreasonable demands for a precipitous withdrawal. We've only committed about a little over half of our troops into a decision I made to help secure the Iraqi capital, and yet there are some saying, we ought to leave before we get there.

I think it is wrong for Congress to restrict our military commanders. I can understand having a difference of opinion about Iraq, but our commanders need the

flexibility necessary to meet the mission. We should not be substituting political judgment for the judgment of those in our military. And the idea of putting, you know, peanut storage—which may be necessary at some point in time, I don't know; I haven't analyzed the peanut storage issue—[*laughter*—]but I do know it doesn't have much to do with—about making sure your loved ones get what's needed to do their job.

I am willing to discuss any way forward that does not hamstring our troops, set an artificial timetable for withdrawal, and spend billions on projects not related to the war. The American people expect the leaders in Washington to find common ground, but they also expect the Congress and the White House to work together to make sure our troops get funded quickly. We should not legislate defeat in this vital war.

We owe it to our men and women in uniform to give them the full support. It's important as people debate this issue to think about somebody like Merrilee Carlson, with us today. She's a Gold Star Mom. Two years ago, Merrilee's son, Michael, gave his life in Iraq when his platoon was on a night mission to take out two terrorist bomb-making factories. As they approached their target, they passed over a culvert that gave way, and their Bradley fighting vehicle plunged into the water, and Michael and four others in the vehicle died that day.

Michael penned a high school essay before he joined the Army. This is what he wrote: "I want my life to account for something. Everyone eventually loses their life. I have only so much time. I want to fight for something, be a part of something greater than myself. I want to be a soldier or something of that caliber." He became a soldier; he gave his life for something greater than himself. And now his mom and dad have just one demand, and that is to make sure Michael's sacrifice is not in vain.

We owe it to the Carlson family; we owe it to other Gold Star families here today

to complete the mission for which their loved ones gave their lives. We owe it to a future generation of Americans to help secure peace. We owe it to the American people to make this Nation safer. The most solemn obligation of the government and Washington is to provide security for the American people and to protect them from harm.

We owe it to the brave Iraqis. I just spoke to the Prime Minister; I told him I was coming to see you. He said, "Please thank the people in the White House for their sacrifices."

And we will continue to work hard to be an ally in this war on terror. We'll continue to do the hard work necessary to help change the conditions that caused 19 young men to get on airplanes to come and kill thousands of our citizens on September the 11th.

We owe it to every sailor, soldier, airman, marine in harm's way to give them the tools they need to prevail. That's what we owe them.

As we saw with last week's brutal attack on the Iraqi Parliament, our troops face depraved and determined enemies, enemies that could just as easily come here to kill us. And therefore, we must give our men and women in uniform the best equipment, the best training, and the unqualified support of our Nation.

Congress needs to put partisanship on hold. It needs to get rid of all the politics right now and send me an emergency war spending bill that I can sign that gets our troops the support they need and gives our commanders the flexibility they need to complete this mission.

I appreciate you coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.



## Remarks on the Shootings at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia *April 16, 2007*

Our Nation is shocked and saddened by the news of the shootings at Virginia Tech today. The exact total has not yet been confirmed, but it appears that more than 30 people were killed and many more were wounded.

I've spoken with Governor Tim Kaine and Virginia Tech President Charles Steger. I told them that Laura and I and many across our Nation are praying for the victims and their families and all the members of the university community who have been devastated by this terrible tragedy. I told them that my administration would do everything possible to assist with the investigation, and that I pledged that we would stand ready to help local law enforcement and the local community in any way we can during this time of sorrow.

Schools should be places of safety and sanctuary and learning. When that sanc-

tuary is violated, the impact is felt in every American classroom and every American community.

Today our Nation grieves with those who have lost loved ones at Virginia Tech. We hold the victims in our hearts, we lift them up in our prayers, and we ask a loving God to comfort those who are suffering today.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The related proclamation of April 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks During a Memorial Convocation at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia *April 17, 2007*

Governor, thank you. President Steger, thank you very much. Students and faculty and staff and grieving family members and members of this really extraordinary place: Laura and I have come to Blacksburg today with hearts full of sorrow. This is a day of mourning for the Virginia Tech community, and it is a day of sadness for our entire Nation. We've come to express our sympathy. In this time of anguish, I hope you know that people all over this country are thinking about you and asking God to provide comfort for all who have been affected.

Yesterday began like any other day. Students woke up, and they grabbed their

backpacks, and they headed for class. And soon the day took a dark turn, with students and faculty barricading themselves in classrooms and dormitories, confused, terrified, and deeply worried. By the end of the morning, it was the worst day of violence on a college campus in American history, and for many of you here today, it was the worst day of your lives.

It's impossible to make sense of such violence and suffering. Those whose lives were taken did nothing to deserve their fate. They were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Now they're gone, and they leave behind grieving families and grieving classmates and a grieving nation.

In such times as this, we look for sources of strength to sustain us. And in this moment of loss, you're finding these sources everywhere around you. These sources of strength are in this community, this college community. You have a compassionate and resilient community here at Virginia Tech. Even as yesterday's events were still unfolding, members of this community found each other; you came together in dorm rooms and dining halls and on blogs. One recent graduate wrote this: "I don't know most of you guys, but we're all Hokies, which means we're family. To all of you who are okay, I'm happy for that. For those of you who are in pain or have lost someone close to you, I'm sure you can call on anyone of us and have help any time you need it."

These sources of strength are with your loved ones. For many of you, your first instinct was to call home and let your moms and dads know that you were okay. Others took on the terrible duty of calling the relatives of a classmate or a colleague who had been wounded or lost. I know many of you feel awfully far away from people you lean on, people you count on during difficult times. But as a dad, I can assure you, a parent's love is never far from their child's heart. And as you draw closer to your own families in the coming days, I ask you to reach out to those who ache for sons and daughters who will never come home.

These sources of strength are also in the faith that sustains so many of us. Across the town of Blacksburg and in towns all across America, houses of worship from every faith have opened their doors and have lifted you up in prayer. People who have never met you are praying for you; they're praying for your friends who have fallen and who are injured. There's a power in these prayers, a real power. In times like this, we can find comfort in the grace and guidance of a loving God. As the Scriptures tells us: "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

And on this terrible day of mourning, it's hard to imagine that a time will come when life at Virginia Tech will return to normal. But such a day will come. And when it does, you will always remember the friends and teachers who were lost yesterday and the time you shared with them and the lives they hoped to lead.

May God bless you. May God bless and keep the souls of the lost. And may His love touch all those who suffer and grieve.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. at Cassell Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia; and Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The related proclamation of April 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum *April 18, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. I appreciate your hospitality, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the fine job you're doing. I am honored to have just taken a tour of this important museum with Sara Bloomfield, who argu-

ably is one of the best museum directors in the country—[*applause*]*—*particularly if you can put up with the board of directors that I've named. [*Laughter*]

I thank you all for serving. I appreciate you taking on this important assignment.

For—my friends on the board will tell you that I hold the Holocaust Museum dear to my heart. You will hear me express my appreciation for the work that is being done here, and I mean it sincerely.

I thank very much Elie Wiesel for joining us. He's a big figure in the life of the world, as he should be. He speaks with moral clarity. And I can't thank you enough for being a leader of talking about what is right. And I'm honored to be in your presence.

I am traveling with some members of my administration, starting with the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. Thank you for being here. Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios—thank you for coming, Andrew. And the newly minted—or newly sworn in U.N. Ambassador Zal Khalilzad—Mr. Ambassador, thanks for coming.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us; appreciate you taking time. I thank the members of the diplomatic community who have joined us. I'm honored that you are here. I thank the survivors of the Holocaust who have graced us with your presence.

We meet at a time of sorrow for our Nation. Our flags fly at half-mast in memory of 32 souls whose lives were taken at Virginia Tech on Monday morning. That day we saw horror, but we also saw quiet acts of courage. We saw this courage in a teacher named Liviu Librescu. With the gunman set to enter his class, this brave professor blocked the door with his body while his students fled to safety. On the Day of Remembrance, this Holocaust survivor gave his own life so that others may live. And this morning we honor his memory, and we take strength from his example.

This is a place devoted to memory. Inside this building are etched the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "You are my witness." As part of this witness, these walls show how one of the world's most advanced nations embraced a policy aimed at the annihilation of the Jewish people. These walls

help restore the humanity of the millions who were loaded into trains and murdered by men who considered themselves cultured. And these walls remind us that the Holocaust was not inevitable; it was allowed to gather strength and force only because of the world's weakness and appeasement in the face of evil.

Today, we call what happened "genocide," but when the Holocaust started, this word did not yet exist. In a 1941 radio address, Churchill spoke of the horrors the Nazis were visiting on innocent civilians in Russia. He said, "We are in the presence of a crime without a name." It is an apt description of the evil that followed the swastika. Mankind had long experience with savagery and slaughter before. Yet in places such as Auschwitz and Dachau and Buchenwald, the world saw something new and terrible: the state-sanctioned extermination of a people, carried out with the chilling industrial efficiency of a so-called modern nation.

Some may be tempted to ask: Why have a museum dedicated to such a dark subject? The men and women who built this museum will tell you: Because evil is not just a chapter in history, it is a reality in the human heart. So this museum serves as a living reminder of what happens when good and decent people avert their eyes from hatred and murder. It honors those who died by serving as the conscience for those who live. And it reminds us that the words "never again" do not refer to the past; they refer to the future.

You who are survivors know why the Holocaust must be taught to every generation. You who lost your families to the gas chambers of Europe watch as Jewish cemeteries and synagogues across that continent are defaced and defiled. You who bear the tattoos of death camps hear the leader of Iran declare that the Holocaust is a myth. You who have found refuge in a Jewish homeland know that tyrants and terrorists have vowed to wipe it from the map. And you who have survived evil know that the

only way to defeat it is to look it in the face and not back down.

It is evil we are now seeing in Sudan, and we're not going to back down. For 22 years, Sudan was plagued by a civil war between the north and south that claimed more than 2 million lives. That war came to an end in January 2005, when Sudan's Government and rebels in the south signed a comprehensive peace agreement that the United States helped to broker. Under this historic accord, Sudan established a Government of National Unity that includes a First Vice President and other cabinet members from the country's south. It also established a government for Southern Sudan that the United States is providing with aid and other assistance.

Unfortunately, just as peace was coming to the south, another conflict broke out in the west, where rebel groups in Darfur attacked government outposts. To fight this rebellion, the Government in Khartoum unleashed a horse-mounted militia called the Janjaweed, which carried out systematic assaults against innocent civilians.

The human toll has been staggering. More than 200,000 people have died from the conflict or from malnutrition and disease that have spread in its wake. And more than 2 million people have been forced from their homes and villages into camps both inside and outside their country.

Ending the violence in Darfur requires better security for the people of Darfur; it requires progress toward political reconciliation. Today, more than 7,000 African Union troops have been deployed to Darfur, and they serve courageously. The problem is, the area they patrol is the size of Texas; 7,000 people is not enough to provide the security the people of Darfur need. Ultimately, the violence will continue until Sudan's Government and the rebel groups reach a political settlement that includes traditional community leaders, representatives of civil society, and African and Arab tribes in the region.

This museum cannot stop the violence, but through your good work, you're making it impossible for the world to turn a blind eye. Earlier I saw an exhibit that puts faces on the millions of men, women, and children who have been killed or driven into the desert. I also saw an interesting new venture that you've arranged with Google Earth. As a result of this partnership, millions of Internet users around the world will be able to zoom in and see satellite images of the burnt-out villages and mosques and schools. No one who sees these pictures can doubt that genocide is the only word for what is happening in Darfur and that we have a moral obligation to stop it.

The United States is helping to lead the effort. Last May, I announced an agreement for Darfur that we helped broker between the Sudanese Government and the largest rebel group. It's a positive agreement. It gave us some sense of optimism that we could help stop the genocide. Under this agreement, Sudan's Government promised to disarm the Janjaweed and punish all those who violated the cease-fire. The main rebel group agreed to withdraw into specified areas.

In August, the United Nations followed up this agreement with a new Security Council resolution. This resolution authorized the U.N. Mission in Sudan to extend its forces to Darfur and to transform the existing AU forces into a larger, better equipped U.N. peacekeeping mission. The U.N. recognized there were not enough forces in Darfur to bring security and peace.

In November, the United Nations, the African Union, the EU, the Arab League, the Government of Sudan, the United States, and 12 other nations reached another important agreement at a meeting in Addis Ababa. This agreement strengthened the terms of the cease-fire. It reenergized the political process and called for the joint

U.N.-AU peacekeeping force to go into action, a force that would be nearly three times the size of the existing AU force.

These are all good agreements. They represent a clear path to end the conflict. And if implemented, they would allow the people of Darfur to return home to their villages safely, and begin to rebuild their lives in peace.

Unfortunately, these agreements have been routinely violated. Sudan's Government has moved arms to Darfur, conducted bombing raids on villages. They've used military vehicles and aircraft that are painted white, which makes them look like those deployed by humanitarian agencies and peacekeeping forces.

Many rebel groups have also pursued violence instead of peace. The groups who have not signed onto last May's peace accord have splintered, and they're roaming the Darfur's countryside pillaging and stealing at will. They have killed civilians. They've plundered vehicles and plundered supplies from international aid workers. They've added to the lawlessness. The Government in Khartoum has been able—unable to control the problem, and they made it even worse last fall with a failed military campaign designed to crush the groups.

While there is now a temporary lull in the fighting between the government and militias and rebel groups, millions of displaced people remain highly vulnerable to attack. The increased lawlessness and instability has made it difficult for aid workers to deliver relief to those who need it; some organizations have been forced to evacuate their staff for safety reasons. Once again, the consequences are being borne by defenseless men, women, and children. That is the story being told here at the Holocaust Museum, and I appreciate what you're doing.

The brutal treatment of innocent civilians in Darfur is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to me, it is unacceptable to Americans, it's unacceptable to the United Nations—

at least that's what they've said. This status quo must not continue.

Just this week, Sudan's Government reached an agreement with the United Nations to allow 3,000 U.N. troops and their equipment into the country to support the AU force. The world has heard these promises from Sudan before. President Bashir's record has been to promise cooperation while finding new ways to subvert and obstruct the U.N.'s efforts to bring peace to his country. The time for promises is over; President Bashir must act.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, is now in discussions with President Bashir to get the Government of Sudan to meet all its commitments. President Bashir should take the last chance by responding to the Secretary-General's efforts—and to meet the just demands of the international community. He must follow through on the deployment of the U.N. support forces. He must allow the deployment of the full, joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force and take every necessary step to facilitate its deployment. He must end support for the Janjaweed. He must reach out to the rebel leaders and allow humanitarian aid to reach the people of Darfur. And he must stop his pattern of obstruction once and for all.

I have made a decision to allow the Secretary-General more time to pursue his diplomacy. However, if President Bashir does not fulfill the steps I outlined above, in a short period of time, my administration will take the following steps.

First, the Department of Treasury will tighten U.S. economic sanctions on Sudan. This new effort will allow the United States to enforce more aggressively existing sanctions against Sudan's Government by blocking any of its dollar transactions within the U.S. financial system. As part of this effort, the Treasury Department will add 29 companies owned or controlled by the Government of Sudan to its list of Specially Designated Nationals. This designation will bar these companies from the U.S. financial



system and make it a crime for U.S.—American companies and individuals to willfully do business with them.

Second, we will also target sanctions against individuals responsible for the violence. These sanctions will isolate designated individuals by cutting them off from the U.S. financial system, preventing them from doing business with any American citizen or company, and calling the world's attention to their crimes.

Third, I will direct the Secretary of State to prepare a new United Nations Security Council resolution. This resolution will apply new sanctions against the Government of Sudan and against individuals found to be violating human rights or obstructing the peace process. It will impose an expanded embargo on arms sales to the Government of Sudan. It will prohibit Sudan's Government from conducting any offensive military flights over Darfur. It will strengthen our ability to monitor and report any violations. And in the next days, we will begin consulting with other Security Council members on the terms of such a resolution.

If Sudan's obstruction continues despite these measures, we will also consider other options. Last week, I sent Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte to the region. He informed Sudan's Government and rebel groups that our patience is limited, that we care deeply about the human condition in Darfur, that it matters to the United States that people are suffering.

I have spoken in the past about the need to end Sudan's use of military aircraft to attack innocent civilians. We also are looking at what steps the international community could take to deny Sudan's Government the ability to fly its military aircraft over Darfur. And if we do not begin to see signs of good faith and commitments, we will hear calls for even sterner measures.

The situation doesn't have to come to that. I urge the United Nations Security Council and the African Union and all

members of the international community to stand behind the Addis Ababa framework and reject efforts to obstruct its implementation. The world needs to act. If President Bashir does not meet his obligations to the United States of America, we'll act.

As we continue to pressure the Government of Sudan to meet its commitments, we will continue our engagement in support of the people of Darfur. My administration is increasing support for the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority. It's an interim authority designed to help the people of Darfur improve local government and build foundations for a healthy economy. We are increasing support for Sudan's First Vice President and the United Nations and African Union special envoys, who are working to bring the rebel groups together and get them to sign in to the peace process.

We're continuing our humanitarian assistance to the people of Darfur. Since 2005, the United States has devoted more than \$2 billion to humanitarian relief and development, and I thank the American people for their generosity. We'll continue to bring relief to the people of Darfur. We'll continue to insist that rebel groups and the Sudanese Government allow international workers to deliver this relief to the people who depend on it.

All the people in this room and people in this country have a vital role to play. Everyone ought to raise their voice. We ought to continue to demand that the genocide in Sudan be stopped.

During my tour of the Darfur exhibits this morning, I was shown a photo of a 1-year-old girl who had been shot as her mother fled the Janjaweed. Although the mother had tried to protect her baby, it was to no avail. When the photo was taken, an observer nearby began to shout: "This is what they do! This is what happens here! Now you know! Now you see!"

Thanks to the efforts of the people in this room, the world knows and the world sees. And now the world must act.



Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Fred S. Zeidman, Chairman, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council; Sara J. Bloomfield, director, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; Nobel Prize winner and author Elie Wiesel; President

Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit of Sudan; United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson; and African Union Special Envoy for the Darfur Talks and Chief Mediator Salim Ahmed Salim.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders *April 18, 2007*

All of us around the table care deeply about what happened at Virginia Tech. And I know I can speak for all of us here that we send our prayers to the families of the victims, and we send our prayers to the friends of the victims. And we also send our deep concerns to the Virginia Tech community.

This fine educational institution is going through a lot of trauma and pain, and all of us here care deeply about their lives, and they just need to know it. They need to know people grieve for them.

I also want to thank the leaders from Congress for coming down. I'm looking forward to what will be a—one, I suspect,

of many conversations on this war in Iraq and other major foreign policy issues.

We're going to have a very good discussion. People have strong opinions around the table, and I'm looking forward to listening to them. I've got my own opinion, which I'm more than willing to share. The whole objective is to figure out how best to get our troops funded, get the money they need to do the job that I've asked them to do.

And so, again, I want to thank you all for coming. I'm looking forward to our discussions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

## Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Partial-Birth Abortion *April 18, 2007*

I am pleased that the Supreme Court upheld a law that prohibits the abhorrent procedure of partial-birth abortion. Today's decision affirms that the Constitution does not stand in the way of the people's representatives enacting laws reflecting the compassion and humanity of America. The partial-birth abortion ban, which an overwhelming bipartisan majority in Congress passed and I signed into law, represents

a commitment to building a culture of life in America.

The Supreme Court's decision is an affirmation of the progress we have made over the past 6 years in protecting human dignity and upholding the sanctity of life. We will continue to work for the day when every child is welcomed in life and protected in law.

## Remarks at Tippecanoe High School and a Question-and-Answer Session in Tipp City, Ohio

April 19, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Sit down. Thanks for coming. I'm honored you're here. Steve, thank you for the invitation. It's a real pleasure to be with you. What I thought I would do is share some thoughts with you about a couple of subjects, primarily Iraq, and then I'd like to answer some of your questions, on any topic that you'd like to ask me about.

Before I do, I do want to thank Steve and the chamber of commerce for giving me a chance to dialog with you and, hopefully, giving the students here at this high school a chance to hear from the President firsthand. I know there are students who will be listening. My mission is to not only share with you what's on my mind and why I have made some of the decisions I have made, but another mission is to convince you that serving the public—that public service is worthwhile, that you can go into politics or you can feed the hungry or you can serve in the military, and it's a fulfilling part of a person's life and a necessary part, in my judgment, of a country that is a complete country.

So I want to thank the high school folks. I want to thank Chuck Wray, the principal, for greeting me. I appreciated you letting me come to this center of learning. I particularly want to thank the teachers for teaching. There is no more noble profession than to be a teacher, and I'm honored to be in your midst.

I want to thank the mayor, George Lovett—George L. [*Laughter*] Thank you, George—George W. [*Laughter*]

I'm traveling today with the leader in the House for the Republican Party, John Boehner. John is a—[*applause*—] I've found him to be a good, solid, honest person. I know he is providing strong leadership in the House of Representatives. And I

know he cares a lot about this district. I've seen John work issues. I've heard him speak in depth about what he believes. And I appreciate his leadership, and I appreciate him joining me today.

I'm—I wish I was traveling here with Laura. The best thing about my family is my wife. She is a great First Lady. I know that sounds not very objective, but that's how I feel. And she's also patient. Putting up with me requires a lot of patience. But she sends her best. She's in New Orleans today.

And I will tell you, one reason—this may sound counterintuitive, but a good marriage is really good after serving together in Washington, DC. It's been an amazing experience to be a husband and then a dad as President of the United States. And I emphasize: That is the priority for me as the President. It's my faith, my family, and my country. And I am pleased to report that our family is doing great, particularly since my wife is such a fantastic person. And she sends her very best.

Let me say something about Virginia Tech, and I want to first thank Steve for the moment of silence. You know, it's a—there is—the President spends time at disasters. It's—part of the job of the Presidency is to help people heal from hurt. And the amazing thing is, though, when you go down to a scene like Virginia Tech, you can't help but be buoyed by the spirit, that out of the tragedy comes a certain sense of resolve.

One of the things I try to assure the families and the students and the faculty of that fine university was that there are a lot of people around our country who are praying for them. It's interesting: Here in Tipp City, the first thing that happened was a moment of silence, a moment of prayer. To provide—at least my prayer was:

Please comfort and strengthen those whose lives were affected by this horrible incident. It really speaks to the strength of this country—doesn't it?—that total strangers here in Ohio are willing to hold up people in Virginia in prayer, and I thank you for that. And my message to the folks who still hurt in—at Virginia Tech is that a lot of people care about you, and a lot of people think about you, a lot of people grieve with you, and a lot of people hope you find sustenance in a power higher than yourself, and a lot of us believe you will.

My job is a job to make decisions. I'm a decision—if the job description were: What do you do? It's decisionmaker. And I make a lot of big ones, and I make a lot of little ones. Interestingly enough, the first decision I made happened right before I got sworn in as President. I was at the Blair House, which is across the street from the White House, getting ready to give my Inaugural Address. And the phone rang, and the head usher at the White House said, "President-elect Bush." I said, "Yes." He said, "What color rug do you want in the Oval Office?" [Laughter] I said, "This is going to be a decisionmaking experience." [Laughter]

The first lesson about decisionmaking is, if you're short on a subject, ask for help. So if you're a student listening and you're not very good at math, ask for help. Don't be afraid to admit that you need help when it comes to life. I wasn't afraid to admit I wasn't sure how to design a rug, so I called Laura. [Laughter] I said: "They've asked me to design a rug in the Oval Office. I don't know anything about rug designing. Will you help me?" She said, "Of course." But I said, "I want it to say something"—the President has got to be a strategic thinker—and I said to her, "Make sure the rug says, 'Optimistic person comes to work.'" [Laughter] Because you can't make decisions unless you're optimistic that the decisions you make will lead to a better tomorrow. And so if you were to come in the Oval Office, what you would see

is this fantastic rug that looks like the sun. And it just sets the tone for the Oval Office.

I share that with you because I make a lot of decisions, and I'm optimistic that the decisions I have made will yield a better tomorrow. The hardest decision you make is whether or not to commit troops into combat, people like this young man, people who've served our country with great distinction, people who volunteered to say, "I want to serve the United States." The hardest decision a President makes is to ask those men and women to go into harm's way.

My decisionmaking was deeply affected by the attack of September the 11th, 2001. It was a moment that defined a dangerous world to me with absolute clarity. I realized then that this country was no longer invulnerable to attack from what may be happening overseas.

I realized that there is an enemy of the United States that is active and is lethal. At further study of that enemy, I realized that they share an ideology, that these weren't—that the—and when you really think about it, the September the 11th attack was not the first attack. There was a 1993 World Trade Center attack; there was attacks on our Embassies in East Africa; there was an attack on the USS *Cole*. There have been other attacks on U.S. citizens, and that these attacks were instigated and carried out by coldblooded killers who have a belief system. They are threatened by free societies. They can't stand the thought of freedom being the prevailing attitude in the world because their view is, if you don't believe in what I believe in, you probably shouldn't be around.

They—this enemy is smart, capable, and unpredictable. They have defined a war on the United States, and I believe we're at war. I believe the attack on America made it clear that we're at war. I wish that wasn't the case. Nobody ought to ever hope to be a war President or a Presidency—a President during war. But that's how I see

the world. And I made a vow that I would do everything I could, and work with Members of Congress to do everything they could, to protect the United States. It is the most solemn duty of our country, is to protect our country from harm.

A lesson learned was that—at least in my opinion—that in order to protect us, we must aggressively pursue the enemy and defeat them elsewhere so we don't have to face them here. In other words, if what happens overseas matters to the United States, therefore, the best way to protect us is to deal with threats overseas. In other words, we just can't let a threat idle; we can't hope that a threat doesn't come home to hurt us. A lesson of that terrible day was, threats overseas can come home to hurt us. And so the fundamental question—and this has led to constructive debate—it's, what do you do about it?

I've chosen a path that says, we will go overseas and defeat them there. I also know full well that it's important for us if we're facing an ideology, if we're facing ideologues, if we're confronting people who believe something, that we have got to defeat their belief system with a better belief system. Forms of government matter, in my opinion. It matters how—the nature of the government in which people live. And therefore, I have put as part of our foreign policy not only an aggressive plan to find extremists and radicals and bring them to justice before they hurt us, but also to help people live in liberty, free societies as the great alternative to people living under a tyrant, for example.

And so my decisionmaking was based upon those principles. And now we're involved in a—I call it a global war against terror. You can call it a global war against extremists, a global war against radicals, a global war against people who want to hurt America. You can call it whatever you want, but it is a global effort. And by the way, the United States is not alone in this effort. We're helping lead an effort. And the major battlefield in this global war is Iraq, and

I want to spend some time talking about Iraq.

The—living under a tyrant must be just brutal, and living under the reign of Saddam Hussein was incredibly brutal. A lot of innocent people were killed; a lot of people were cowed by the state. There really wasn't much in terms of a civil structure that would enable people to have a kind of a form of a representative government. People were kept apart through violence, in many ways. People were pitted against each other. A lot of people were given favored treatment.

The decision to remove Saddam Hussein was a difficult decision, I think a necessary decision. If you want to talk about that later on, we can. And what has happened since then is that we are trying to help a young democracy survive in the heart of the Middle East and, at the same time, prevent our stated enemies from establishing safe haven from which to attack us again.

Now I say that—preventing our enemies from establishing a safe haven from which to attack us again—because that is their stated objective in Iraq. That's what Al Qaida says. Al Qaida is the same group of folks that attacked us on September the 11th. They have said their objective is to drive the United States out of Iraq in order to establish safe haven. And why would they need safe haven? They would need safe haven from which to plot and plan and train to attack again. They have an objective, and that is to spread their ideology throughout the Middle East. That is what they have stated. That's their objectives.

Our objective is to deny them safe haven, is to prevent Al Qaida from being able to do in Iraq that which they did in Afghanistan, which is where they trained thousands of young men to come and kill—and to eventually kill innocent people.

Our objective also is to help a young democracy flourish in a part of the world that desperately needs liberty, in a part of

the world where government—forms of government will provide hope so as eventually to discourage the type of mentality that says 19 kids should get on airplanes and kill 3,000 people.

And it's incredibly hard work, but I have come to the conclusion, obviously, that it's necessary work. It's necessary work for peace.

The—in 2005, the Iraqi people went to the polls; 12 million voted. I view that as a statement that says—by the way, I wasn't surprised that 12 million people, if given a chance to vote, voted. I was pleased, but I wasn't surprised. And the reason I wasn't surprised is because I believe in this principle: I believe liberty is universal. I don't believe freedom is just confined to America. I think there is a universal principle that all people desire and want and should be free, that it's not just an American ideal; it is universal.

I think back, for example, right after World War II—people might have argued after fighting the Japanese that they don't want to be free. They're the enemy; they killed a lot of people; they attacked the United States? Why should we work to help them be free? Except those people were—didn't quite understand, not only do people want to be free, that when free societies emerge, they're more likely to yield the peace.

And so it's a—this country began to evolve, and it started with elections. And it's easy to forget the elections because of all the violence. In 2006, I was convinced that we would be able to reposition our troops and have fewer troops in Iraq because the Iraqis want to take on the security themselves. This is a sovereign government. People got elected. They want to be—showing the people of Iraq that they can run their own government. I don't know if you get that sense on your TV screens or not, but I certainly get that sense when I talk to the Prime Minister, with whom I speak quite frequently.

And yet they—and yet the enemy—and the enemy—when I say “enemy,” these are enemies of free societies, primarily Al Qaida-inspired—blew up the great religious shrine in '06, a year ago—all aiming to create a sense of sectarian violence, all aiming to exacerbate the religious tensions that sometimes were exacerbated under Saddam Hussein, all aiming at preventing this young democracy from succeeding. And they succeeded. The enemy succeeded in causing there to be sectarian strife. In other words, the Government wasn't ready to provide the security. People started taking matters into their own hands. “I'm going to protect myself, or I'm going to rely upon somebody else to protect me,” they would say.

So I have a decision point to make, last fall. And the decision point was whether or not to either scale back or increase our presence in Iraq. And that was a difficult decision. It's difficult any time, as I told you, you put a soldier in harm's way. I understand the consequence of committing people into war. The interesting thing is, I'm the Commander in Chief of an incredibly amazing group of men and women who also understand that consequence and yet are willing to volunteer.

The question was, do we increase our—I call it “reinforce”; you can call it surge; there's all kind of words for it—or do we pull back? As you know, I made a decision to reinforce. And I did because I believe the Iraqis want to have a peaceful society. I believe Iraqi mothers want their children to grow up in peace, just like American mothers do. I think, if given a chance, that society can emerge into a free society. I felt strongly that if violence erupted, sectarian violence erupted in the capital, it would make it impossible to achieve the objective, and that is to help this free society. Listen, there are people—or let it emerge into a free society.

And the goal is a country that is stable enough for the Government to work, that can defend itself and serve as an ally in this war on terror, that won't be a safe

haven, that will deny the extremists and the radicals. I happen to think there will be an additional dividend when we succeed. Remember the rug? I'm optimistic we can succeed. I wouldn't ask families to have their troops there if I didn't think, one, it was necessary, and two, we could succeed. I believe we're going to succeed, and I believe success will embolden other moderate people that said, they're going to reject extremists and radicals in their midst.

There's a good group of people in Washington—fair, decent, honorable people—and by the way, in this political discourse, we should never question anybody's patriotism if they don't happen to agree with the President. That's not the American way. The American way is, we ought to have a honest and open dialog. There are good people, patriotic people who didn't believe that additional troops would make that big a difference, and, therefore, we should not increase but, in some cases, pull out; in some cases, pull back. Either case, having weighed the options, I didn't think it was viable, and I didn't think it would work.

A couple of points I want to make, and then I promise to stop talking and answer your questions. [Laughter] People often ask me, what are we seeing on TV? What's happening with the violence? Here's my best analysis: One, the spectaculars you see are Al Qaida-inspired. They claim credit for a lot of the big bombings. The bombing of the Parliament was Al Qaida; the bombing of the Golden Samarra was Al Qaida. These are the Sunni extremists inspired by Usama bin Laden, who attacked the United States. I keep repeating that because I want you to understand, what matters overseas, in my judgment, affects the security of the United States of America in this new era.

Their objective is twofold: One, shake the confidence of the average Iraqi that their Government is incapable of providing security, and, therefore, people will turn to militias in order to protect themselves; their second objective is to shake our con-

fidence. It's an interesting war—isn't it?—where asymmetrical warfare is—and that means people being able to use suicide bombers—not only obviously kills a lot of innocent people, like which happened yesterday in Iraq, but also helps define whether or not we're successful.

If the definition of success in Iraq or anywhere is no suicide bombers, we'll never be successful. We will have handed Al Qaida "that's what it takes" in order to determine whether or not these young democracies, for example, can survive. Think about that. If our definition is no more suiciders, you've just basically said to the suiciders, "Go ahead."

The—Iran is influential inside of Iraq. They are influential by providing advanced weaponry. They are influential by dealing with some militias—they tend to be Shi'a militias—all aiming to create discomfort, all aiming to kind of—according to some—to create enough discomfort for the United States. But in doing so, they're making it harder for this young democracy to emerge. Isn't it interesting, when you really take a step back and think about what I just said, that Al Qaida is making serious moves in Iraq, as is surrogates for Iran.

Two of the biggest issues we face for the security of this country today and tomorrow is Al Qaida and Iran. And yet their influence is being played out in Iraq. I believe that if we were to leave before this country had an opportunity to stabilize, to grow—and by the way, I fully understand and completely agree with those who say, this is not just a military mission alone. That is too much, to ask our military to be able to achieve objectives without there being a corresponding political avenue, political strategy being fulfilled by the Iraqis. I fully expect them to reconcile. I fully expect them—and I made it clear to the Prime Minister that they should pass different de-Ba'athification law, that they ought to have local elections, that they ought to share their oil wells so people feel a common—you know, a common



bond to something bigger than provincialism.

They have to do work. They know they have to do work. I told that to Prime Minister Maliki this week on a secure video: You have an obligation to your people, and to our people, for that matter, to do the hard work necessary, to show people that you're capable of getting your Government to move forward with political reconciliation. There has to be reconstruction money spent, their reconstruction money. They've dedicated \$10 billion out of their budget, and now they've got to spend that money wisely to show people that the Government can be for all the people.

The—but if we were to leave before that were to happen, I will share a scenario that I'm fearful of. One, that the very radicals and extremists who attack us would be emboldened. It would confirm their sense that the United States is incapable of long-term commitments, incapable of—it would confirm their commitment that they think we're soft—let me put it to you that way. That's what they think.

That doesn't necessarily mean that the United States has to kind of muscle up for the sake of muscling up. That's not what I'm trying to say. But I do believe it is risky to have an enemy that has attacked us before to not take the United States seriously for the long run.

Secondly, there would be a violence—level of violence that would spill out beyond just the capital, could spill out beyond Iraq. And then you would have ancient feuds fueled by extremists and radicals competing for power, radical Shi'a, radical, extreme Sunnis, all competing for power. They would happen to share two enemies: one, the United States and Israel, for starters, and every other moderate person in the Middle East.

Imagine a scenario where the oil wealth of certain countries became controlled—came under the control of a radical, extremist group. And then all of a sudden, you'd be dealing not only with safe haven

for potential violent attack; you'd be dealing with the economic consequences of people who didn't share the values of the West, for example.

Iran wants to—they've stated they'd like to have—let me just say, we believe they would like to have a nuclear weapon. Part of our diplomacy is to prevent them from doing so. If the United States were to leave a chaotic Iraq, not only would the vacuum of our failure there to help this young Government enable extremists to move more freely and embolden them, but I also believe it would—it could cause the Middle East to enter into a nuclear arms race.

And the scenario I'm beginning to describe to you, I believe, is a real scenario, a real possibility for scenario. And I believe if this were to happen, people would look back 30 years from now or 20 years from now, and say: What happened to them in 2007? How come they couldn't see the threat?

And so I want to share that with you because—these thoughts with you, because as a person whose job it is to make decisions, you've got to understand that I'm making them on what I believe is solid ground. These are necessary decisions for the country.

We're having an interesting debate in Washington. John and I spent some time talking about it, and that is this supplemental funding—because I sent up a request to make sure our troops had the money necessary to do the missions that they have been asked to do. I want to share a couple thoughts with you on that, and then I'll answer some questions.

First, I think it's a mistake, and I've made it clear that the Congress should not have artificial timetables for withdrawal in a funding mission—funding statement. I'll tell you why. *[Applause]* Thank you. Thank you. The reason why is, if you're a young commander on the ground or an Iraqi soldier and you've been tasked with a mission to help provide security for a city and an enemy hears that you're leaving soon, it

affects your capacity to do your job. It sends a signal to a dangerous part of the world that it's just a matter of time; things will happen.

I think it's a mistake for Congress to tell the military how to do its job. We've got fantastic generals and colonels and captains who are trained to carry on military missions; that's their responsibility. And it's very important that they be given the resources and the flexibility necessary to carry out that which the Commander in Chief has asked them to do.

I fully understand the debate, and, again, I repeat to you: It's an important debate. I would hope it would be conducted with civil tone to bring honor to the process. Sometimes it gets a little out of hand there in Washington; I admit. But my message to the Congress has been: Don't put our troops in between the debate; let's get them the money; let's get the commanders the flexibility; and we can debate Iraq policy without shorting the capacity for these troops to do their jobs.

These are—I would call these times consequential times. I believe we're in a long, ideological struggle. And I believe the struggle will determine whether or not this country is secure. People ask me—you know, I've been reading a lot of history. People ask me, "Can you think of any historical parallels?" Well, clearly the cold war is an interesting parallel. There's a—by the way, every new phase of history has its own unique features to it. For example, you've got a kid in the battlefield, and he's e-mailing home every day, or 24-hour news cycles. I mean, there's a lot of war—asymmetrical warfare, or \$50 weapons are sometimes used to defeat expensive vehicles. In other words, these are different times.

But there are some parallels. One is, of course, the ideological standoff during the cold war, eventually won by freedom, the forces of freedom. For some, that sounds, maybe, corny—but it's true. It's an historical truth. And in my judgment, it requires

people to have faith in that universal principle of liberty.

I like to remind people that my dad was a 18-year-old kid when he signed up to—for the United States Navy in World War II and went off to combat in a really bloody war. And yet his son becomes the President, and one of his best friends in the international scene was the Prime Minister of Japan. Prime Minister Koizumi was a partner in peace. Isn't it interesting? I think there's a historical lesson there, that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies to allies.

I think there's a lesson in Korea. I think if you were to ask somebody to predict in 1953 what the world would look like in the Far East, I don't think they would have said, China would have a marketplace that was growing; Korea would be our sixth largest trading partner—I think it's the sixth largest trading partner, but certainly a partner in peace; and Japan would have been an ally, a strong ally that would have committed troops to the young democracy of Iraq to help this democracy. I don't think people would have predicted that, but, in fact, it happened. It happened because the United States provided enough stability so that societies were able to evolve toward free societies, or freer societies.

We've got—we face this—we face a unique set of challenges, but I think we can learn something from history when we think about those challenges. And I guess my conclusion is, I believe the decisions I have made were not only necessary to protect the country but are laying a foundation of peace, the beginnings of laying that foundation of peace, so that generations will look back and say: "Thank goodness. I thank goodness America didn't lose sight of basic principles, and thank goodness America stayed true to her beliefs, and thank goodness America led."

So thanks for letting me share some thoughts with you. And now I'll be glad to answer some questions. [*Applause*] Okay,

thank you. Probably a nerve-racking experience to think about asking—it's not a nerve-racking experience. Go ahead.

*Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

*Q.* Mr. President, what is your view of those who—in the opposing party whom you've invited to come to the White House to discuss solutions to the Iraq war and its funding, who have expressed a reluctance to come and talk because of the perception that you would have a precondition or a no-negotiation on any points regarding the war?

*The President.* No, thanks. He asked the question about—prior to the meeting yesterday, there was some concern that I wouldn't listen, that I'd made up my mind, and, therefore, discussions weren't necessary. And I will tell you, we had a very cordial meeting. The Speaker and the leader and minority leader and Senator McConnell all came down, along with others.

Clearly, there's different points of view, and that's fine. That's the greatness about our society. In my discussions with the leaders, I said: "You have the authority to pass the funding legislation. That's your authority, not mine." I submitted what the Pentagon thinks it needs. In other words, the process works where I ask the Pentagon: How much do you need? What do you need to do the job? And they submitted their request, and then we, on behalf of the Pentagon, sent it up to Congress. And they had the authority to pass that—pass the bill any way they see fit.

I have the authority, in our Constitution, to veto the bill if I don't think it meets certain criteria. They, then, have the authority to say, "Well, we don't agree with the President's veto, and now we're going to override the veto," so that that which they passed becomes law. And here's where we are. I said, "Get a bill to me as quickly as you can." And I believe they committed to a bill late next week, or a week from next Monday, I think is what they're aiming

for. And therefore, we will sit back and hope they get it done quickly. Time is of the essence. We need to get money to the troops. It's important for them to get the money.

However, I did make it clear that in exercising your authority, if you put timetables, or if you micromanage—or artificial deadlines or micromanage the war or insist upon using a war supplemental to load up with items that are not related to the global war on terror, I will exercise my constitutional authority, and then you will have the opportunity to override my veto if you so choose.

My point to the leaders—and it was a very cordial meeting yesterday, by the way, and people—the positive news is that we don't—the negative thing is we don't agree 100 percent. That's not—you shouldn't be surprised. The positive news is that there was a cordial discussion. The discussion was dignified, like you would hope it would be, and people were free to express their minds.

And so my attitude is, if they feel like they've got to send this up there with their strings, like they said, please do it in a hurry so I can veto it, and then we can get down to the business of getting the troops funded. *[Laughter]*

Sir.

*Public Opinion on Iraq*

*Q.* Mr. President, how would you respond to the rather mistaken idea that the war in Iraq is becoming a war—in Vietnam?

*The President.* Yes, thank you. There's a lot of differences. First, the Iraqi people voted for a modern constitution, and then set up a government under that Constitution. Secondly, the—that's as opposed to two divided countries, north and south. The—in my judgment, the vast majority of people want to live underneath that Constitution they passed. They want to live in peace. And what you're seeing is radical on the fringe creating chaos in order to

either get the people to lose confidence in their government or for us to leave.

A major difference, as far as here at home is concerned, is that our military is an all-volunteer army, and we need to keep it that way. By the way, the way you keep it that way is to make sure our troops have all they need to do their job and to make sure their families are happy. And—[*ap-  
pause*].

There are some similarities, of course; death is terrible. Another similarity, of course, is that Vietnam was the first time a war was brought onto our TV screens here in America on a regular basis. I'm looking around, looking for baby boomers. I see a few of us here. It's a different—it was the first time that the violence and horror of war was brought home. That's the way it is today.

Americans, rightly so, are concerned about whether or not we can succeed in Iraq. Nobody wants to be there if we can't succeed, especially me. And these—violence on our TV screens affects our frame of mind, probably more so today than what took place in Vietnam. I want to remind you that after Vietnam, after we left, the—millions of people lost their life—the Khmer Rouge, for example, in Cambodia. And my concern is, there would be a parallel there, that if we didn't help this Government get going, stay on its feet, be able to defend itself, the same thing would happen. There would be the slaughter of a lot of innocent life. The difference, of course, is that this time around the enemy wouldn't just be content to stay in the Middle East; they'd follow us here.

It's interesting, I met with some Congressmen today, and one person challenged that. He said, "I don't necessarily agree with that." In other words, I have told people that this is a unique war, where an enemy will follow us home, because I believe that. But if you give Al Qaida a safe haven and enough time to plan and plot, I believe the risk is, they will come and get us. And I freely admit that much of

my thinking was affected on September the 11th, 2001, and the aftermath of September the 11th, 2001. And I wanted to share that with you and the American people so that they understand that when I make decisions, why I'm making decisions. I can assure you; I'm not going to make any decisions in regard to anybody's life based upon a poll or a focus group.

Sir, they don't want you to ask the question. [*Laughter*] They silenced you. Go ahead and yell. [*Laughter*]

#### *International Support for Iraq/Iran and Syria*

Q. Would you speak, please, a little bit about—

*The President.* Now you can use it.

Q. Would you speak a little bit about the support or lack of support that we're getting from other countries, particularly those countries surrounding Iraq—

*The President.* Sure.

Q. —Saudi Arabia, so forth?

*The President.* Thank you, sir. First, our mission is getting a lot of support from the Iraqis. That's the place to first look. Are the Iraqis willing to make sacrifices necessary for their own country? I think there's a lot of Americans who wonder whether or not the Iraqis want to live in a free society and are willing to do that which is necessary to help their country succeed. If I felt they weren't, I would not have our troops in harm's way, just so you know.

I believe they are. They have suffered unbelievable death and destruction. Yesterday's bombing—I don't—we don't have the intel on it; I suspect it's Al Qaida. Al Qaida convinces the suiciders to show up. Al Qaida understands the effects of this kind of warfare on the minds of not only people in Iraq but here and elsewhere in the world. And yet the Iraqis continue to recruit for their army and their police force. I thought it was interesting that the Sunni Speaker of the House, the day that the council chambers were bombed, said,

"We're going to meet." These folks have gone through unbelievable horrors—they really have—and yet they continue to show courage in the face of this kind of violence.

Secondly, there is—there are nations who are concerned about whether or not a Shi'a government in Iraq will end up being a surrogate for Iran, for example. I think there are some Sunni nations—Sunni-governed nations, like Saudi and Jordan, that are concerned about a shift in the Middle East toward Iran, and that they are—wonder whether or not this Government of Iraq, which is a Shi'a government as a result of the fact that most people in Iraq—or the majority, see a—the largest plurality of people in Iraq are Shi'a—you wouldn't be surprised if people voted that; that's what happened as a result of the elections. And they wonder whether or not the Government is going to be of and by and for the Iraqi people. And that's—concerns them.

And so one of the reasons we were working with the Iraqis on this neighborhood conference is for people to hear firsthand that the Iraqi Government is, first and foremost, Iraqi. They're not interested in being anybody else's surrogate.

We've got a lot of work to do there, and it's an interesting question you ask. I was pleased, and I thanked His Majesty, that 80 percent of the debt in Saudi—I'll get you in a minute—is—80 percent of the Saudi debt in Iraq was forgiven. I appreciated that. It's a strong gesture. But we have a lot—not we; the Iraqi Government has a lot of work to do to convince skeptical nations that, in fact, they're going to be a pluralistic society, that they're not going to hold one group above another when it comes to their society.

Iran—I mentioned Iran. Iran is a serious problem. This is a nation that has said they want to have a nuclear—or we believe wants to have a nuclear weapon. And to what end? They don't need a nuclear weapon. And it's really important for the free

world to work together to prevent them from having a nuclear weapon.

I'm very worried about a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. It's not in the interests of our children that that happens, for the sake of peace. They have been unhelpful in Iraq, intentionally unhelpful in Iraq. And so I obviously sent out the orders to our troops, commanders, that they will protect themselves against Iranian influence—or let me just say this—or threats to their lives based—because of what Iran has done.

We have no beef with the Iranian people, which is really important for the people of Iran to understand. We value the history of Iran. We respect the traditions of Iran. It's the Iranian Government that is making the decisions that is causing you to be isolated. You're missing a opportunity to be a great nation because your Government has made decisions that is causing the world to put economic sanctions on you and to isolate you. I would hope the Iranian Government would change their attitude. And the Iranian people must understand that if they do—if they don't—if they stop their enrichment process, that they can have a better relationship with countries such as the United States. If they aren't meddling in Iraq, they can have a better relationship with a country that wishes them no harm.

Syria—I don't know if I'm going too much or not, but you asked. [*Laughter*] We have made it very clear to President Asad that there are a series of gestures we'd like to see him make for the sake of peace. One such gesture is to leave Lebanon alone, let the Lebanese democracy flourish, stop interfering in this young democracy.

Isn't it interesting that it's the democracies of the Middle East that are having the most problem with the extremists? I think it is. We have said to the Syrians, "Stop harboring Hamas and Hizballah"—violent, radical organizations aimed at causing harm in the Middle East. And we have



said to President Asad, “Stop allowing the flow of suicide bombers through your country into Iraq.”

You know, some have suggested that the United States start diplomatic relations with Syria. My message is, the Syrian has got the choice to make; the Syrian President must make the choice that will stop isolating his regime. And the United States will continue to make it clear to Syria, and work with other nations to make it clear to Syria, that their behavior is unacceptable if we want peace in the Middle East.

And so that’s a—there will be meetings. I think the Iraq Compact group will be meeting, as will an Iraq neighbor group. And it’s there that the neighborhood can come together, all—and Condi is going to—Condi, Secretary Rice will be representing us there—all aiming to make it clear that we hope that we can encourage nations to help this young democracy to not only survive but to thrive. And it’s an interesting challenge given the history of the region.

Yes, sir.

#### *Immigration Reform/Border Security*

Q. Mr. President—to kind of switch directions a little bit—illegal aliens in this country apparently are putting a lot of pressure on our social services. Could you comment on what the plans are in the future to take care of that?

*The President.* Yes, sir. They are not apparently putting pressure on the social services, they are putting pressure on the social services. *[Laughter]*

I believe it’s in the interest of the United States to have a comprehensive immigration plan that meets certain objectives: One, helps us better secure our border; two, recognizes that people are doing work here that Americans are not doing; three, that recognizes that we are a nation of immigrants, and we ought to uphold that tradition in a way that honors the rule of law; four, that it’s in the interest of the country that people who are here be assimilated

in a way that—with our traditions and history—in other words, those who eventually become citizens be assimilated. In other words, one of the great things about America is, we’ve been able to assimilate people from different backgrounds and different countries. I suspect some of your relatives might be the kind of people I’m talking about.

Four, that we do not grant amnesty. I am very worried about automatic citizenship being granted to people who have been here illegally. I think it undermines the rule of law—*[applause]*. I think it undermines the rule of law. I also think it would create a condition or, indeed, send the signal that it’s okay for another X millions of people to come.

Five, you can’t kick people out. You may think you can kick people out, but you can’t. It’s not going to work. It’s impractical to think that you can find 10 million people who have been here for a long period of time and boot them out of the country.

Six, if you hire somebody who is an illegal alien, you ought to be held to account. Now, those are the principles—*[applause]*—wait a minute. Those are the principles. And we’re working in Congress. The first step was to make it clear to the American people that we would change our border policy. This is a subject I’m real familiar with. As you might recall, I was the Governor of the great State of Texas, and we’ve been dealing with immigration—*[applause]*—there you go. Always one in every crowd. *[Laughter]*

A lot of Americans did not believe that this country was intent upon enforcing our border. And a couple of years ago, working with John and other Members of Congress, we began a border modernization program. And that meant, for example, more Border Patrol agents, and we will have doubled them, I think—I can’t remember; I don’t want to throw out facts; I may get them wrong, but we’re doubling the number of Border Patrol agents by 2008.



It means some barriers, whether they be vehicle barriers or fencing, different roads to make our enforcement folks be able to travel easier on the border, UAVs—unmanned aerial vehicles—infrared detection devices. In other words, this border is becoming modernized.

It's interesting, I went down to Yuma, Arizona, right after Easter. And when I first went down there, there was a fence next to Mexico, and that was it; kind of a rickety fence, it looked like. And one of the tactics was for people to storm over the fence and rush the neighborhood on the other side, and the Border Patrol may pick up two or three of them, and however many else got in. Now there is double fencing in this area, with a wide area in between that our Border Patrol are able to travel on. In other words, we're beginning to get a modernization program that's pretty effective. As a matter of fact, the number of arrests are down.

Another problem we had—it's a long answer because it's a really important topic. Another problem we had was catch-and-release. We would—the Border Patrol would catch somebody, say, from Mexico; they'd send them right back, but, say, from—a lot of folks are coming from Central America. But by the way, the reason why is because they want to put food on the table, and there are jobs Americans aren't doing. You know what I'm talking about. Some of you—if you're running a nursery, you know what I'm talking about. If you've got a chicken factory, a chicken-plucking factory, or whatever you call them, you know what I'm talking about. People have got starving families, and they want to come and work.

By the way, if I were a leader of a country where people were willing to take risks like these people were, I'd be worried that I'd be losing an incredibly good part of my workforce, hard-working people.

Anyway, they're coming across—and from Central America; they're paying exorbitant sums, by the way. There's a whole

industry based upon using people as chattel. They're commodities to be exploited, frankly. And they're coming up, and so we would catch them, but we didn't have enough beds on the border. So they catch a fellow from El Salvador trying to sneak in, and they say: "Check back in with us, you know; we don't have any room to hold you. Come back in, and we'll have the immigration judge." Well, guess what happened? A guy wants to work; he's not interested in seeing the immigration judge. Off he goes; you'll never find him.

And so we've ended that practice by increasing the number of beds now on the border. So when we get somebody from other than Mexico, we hold them, and then send them back to their country. And the message is getting out that the border is becoming more secure.

However, I think it's very important—I'm getting to the meat here—very important for us to have a temporary-worker program if you really want to enforce the border. Our border is long. It is hard to enforce to begin with. It seems like to me that it's in our national interest to let people come on a temporary basis to do jobs Americans are not doing, on a temporary, verifiable basis, with a tamper-proof card, to let people come and do jobs Americans aren't doing and let them go home after that so that they don't have to sneak across the border. In other words, if there's a way for people to come in an orderly way, they won't have to try to get in the bottom of the 18-wheeler and pay a person thousands of dollars to smuggle them into the United States of America.

There are a lot of employers who are worried about losing labor here in the United States. They don't know whether they're legal or illegal, by the way, because not only is there a smuggling operation, there's a document forging operation. In other words, the law that we have in place has created an entire underground system of smugglers, inn keepers, and document

forgers. And that's not the American way, by the way.

And so these guys don't know what they're getting—some card; it looks legal—“Sure, let's go; you can work in my nursery or go pick my—help me pick my lettuce.” And they don't know whether they're looking at somebody legal or illegal. We need a tamper-proof card that will enable an employer to verify whether or not this person is here legally or not. Otherwise, it's unfair to hold somebody to account. In other words, if we're enforcing the law, saying you're employing somebody here illegally, we better make sure that that employer is able to verify with certainty whether the person is here legal or not.

Finally, the fundamental question is, what do you do with the—you right there; everybody nervous up front—[laughter]—the question is, what about the 10 to 12 million people who are already here? It's a tough issue. As I've told you, my position is, not legal automatically. I'm also realistic enough to know that you're just—it may sound attractive in the political sound-bite world—just kick them out. It is not going to work. It's just not going to work.

And so we're working with the Senate and the House to devise a plan that, in essence, says that you have broken the law and that you have an obligation to pay a fine for having broken the law if you want to stay in the United States; that there is a line for citizenship—there are a lot of people in that line right now—and that after paying a penalty for breaking the law, that you can get at the back of the line, not the front of the line; that if you want to become a citizen, you've got to prove that you can speak the language, that you can assimilate, that you have paid your taxes, that you haven't broken the law—[applause]—that you haven't broken the law, and then, if you choose, you have an opportunity to apply for citizenship. But you don't get to jump ahead of people who have played by the rules.

And this is a tough debate, and I appreciate John's leadership on this issue. It's an emotional debate. I just ask our fellow citizens not to forget that we are a nation of law, but we are also a humane country that breaks our heart when we see people being abused and mistreated, and that I believe that—I know we need to have a civil debate on the subject. We're immigrants. We're a nation of immigrants. And I happen to personally believe as well, that there's nothing better for society than to have it renewed. When newcomers who come here legally realize the great benefits that one can achieve through hard work, it renews our spirit and renews our soul, when people are given a chance to realize the great blessings of the United States of America.

And so we're working on it. Thank you for bringing it up. It's going to be an interesting, interesting legislative issue. I'm—there's—a lot of good people in the Senate are working hard to reach accord. And we're right in the middle of them trying to help them. And then if we can get a bill out of the Senate, we'll take it to the House and see where we go. Good question.

Yes, sir.

*U.S. Armed Forces/Iraq Study Group/  
Health Care of Wounded Soldiers and  
Veterans*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* About time you asked a question. [Laughter]

Q. This is truly an honor. Thank you for coming today. My question is about the U.S. military preparedness. I'm actually of a small manufacturing company in Dayton where we manufacture a lot of parts for the up-armored Humvees, gun turrets, and things like that—

*The President.* This isn't, like, one of these self-interest questions, is it? [Laughter]

Q. No, no, no. There's my—I'll get right to it. There's—currently the law is that only

50 percent of the military components have to be U.S. made. When we went into Afghanistan, there was a gentleman in Switzerland who refused to give us part of something for the NORDAM bomb that we had; he refused to make it because it was made over there. And my question is about increasing that percentage and keeping a prepared military, that we don't have to rely on other countries to defend ourselves.

*The President.* Right. My answer is, I'm really not sure what you're talking about, and I'll look into it. [Laughter] But I can tell you, we're going to spend a lot of money on this military because we're worried about whether or not this military will have the supplies necessary, the equipment necessary after multiple rotations.

I want to assure parents whose loved one may be in the military: We're not going to put your son or daughter over there unless they're ready. And no question, multiple rotations have been hard on our families. And as you know, recently, Secretary Gates recommended to me, and I accepted, saying with certainty to our troops: "Your tours will be up to 15 months, and you'll be home for a guaranteed 12 months." And the reason why he did that is that we had some people deployed for what they thought might be 12 months and were asked to stay in theater. And what's the most important thing we can do for this volunteer army is to provide certainty for our families.

In other words, you sign—you volunteer to be in the military, and you're deployed, we want to make sure there's certainty so that families can prepare. The worst thing that can happen, according to our military experts there, is for somebody's hopes to be dashed, that there's not clarity about what's expected of our troops. And so we did that.

There is—the term of art is called reset—that is to make sure that we reset our military. And there is an area where there is good common ground with Mem-

bers of Congress—the Democrat leadership understands that reset is an important part of keeping this military ready and active.

Let me say one thing I forgot to tell you before. I don't know if you remember the Baker-Hamilton report. James A. Baker, the Secretary of State, Lee Hamilton, two distinguished people, real good people, the kind of Americans that have served with distinction and are still serving. They proposed an interesting idea, which was for the United States to be postured at some point in time with the following force posture: One, embedded with Iraqi troops, not only as a training mission but to help them understand chain of command issues and just the issues of a modern military; that our troops be stationed in a over-the-horizon position so we could respond to a particular situation, so it didn't get out of control; that we helped defend the territorial integrity of Iraq; and that we chase down Al Qaida.

It's an interesting force posture to be in. Frankly, I was hopeful, as I mentioned to you, that we could be in that kind of force posture a year ago. I really thought we were going to be there until the sectarian violence got out of control. They also said that the United States may have to increase troops in order to be able to get there. And that's what you're seeing happen. And that's where I'd like to be. And I'd like to be in a position so that the certainty of our troop deployments, like we've come, is just etched in everybody's mind.

I'm watching our military very carefully. I love our military, for starters. And I want to make sure that during these difficult times, that we help them on their needs. One of my concerns is that the health care not be as good as it can possibly be.

I will tell you that we had a bureaucracy problem at Walter Reed. What we didn't have is a compassion problem at Walter Reed. We've got some unbelievably good docs and nurses who work around the clock to help the troops and their families. But

our bureaucracy, that sometimes can be large and cumbersome at the Federal level, didn't respond. And I appreciate the way Secretary Gates got control of the situation.

Just so you know, I am concerned that a soldier getting out of—or a marine getting out of uniform and stays in the Defense—is transferred seamlessly from the Defense health system to the Veterans health system. In other words, one of my concerns is that there is a gap. And we owe it to these families and these soldiers and marines to make sure that that service is seamless. And that's why I asked Bob Dole and Donna Shalala to make sure that those two bureaucracies don't create the conditions where somebody isn't getting the help they need.

I know that's on people's minds. There's—one of the areas where we do agree is that we got to make sure our veterans are treated as good as we can possibly treat them. We've asked a lot of these troops, and we will do the best to make sure the Veterans Administration and the Defense health systems work well.

Yes, sir.

### *President's Principles*

Q. Mr. President, I admire your stick-to-it-iveness. You mentioned earlier about not using polls and focus groups. But I have to ask you personally, with respect to economics, with respect to the war, with respect to the war on terror and Iraq and immigration, when you go to bed at night and you see these polls—everybody and their brother does a poll now—how does it make you feel?

*The President.* That's an interesting question. You know, I'm—I've been in politics long enough to know that polls just go poof at times. I mean, they're a moment; that they are—let me put it to you this way: When it's all said and done, when Laura and I head back home—which at this moment will be Crawford, Texas—I will get there and look in the mirror, and I will say, "I came with a set of principles, and

I didn't try to change my principles to make me popular." You can't make good decisions—[*applause*].

As I mentioned to you, this is a decision-making experience, and you cannot make good decisions if you're not making decisions on a consistent set of principles. It's impossible. Oh, you can make decisions, all right, but they're inconsistent. What I think is important is consistency during difficult and troubled times, so that people—they may not agree, but they know where I'm coming from.

And I'll share some of the principles. You've heard one: I believe freedom is universal; I believe that. Let me put it another way: I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a gift from the Almighty to every man and woman and child on this Earth is freedom. That's what I believe.

Secondly, I believe you can spend your money better than the government can spend your money. Oh, I know that sounds like a sound bite, but it's a principle by which you set budgets. For example, I believe that cutting taxes helped this country overcome a recession and a war. And the reason why is, is that markets flourish when people have more money. Employers, small businesses do better when you have more money. When your treasury is more likely to have money, you're more likely to take risk. And that's what tax cuts do.

And by the way, it's another issue that we're facing. I—in all due respect to the Democrats, if you look at their budget, they want to raise your taxes. I believe Congress needs to keep your taxes low. I believe, by the way—let me—[*applause*]. Thank you. I'm not trying to rally, I'm just trying to explain. [*Laughter*]

I believe we have proven that the best way to balance the budget—and I know many of you are concerned about a balanced budget—is to grow the economy through low taxes, which means enhanced revenues, and be wise about spending your money. In other words, progrowth economic policies have proven to work. And

it turns out that when the economy grows, taxes increase. And therefore, the corollary is to make sure we don't overspend.

The temptation in Washington is to spend, it just is. And every idea sounds like a great idea. And—but we are proving that you can balance the budget by keeping taxes low. As a matter of fact, I think it was 167 billion—the deficit was 167 billion less than anticipated because of—over the last 2 years because of low taxes. I said we'd cut the deficit in half by 5 years or 4 years, and we've done it 3 years quicker. Now, we've submitted a new budget that shows we can balance the budget without raising taxes. That's a principle.

I believe, for example, that the government ought to trust people to make decisions. And so how does that—like health care; that's a big issue for all of us. One of the ways that I think—was that your question? Good, okay. I'll ask it for you: What are you going to do on health care? Anyway—[laughter]. The Tax Code discriminates against an individual on health care decisions. And I believe that we ought to change the Tax Code so an employee of a corporation is treated equally as somebody who is self-employed. In other words, the tax treatment ought to be the same, all aimed at encouraging individual decisionmaking in the marketplace. I'm a big believer in health savings accounts, because health savings accounts means you are the decisionmaker, along with your doc.

Health care—like Medicare, we changed Medicare for the better. Medicare—I remind people, Medicare had changed—medicine had changed; Medicare hadn't. Prescription drugs became an integral part of medicine, and yet the senior was not covered with prescription drugs in Medicare. It didn't make any sense to me to pay thousands for an ulcer operation but not a dime for the prescription drugs that could have prevented the ulcer from happening in the first place.

And so we modernized Medicare with the prescription drug benefit, but we also

did something unique when it came to Government programs. We gave seniors choices. In other words, we created more of a marketplace. It's amazing what happens when people demand something: People provide for it in the marketplace. Competition helps keep price low. It was estimated that we would spend some 600 billion additional money through Medicare, and yet the cost to the Government and you, more particularly, is substantially lower because of competition. That's a principle.

When it comes to pension plans, I think you ought to be managing your money. I don't think you ought to be relying upon government to tell you what your benefit is. I think you ought to be in a position to take your own money and manage it on a tax advantage basis.

In other words, my point is, the principle is that we ought to trust people to make decisions. To whom much is given, much is required. I'm glad you asked this question; thank you. [Laughter] Listen, Laura says, "You love to hear yourself talk, don't you?" [Laughter]

I want to share this story with you, though, because I believe an important principle is, to whom much is given, much is required. The United States of America has been given a lot. We are a blessed nation. For—those of you who travel around the world know exactly what I'm talking about, about what a great life we have here compared to a lot of other folks.

When I first came into office, I was deeply concerned about the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, particularly on the continent of Africa. I was concerned because during the 21st century, an entire—it was possible that an entire generation could be wiped out by a disease for which we could do something about.

I went to Congress; I went to you. I asked for a substantial sum of money to help fund a campaign to save lives on the most 19 affected nations on Earth. I asked a former CEO of Eli Lilly, Randy Tobias, to run the program. As a result of your



generosity, based upon the principle to whom much is given, much is required, over 850,000 people receive antiretroviral drugs today. That's up from 50,000, 3 years ago.

Is it in our Nation's interest to do that? I believe it is. If what happens overseas matters here at home, then I do think it's important to help address issues like starvation and disease. But I also think it's in the interest of the soul of the Nation to adhere to an important principle. And I think we're adding to a glorious chapter in our history to say that the people of the United States have helped save thousands of lives that otherwise might have been lost to HIV/AIDS.

And so those are some of the principles. And you asked a question: What do I think? I think it's important to stand on principle. I think it's important to make decisions based upon a core set of beliefs. That's what I think. And politics comes and goes, but your principles don't. And everybody wants to be loved—not everybody, but—[laughter]—you run for office, I guess you do. [Laughter] You never heard anybody say: "I want to be despised; I'm running for office." [Laughter] But I believe, sir, in my soul, that I have made the right decisions for this country when it comes to prosperity and peace. That's what I believe.

I want to share something with you about history. I'm reading a lot of history; I mentioned to you. I read three histories on George Washington last year. The year 2006, I read three histories about our first President. My attitude is, if they're still writing about 1, 43 doesn't need to worry about it. [Laughter]

Yes, ma'am.

#### *Shootings at Virginia Tech/School Safety*

Q. This is in regards to the Virginia Tech tragedy. Being a high school student—

*The President.* Go ahead. Go ahead. Let's get the mike there.

Q. Sorry.

*The President.* Thanks.

Q. This is in regards to the Virginia Tech tragedy. Being a high school student, I was wondering what's being done to ensure safety in schools?

*The President.* I think that—first of all, I don't know your principal very well—I met him. I will tell you, though, that his biggest concern, besides you learning to read, write, add, and subtract and be a student who can contribute to society, is your safety.

One of the lessons of these tragedies is to make sure that when people see somebody or know somebody who is exhibiting abnormal behavior, to do something about it, to suggest that somebody take a look, that if you are a parent and your child is doing strange things on the Internet, pay attention to it and not be afraid to ask for help and not be afraid to say, "I am concerned about what I'm seeing."

I think there's a tendency at times for people—and I fully understand this—is to respect somebody's privacy, you know, and not share concerns. But some of the lessons of these shootings have been that it is—and I don't know about this case—and by the way, they're still digging out the facts, so I think it's very important for us not to comment until it's all said and done—but that other cases, there have been warning signals, that if an adult, for example, had taken those signals seriously, perhaps tragedy could have been avoided.

And so the lesson is, is that—and I know you're—the lesson is, is that the principals and teachers and adults of this school must be on alert, and I know they are.

And as I—I repeat to you: You're lucky—all of us—a lot of these high schools are really lucky to have people who care about you. I mean the—unfortunately, in a complex society, the teacher's job and the principal's job is more than just teaching; it is safety. And yet that is a vital concern, I know, to the folks who run this school.

Okay. Yes, ma'am.



### War on Terror

Q. [Inaudible]—misconception about scaling back in Iraq.

The President. Sure, go ahead. Wait, I want this question recorded. A little hustle there. [Laughter] Thank you.

Q. I believe there's a big misconception that scaling back in Iraq will cost less in the long run than to go in and get the job done. How do you get that message across to America and especially to Congress?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. Her concern is that a scale back will either save money or save lives or save headache, and how do you get the message out? Coming here is part of getting the message out. The President has got to be educator in chief, and I've just got to keep talking about it. I've spent a lot of time on this subject. This is a subject that has concerned a lot of our fellow citizens. They are deeply worried about whether or not it is possible for us to succeed, and that there needs to be an explanation of the violence.

And my answer is, is that the—there is a political process that's ongoing, an economic process that's ongoing, a rebuilding process that's ongoing, and a security process that's ongoing, and that you can't have the former unless you have security. And therefore, it's in the interest—if a failed state creates violence and chaos that eventually could come and hurt us, it's in our interest to help succeed.

And therefore, the troop levels need to be commensurate with the capacity of that society to protect itself. The objective is to have the Iraqis take over their own security. It's just that they weren't ready to do so. And I appreciate your question.

It's very important—I think some really are—I know a lot of people are tired of it. People get pretty tired of war, and I understand that. It's really important as we—that we have a sober discussion and

understand what will be the consequences of failure.

The—as I told you, on the rug—the reason I brought up the rug was to not only kind of break the ice but also to talk about strategic thought. The President's job is to think not only about today but tomorrow. The President's job is not only think about the short-term security of the United States but to think about the little guys, you know—what the world will look like 20 or 30 or 40 years from now.

And I appreciate your question because I will continue to work hard to explain the consequences of this world in which we live; that what happens overseas matters here at home in the 21st century, and that we are in the beginning of a long struggle that will have, hopefully, not a lot of military action, would be my hope for future Presidents. But it is a struggle akin to other struggles we have been through.

The ideological struggle of the cold war is a potential parallel. It's freedom versus communism. This is a—this is a struggle with freedom versus extreme radicalism. There have been—how do you allow a society, or how do you encourage societies to evolve after struggle, after conflict? There are other historical parallels. And my job is to continue to explain the consequences: consequences of success, which I believe will be peace; the consequences of failure, which I believe will be creating a more dangerous situation here in the United States.

Boehner is a busy man. He is busy representing the people of this district. He is now giving me the signal—[laughter]. I'm feeling his vibes. [Laughter] I'm going to fly him back to Washington.

I'm honored that you gave me a chance to come and visit with you. I ask for God's blessings on our troops and their families, on the people of Virginia Tech, and on the people of the United States. Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Bruns, former president, Tipp City Area Chamber of Commerce; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Mahmud al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Iraqi House of Representatives; King Abdallah bin Abd al-

Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

## Remarks on Signing the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act April 20, 2007

*The President.* Good morning. Thanks. Be seated. Welcome to the Roosevelt Room. This morning I have the honor of signing a bill that will help continue our Nation's fight against breast and cervical cancer. This bill reauthorizes the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. I want to thank the Congress for passing this bill. I appreciate you all coming down to witness the signing of this important piece of legislation.

Our family, like many families, has been touched by this issue. Laura's mom, my mother-in-law, Jenna Welch, was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 78. She is a fortunate person—she had surgery, and 9 years later, she is a cancer survivor, and we are thankful for that.

As a result of her mom's battle with cancer, Laura has devoted a lot of time and energy to raising awareness about breast cancer through efforts like the pink ribbon campaign. She managed to get me to wear pink. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Laura's good work. And I thank your good work as well, and thank you for joining us.

I want to thank Mike Leavitt, the Secretary of Health and Human Services. I appreciate Senator Barbara Mikulski from Maryland, who is a pioneer in a bill such as this. And, Senator, you're a—when you get on an issue, you can get—[*laughter*]—

you get things done, and we appreciate your leadership.

*Senator Barbara A. Mikulski.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* I thank Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, who is a bill sponsor, as well as Congresswoman Sue Myrick. Sue is a cancer survivor. And we appreciate both of your leadership on this issue. I thank members from my administration for joining us; good to see you all.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths for American women. This year, an estimated 180,000 Americans will be diagnosed with breast cancer; 11,000 will be diagnosed with cervical cancer. Together, these two cancers are expected to claim the lives of more than 44,000 Americans in 2007.

Early detection allows early intervention and is the best way to increase the chance for survival. Mammograms and pap tests and other screening services can help doctors diagnose cancer before it has a chance to spread. When breast cancer or cervical cancer is caught early, the survival rate is more than 90 percent. Early detection makes treatment more effective: It gives hope to patients, and it saves lives.

The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program has helped millions of low-income and uninsured women get screened for cancer. This is an effective

program. Since its creation, the program has conducted nearly 7 million cancer screenings; it's diagnosed thousands of cases of breast and cervical cancer; and it's helped educate women about the importance of early detection. We expect that in 2007, this program will provide more than 700,000 screenings for low-income and uninsured women. The program is an important part of this Nation's fight against cancer, and the bill I'm about to sign will continue to lifesaving work.

I appreciate working with the United States Congress to fund breast and cervical cancer research and prevention. The span of my administration, we have spent, along with Congress, \$6.7 billion. My budget for 2008 includes another billion dollars for research and prevention activities. We'll continue to work to ensure that every American woman has access to the screenings

she needs to detect the cancers in time to treat them.

Again, I want to thank the Members of Congress for their hard work and their dedication in passing this important piece of legislation. I appreciate you all joining us to witness the bill signing ceremony. And it's now my honor to sign the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act. *[Laughter]*

*[At this point, the President signed the bill.]*

*The First Lady.* Thank you all.

*The President.* Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. H.R. 1132, approved April 20, was assigned Public Law No. 110-18. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks to the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan and a Question-and-Answer Session in East Grand Rapids, Michigan April 20, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all very much. I'm glad to be back in Grand Rapids. I appreciate the opportunity to address the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan. I was leaving the White House today, Laura said, "Where are you headed?" I said, "To the west coast." *[Laughter]* She said, "Make sure you take your suntan lotion." *[Laughter]* I said, "The west coast of Michigan"—*[laughter]*—and I'm glad to be with you.

You can't help but think about Gerald Ford when you come to Grand Rapids, Michigan. You know, our country was blessed to have such a decent, honorable, kind, courageous leader in Gerald R. Ford, and we miss him a lot.

I appreciate Dixie Anderson, who is the executive director of the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan. I thank Bar-

bara Propes, who is the president of the World Affairs Council of America. I want to thank Ping Liang, president, board of directors of the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan, and a fellow Yale Bulldog.

I appreciate my friend, Ambassador Pete Secchia for joining us today. He was the Ambassador to Italy under 41. I appreciate Sara Shubel, who is the superintendent of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools. Thank you very much for allowing me to come to this beautiful auditorium here in East Grand Rapids High School. I appreciate Jenny Fee, the associate principal, as well as Larry Fisher.

My purpose of coming is to instruct, is to talk about the issues that our world is facing, particularly the issue of Iraq. And

I appreciate the chance to come to this high school to do so.

I thank Congressman Vern Ehlers, Congressman from this district. I appreciate you being here, Vern, and thank you for joining me and Congressman Pete Hoekstra on Air Force One. It's probably quite convenient for you to fly from Washington on Air Force One. [Laughter] Glad to provide the transportation. [Laughter] Both these men are really honorable folks who serve western Michigan well in Congress, and I want to thank you for your service.

I thank the Michigan Attorney General, Michael Cox, for joining us. Mike, thanks for coming today. Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land. She heard this was a foreign policy speech. [Laughter] I appreciate Mayor Cindy Bartman, city of East Grand Rapids; Mayor George Heartwell, city of Grand Rapids. Thank you all for serving. I appreciate your willingness to become public servants.

One of the messages I hope that I can convey to the high school students who are here, no matter what your political beliefs may be: that it's important to serve. It's important to serve the community in which you live. And you can do so all kinds of ways. You can run for mayor at some point in time, or you can feed the hungry. But service is noble, and service is necessary. I see we've got some who wear the uniform of the United States military. In this day and age, that's the ultimate service, as far as I'm concerned, and I appreciate your volunteering.

For more than a half century, the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan has been a forum for lively and important debate. I understand this council was set up in 1949. It's been an important forum for people to talk about the big questions facing our country. There is no bigger question than what course our Nation should pursue in Iraq, and that's what I'm here to talk about.

Three months ago, my administration completed an extensive review of that very

question. I ordered major changes to our strategy in Iraq. And to lead this new strategy, I named General David Petraeus, an expert who wrote the Army's new manual on counterinsurgency warfare.

This new strategy is fundamentally different from the previous strategy. It recognizes that our top priority must be to help Iraq's elected leaders secure their population, especially in Baghdad, because Iraqis will not be able to make the political and economic progress they need until they have a basic measure of security. Iraq's leaders are committed to providing that security, but at this point, they cannot do it on their own.

And so I ordered American reinforcements to help the Iraqis secure their population, to go after the terrorists and insurgents that are inciting sectarian violence, and to get their capital under control. As our troops take on this mission, they will continue to train and mentor the Iraqi security forces for the day they can take full responsibility for the security of their own country.

General Petraeus has been carrying out this new strategy for just over 2 months. He reports that it will be later this year before we can judge the potential of success. Yet the first indications are beginning to emerge, and they show that so far, the operation is meeting expectations. There are still horrific attacks in Iraq, such as the bombings in Baghdad on Wednesday, but the direction of the fight is beginning to shift.

In the coming months, I'll deliver regular updates on our operations. Today I want to share some details about how this effort is unfolding in three areas: Baghdad, Anbar Province, and the outskirts of Baghdad, where terrorists and extremists are making a stand.

The most significant element of our new strategy is being carried out in Baghdad. Baghdad has been the site of most of the sectarian violence; it is the destination for most of our reinforcements. So far, three

additional American brigades totaling about 12,000 troops have reached the Baghdad area, another brigade is in Kuwait preparing to deploy, and one more will arrive in Kuwait next month. The Iraqi Government is also meeting its pledge to boost its force levels in the city. For every American combat soldier deployed to Baghdad, there are now about three Iraqi security forces, giving us a combined total of nearly 80,000 combat forces in the Baghdad area.

My point is, is that the American combat forces are not alone in the effort to secure the nation's capital. And just as important as the growing number of troops is their changing position in the city. I direct your attention to a map showing our troop presence around Baghdad late last year. This is how we were positioned. Most troops were at bases on the outskirts of the city. They would move into Baghdad to clear out neighborhoods during the day, and then they would return to their bases at night. The problem was that when our troops moved back to the bases, the extremists, the radicals, the killers moved back into the neighborhoods.

And we're changing. Part of our strategy change, part of the new mission in Baghdad, is for American troops to live and work side by side with Iraqi forces at small neighborhood posts called joint security stations. You can see from this map, there are now more than two dozen joint security stations located throughout Baghdad; more are planned. From these stations, Iraqi and American forces work together to clear out and then secure neighborhoods, all aimed at providing security for the people of Baghdad. If a heavy fight breaks out, our forces will step in, and Iraqi forces learn valuable skills from American troops. They'll fight shoulder to shoulder with the finest military ever assembled.

By living in Baghdad neighborhoods, American forces get to know the culture and concerns of local residents. Equally important, the local residents get to know them. When Iraqi civilians see a large pres-

ence of professional soldiers and police patrolling their streets, they grow in confidence and trust. They become less likely to turn to militias for protection. People want security in their lives, and they tend to turn to the most apparently effective security force. And as people gain confidence in the ability of the Iraqi troops, along with the United States, to provide security, they begin to cooperate. In fact, Iraqi and American forces have received more tips in the past 3 months than during any 3-month period on record. These are tips provided by local citizens about where to find terrorists and insurgents.

Most people, the vast majority of people want to live in peace. Iraqi mothers want their children to grow up in peace. And if given the opportunity and given the confidence, civilians turn in the terrorists and extremists and murderers to help achieve that peace.

This new approach to securing Baghdad brings risks. When I announced the new operation, I cautioned that more troops conducting more operations in more neighborhoods would likely to bring more casualties. Since the security operation began, we have seen some of the highest casualty levels of the war. And as the number of troops in Baghdad grows and operations move into even more dangerous neighborhoods, we can expect the pattern to continue.

We must also expect the terrorists and insurgents to continue mounting terrible attacks. Here is a photo of the devastation caused by a car bomb at a bus stop in Baghdad on Wednesday. The victims of this attack were innocent men and women who were simply coming home from work. Yet this was hardly a random act of murder. It has all the hallmarks of an Al Qaida attack. The terrorists bombed the buses at rush hour, with the specific intent to kill as many people as possible. This has been long a pattern of Al Qaida in Iraq; this



is what they do. They carried out the spectacular attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. They bombed the Jordanian Embassy in Iraq. They claimed credit for the bombing of the Golden Mosque of Samarra. Just last week, they sent a suicide bomber to attack the Iraqi Parliament building.

Al Qaida believes that its best chance to achieve its objectives, which is to drive the United States out of Iraq and prevent the emergence of a free society in the Middle East, is to defeat the security operation by conducting spectacular attacks that provoke Iraqis into taking violence into their own hands and lead Americans to conclude that the sectarian killing will never be contained. This strategy is merciless, but it is not without logic. It's important for all Iraqis—Sunnis and Shi'a alike—to understand that Al Qaida is the greatest threat to peace in their country. And the question is whether we and the Iraqis will give in and to—respond the way Al Qaida wants. Because of the lessons of September the 11th, the answer is, the United States Government will not give in to what Al Qaida wants. And the Iraqis must not give in to Al Qaida if they want to have a peaceful society.

The nature of a strategy aimed at securing the population is that the most important gains are often the least dramatic. Day by day, block by block, Iraqi and American forces are making incremental gains in Baghdad. Thanks to more troops on the streets and more cooperation from residents, the average number of weapons stockpiles seized each week has jumped 50 percent since the beginning of the new strategy. American and Iraqi forces tracked down and captured the leaders of a major car bomb ring. We found and cleared a warehouse where terrorists were storing chemicals to make weapons. We captured members of a death squad that had terrorized hundreds of residents in a Baghdad neighborhood. As a result, displaced families are beginning to return home. And the

number of sectarian murders in Baghdad has dropped by half since the operation began.

The results of the security operation are uneven across the city. In some areas, there have been sharp declines in sectarian killing, while in other areas, the level of violence is still far too high. Yet even in volatile districts like Sadr City, our new approach is beginning to make a difference. A report last month in the *Grand Rapids Press* quoted an Iraqi resident of Sadr City. Perhaps you read it. If you didn't, here's what it said: "They thanked us"—they're talking about our forces and Iraqi forces—"They thanked us with respect and a smile." This resident said, "I'm happy that such a campaign is done in my neighborhood." People want security, and they want to live in peace.

Developments like these are not as spectacular as a terrorist bomb. When a family decides to stop depending on militias to protect them or a young man rejects insurgency and joins the Iraqi Army, it doesn't usually make the evening news. Yet small, individual choices like these are vital to the success of our campaign. They show that despite all the violence, the vast majority of Iraqis want security; they want to live in peace. I know I've said that more than once. It's important for our citizens to understand that people around the world are anxious for peace, and yet there are extremists and radicals and murderers who will do anything they can to prevent it from happening.

The Iraqi security forces are growing in maturity and gaining trust, and that's important. Our men and women in uniform are showing great courage and skill, and that's important to the Iraqi people as well.

Another significant element of our new strategy is being carried out in Anbar Province, a largely Sunni area west of Baghdad. For much of the past 4 years, Anbar has been a hotbed for insurgents and Al Qaida terrorists. Remember, Al Qaida is Sunni in nature. According to a captured Al Qaida



document, according to what Al Qaida has made clear, their goal is to take over the Anbar Province and make it their home base for Iraq. That would bring them closer to their stated objective of taking down Iraq's democracy, building a radical Islamic empire, and having safe haven from which to launch attacks on the United States citizens here at home or abroad. That is what Al Qaida has stated. That is their objective, and Anbar Province is where they're trying to achieve their objective. Al Qaida has pursued this goal through a ruthless campaign of violence, and they grew in power. They were succeeding.

And then something began to change. The people of Anbar began to realize their life was not the paradise Al Qaida promised; as a matter of fact, it was a nightmare. So, courageous tribal sheiks launched a movement called The Awakening, and began cooperating with American and Iraqi forces. The sheiks and their followers knew exactly who the terrorists were, and they began providing highly specific intelligence. To help capitalize on the opportunity, I sent more troops into Anbar Province. Alongside the Iraqi Army and police, U.S. marines and Special Operations forces have been striking terrible blows against Al Qaida.

The maps show the dramatic changes taking place in Ramadi, which happens to be the capital of Anbar Province. The red-shaded areas in the first map show the concentration of Al Qaida terrorists in the city 2 months ago. The second map shows the concentration of the terrorists now. Their presence has declined substantially. Here is how one reporter described the changes: "A year ago, Ramadi's police force had virtually been wiped out, leaving only a couple dozen officers and a lawless city with nowhere to turn for help. Now guerrilla fighters have begun to disappear, schools and shops have reopened, and civilians have begun walking previously in deserted streets."

Anbar Province is still not safe. Al Qaida has responded to these changes with sickening brutality. They bomb fellow Sunnis in prayer at a mosque; they send death squads into neighborhoods; they have recruited children as young as 12 years old to help carry out suicide attacks. But this time, local Sunnis are refusing to be intimidated. With the encouragement of their tribal leaders, they're stepping forward to protect their families and drive out the terrorists. They're stepping forward to prevent Al Qaida—the people who attacked us on September the 11th, 2001—from establishing safe haven in Anbar Province. And I believe strongly it's in the interest of the United States of America to help them.

General Petraeus said earlier this month, "In the latest recruiting effort, which used to draw minimal numbers of Iraqis willing to serve in the Iraqi Army or the Iraqi police in Anbar Province, there were over 2,000 volunteers for the latest training." General Petraeus went on: "Frankly, it's a stunning development and reflects the frustration the Sunni Arab tribes have with what Al Qaida has done to them. It has really had a devastating effect." If given a chance, most people will reject extremists and radicals and murderers.

The United States will help the Sunni sheiks and will help their people. We will stay on the offense in Anbar Province. We and the Iraqi Government are carrying out our new strategy in Baghdad and Anbar, as well as the "Baghdad belts"; these are areas on the outskirts of the capital that have been staging grounds for deadly attacks. I have discussed the capital city with you. I discussed a western Province with you. And I'm now going to talk about the belts around the capital city of Iraq.

We have moved an additional Stryker battalion to Diyala Province, which is northeast of Baghdad, where our soldiers and Iraqi forces are conducting raids against Al Qaida and insurgents. We have sent reinforcements to Diwaniyah Province—Diwaniyah, a city of Diwaniyah,

which is 80 miles south of Baghdad, where we're working with Iraqi forces to rout out militia and Shi'a extremists.

In these and other parts of the Baghdad belts, Iraqi and American forces are fighting to clear and hold territory that the enemies of a free society considered their own. They're fighting back. As a result, violence is increasing. And as our forces move deeper into the territory, the violence could increase even more. Yet these operations are having an important impact on this young democracy. They're keeping the pressure on the terrorists and insurgents who have fled Anbar and Baghdad. They're helping cut off the supply of weapons and fighters to violent groups inside the capital. They're showing Iraqi citizens across the country, there will be no sanctuary for killers anywhere in a free Iraq.

All of these military operations are designed to improve security for everyday folks, they're designed to reduce sectarian violence, and they're designed to open up breathing space for political progress by Iraq's Government.

It may seem like decades ago, but it wasn't all that long ago that 12 million Iraqi citizens voted for a free and democratic future for their country. And the Government they elected is in place—it hasn't been in place a year yet—and they're working hard to make progress on some key benchmarks, progress to help this country reconcile and unite after years of tyrannical and brutal rule.

The Iraqi legislature passed a budget that commits \$10 billion of their money for reconstruction projects, and now the Government must spend that money to improve the lives of Iraqi citizens. The Council of Ministers recently approved legislation that would provide a framework for an equitable sharing of oil resources, and now that legislation needs to go before their Parliament for approval. The Government has formed a committee to organize Provincial elections, and the next step is to set a date for those elections to be held. Iraqi leaders

are taking steps toward an agreement on a de-Ba'athification law that will allow more Iraqis to reenter their nation's civic life, and they need to agree on that measure and send it to the Parliament.

Prime Minister Maliki is working to build greater support from Iraq's neighbors and the international community. I just talked to him the other day on secure video—I was in the White House, and he was in Baghdad—and we talked about this neighborhood conference opportunity to rally the international community to help support this young democracy's efforts to thrive and prosper. And at the conference in Egypt next month, he, along with Secretary Rice and other concerned leaders, will seek increased diplomatic and financial commitments for this country.

Iraq's leaders have begun meeting their benchmarks, and they've got a lot left to do. As more breathing space is created by reducing the sectarian violence, Iraq's leaders have got to take advantage of that breathing space. I have made it abundantly clear to the Prime Minister that our patience is not unlimited, that we fully recognize that there has to be political progress and economic progress, along with military progress in order for that Government to succeed. And it's up to the Iraqi people and the Iraq-elected folks to show America and the world they're ready to do the hard work necessary to reconcile and move forward.

It's important to understand that Iraq's Government is working hard in a difficult environment. The day after its building was bombed, the Iraqi Parliament held a special session. Its Speaker said the meeting sent "a clear message to all the terrorists and all those who share—who dare to try to stop this political process that we will sacrifice in order for it to continue." I found that to be a heartening statement, that here Al Qaida bombs their Parliament, and this man stands up and says: You're not going to scare us; we want to represent the will of the 12 million people who voted.

I—you've just got to know my view of—the vast majority of Iraqis are courageous people. They've endured brutality as a result of murderers trying to stop their new country from—their new system of government from succeeding. And I'm impressed by their courage. And I believe this current Government under Prime Minister Maliki is committed to building a strong democracy. That's my judgment, having talked to him. I've watched a man begun to grow in office. I first talked to him in June, when he was named the Prime Minister. I've talked to him consistently ever since. I look to see whether or not he has courage to make the difficult decisions necessary to achieve peace. I'm looking to see whether or not he has got the capacity to reach out and help unify this country. He says, you know, sometimes it's hard to get the Parliament to do exactly what he thinks they ought to do. *[Laughter]* I know what he means. *[Laughter]*

As we increase troop levels, we're also increasing our civilian presence. We're doubling the number of what's called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which partner civilian experts with combat units to ensure that military operations are followed up with rapid economic assistance. These teams help local Iraqi leaders restore basic services and stimulate job creation and promote reconciliation. Their work highlights a sharp difference: The Iraqi and American Governments want to rebuild communities and improve lives; the extremists and terrorists want to destroy communities and take lives. And when ordinary Iraqis see this difference for themselves, they become more likely to stand with their elected leaders and help marginalize the extremists in this struggle.

Here at home, a different kind of struggle is taking place, and its outcome will have a direct impact on the frontlines. Despite the initial signs of progress on the ground, despite the fact that many reinforcements have not even arrived, Democratic leadership of the Congress is pushing

legislation that would undercut the strategy General David Petraeus has just started to pursue. They have passed bills in the House and Senate that would impose restrictions on our military commanders and mandate a precipitous withdrawal by an arbitrary date. They say, withdrawal, regardless of the conditions on the ground. That approach makes for a vivid contrast with the attitude in Iraq. A prominent Middle Eastern scholar recently visited Iraq, described the difference this way: "A traveler who moves between Baghdad and Washington is struck by the gloomy despair in Washington and the cautious sense of optimism in Baghdad."

We have honest differences of opinion in Washington and around this country, and I appreciate those differences. The ability to debate differences openly and frequently is what makes America a great country. Our men and women in uniform should never be caught in the middle of these debates. It has now been 74 days since I sent to Congress a request for emergency funding that our troops urgently need. The leadership in Congress have spent those 74 days trying to substitute their judgment for the judgment of our generals, without sending me legislation. And now, to cover ongoing Army operations, the Pentagon is being forced to transfer money from military personnel accounts.

The delay in spending is beginning to affect the ability of the Pentagon to fund our troops and all our missions. On Wednesday, I met the White House with congressional leaders from both parties. It was a very cordial meeting. I think you would have been pleased at the tone of the meeting in the Cabinet Room there at the White House; at least I was. I urged the people around the table to put politics aside and to send a bill that funds our troops, without arbitrary deadlines, without wasteful spending, and without handcuffing our commanders.

There is ample time to debate this war. We need to get the troops the money.

When we debate the war on terror, it can be convenient to divide up the fight by location. And so we hear about, quote, “the war in Afghanistan” and, quote, “the war in Iraq,” if they were something separate. This is a natural way to talk about a complicated subject; I don’t think it’s accurate. Our enemies make no distinction based on borders. They view the world as a giant battlefield and will strike wherever they can. The killers who behead captives and order suicide bombings in Iraq are followers of the same radical ideology as those who destroy markets in Afghanistan, or they set off car bombs in Algeria, and blow up subway trains in London. The men who attacked Iraq’s Parliament last week swear allegiance to the same terrorist network as those who attacked America on September the 11th, 2001.

The fight in Iraq has been long and is trying. It’s a difficult period in our Nation’s history. I also say, it’s a consequential moment in our Nation’s history as well. It’s natural to wish there was an easy way out, that we could just pack up and bring our troops home and be safe. Yet in Iraq, the easy road would be a road to disaster. If we were to leave Iraq before that Government can defend itself and be an ally in this war against extremists and radicals and be able to deny safe haven to people who want to hurt the United States, the consequences for this country would be grave.

There would be a security vacuum in Iraq. Extremists and radicals love vacuums in which to spread chaos. The world would see different factions of radicals, different groups of extremists competing for influence and power. The extremists who emerge from this battle would turn the country into a new radical regime in the Middle East. I told you they want to launch new attacks on America, and they need safe haven from which to do so.

Not every enemy we face in Iraq wants to attack us here at home, but many of them do. And I believe it’s in the interest of this country to take those threats seri-

ously. We don’t have to imagine what might happen if a group of terrorists gained safe haven. We’ve learned that lesson, I hope—precisely what happened in Afghanistan—it’s really important for our memories not to dim. At least it’s important for my memory not to dim, because my most important job is to protect the American people. The lesson of 9/11 is that when you allow extremists and radicals and killers to find a sanctuary anywhere in the world, that can have deadly consequences on the streets of our own cities. What happens overseas matters here in the United States of America. It’s one of the fundamental lessons of September the 11th, 2001.

Those who advocate pulling out of Iraq claim they are proposing an alternative strategy to deal with the situation there. Withdrawal is not a strategy. Withdrawal would do nothing to prevent violence from spilling out across that country and plunging Iraq into chaos and anarchy. Withdrawal would do nothing to prevent Al Qaida from taking advantage of the chaos to seize control of a nation with some of the world’s largest oil resources. Withdrawal would embolden these radicals and extremists. Withdrawal would do nothing to prevent Al Qaida from using Iraq as a base to overthrow other moderate countries. Withdrawal would do nothing to prevent Iran from exploiting the chaos in Iraq to destabilize the region, expand its radical influence, threaten Israel, and further its ambitions to obtain nuclear weapons.

If anything, withdrawal would make each of these dangerous developments more likely. Withdrawal would embolden enemies and confirm their belief that America is weak and does not have the stomach to do what is necessary to lay the foundations for peace. Ultimately, withdrawal would increase the probability that American troops would have to return to Iraq and confront an enemy that is even more dangerous.

So no matter how frustrating the fight in Iraq can be, no matter how much we

wish the war was over, the security of our country depends directly on the outcome of Iraq. The price of giving up there would be paid in American lives for years to come. I firmly believe that historians would look back on that decision to withdraw, and say: "What happened to them in the year 2007? How come they could not see the dangers to the United States of America?"

No one understands the stakes in Iraq more clearly than our troops. Every man and woman in our military volunteered for the job. They make us proud every day. Michael Evans is a specialist from Sumner, Illinois. His unit is part of the new operation to secure Baghdad. He said, quote, "It is a great feeling to know we're contributing to getting insurgents off the streets, so the people do not have to live in fear." He went on to say, "I'll be coming away from this knowing that I was doing something to help the American people—so that what happened on 9/11 never happens again."

I agree with him. Specialist Evans represents the greatness of our country, decent citizens volunteering to protect you. You know, for all we hear about the consequences of failure in Iraq, we should not forget the consequences of success in Iraq. Success in Iraq would bring something powerful and new, a democracy in the heart of the Middle East, a nation that fights terrorists instead of harboring them, and a powerful example for others of the power of liberty to overcome an ideology of hate.

We have done this kind of work in the United States of America before. I am—you know, I marvel at the fact that on the one hand, my dad joined the Navy at 18 to fight a sworn enemy—the Japanese—and on the other hand, his son, some 55 years later, best friend and keeping the peace with the Prime Minister of Japan. I find that an amazing fact of history: 41 fights them; 43 works with them to lay the foundation for peace, including working

with Japan to deploy Japanese troops in Iraq. It's amazing to me. But it shows the power of liberty to transform enemies into allies.

We have done the hard work before of helping young democracies. As a matter of fact, we did so after a brutal World War II, in helping Germany and Japan get back on their feet and establish forms of government that yield peace. We did so after the Korean war. I suspect it would be hard to find anybody in 1953 to predict that an American President would one day be reporting to the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan that relations in the Far East are solid for the United States of America and that that part of the world is relatively peaceful compared to other troubled parts of the world. In '53 they would have been thinking about all the lives lost in Japan or in Korea. In '53 they would have seen a Communist China gaining strength.

And yet, in 2007, we've got a Korea that went through difficult times to get to the democracy she's now in and is now a major trading partner of the United States. We've got a China with an open marketplace, based upon the principles where consumers get to decide things, not the state. The political system has got a long way to go, but the marketplace is beginning to redefine that society. Or how about Japan? A place where we lost thousands of lives, and yet now they're a partner in peace.

America has done the hard work necessary to give liberty a chance to prevail. And it's my answer—my opinion and in the opinion of people like Specialist Evans that we do so in the Middle East for the sake of peace for a young generation of Americans.

Thank you. Thank you all. You all, sit down.

I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions, on any subject. Yes, sir.



*Emergency Supplemental Appropriations/  
War on Terror Strategy*

Q. How do you think the new Democratic Congress will—[inaudible].

*The President.* Yes, thanks. First of all, I just want you to know that even though I'm quite critical of the delay in the supplemental funding, I respect the Democratic leadership in Washington. We have fundamental disagreements about whether or not helping this young democracy is—the consequences of failure or success, let's put it that way. It's also very important in this debate to understand that even though we have our policy differences—particularly as the young lad that you are—that we don't think either of us are not patriotic citizens, okay?

So when you hear the debate, in my perspective, it's because of—I just disagree with the notion that when we have troops in harm's way that there ought to be a kind of political process with strings attached to a piece of legislation that goes to fund our troops. As I say, there's ample time to discuss right or wrong. I don't believe there's ample time to delay funding for men and women who have volunteered.

Secondly, I feel very strongly—wait a minute—[applause]—this is a sober forum—or a forum of sober people, I hope. [Laughter] There is a—I have a fundamental problem with a—look, a lot of people didn't like the strategy. In other words, people said: "You shouldn't have done that, Mr. President." And I fully understand that aspect of it. I also found it quite ironic that the general I asked to lead the strategy, a counterinsurgency expert, David Petraeus, gets approved by the United States Senate 81 to nothing, and then, on his way over, they begin to micromanage his ability to follow through on the strategy.

So we have just a policy difference. I—when it's all said and done, I believe these troops will get the money they need. I think you're going to see there to be a continual debate on this subject. Interest-

ingly enough, I said in a forum yesterday in Ohio and I'll share with you now, I thought at this point this year, I would be announcing troop reductions in Iraq, because I felt—this is, again, a year ago—I felt that the Iraqi Government was better prepared to be able to handle their own security. And by the way, they want to handle their own security. The Prime Minister is constantly saying: "Let me do more of it." We just believe he's not quite ready to do so and that it's in our interest to help him be able to take on more of the security challenges. And I thought we'd be reducing troops.

And then what happened was, the Samarra bombing took place by Al Qaida, which caused there to be a sectarian outrage. And because the Government was ill-prepared to provide enough security in the capital, people began to use militias to provide security. And the sectarian outrage, the killing started to get out of hand. And I had a decision to make: withdraw from the capital and just kind of hope for the burn-out theory—as you know, I was worried about chaos, and into chaos comes more extremists—or reinforce. I chose reinforce, all aiming to get to a position where we'll be able to reposition our forces.

I liked what James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton suggested. I thought that was a good suggestion. And that is to be in a position at some point in time where our troops are embedded with the Iraqi units; in other words, there's Iraqi units providing security with a handful of U.S. troops helping them learn what it means to be a good military. That's not a given. It's hard to have a good military. It's hard to have a chain of command with logistical support and maintenance support. And we're good at it, and we can help others become good at it. And embedding troops and training troops makes sense for me. I like the idea of having our troops on the over-horizon presence, to be able to help bail out extreme situations. I really want to make sure that our special ops stays on the hunt for



Al Qaida in Iraq. We can't let Al Qaida develop another safe haven. Listen, we spent a lot of energy to drive Al Qaida out of Afghanistan; we don't want them to be able to establish a same type of safe haven in Iraq. That's where I would like to be.

I made the judgment, along with our military commanders: we could not get there until we provided enough security. And I fully understand this is a rough war. As I mentioned in my speech—let me put it more bluntly: The enemy has got an advantage. They know that a spectacular bombing is going to make it on the news, and it shakes people's conscience, and it should. Ours is a nation that has deep compassion for human life and human dignity.

But they also know it makes people question whether or not we can succeed in Iraq. Remember, we believe most of the spectaculars, like the ones you saw—we don't have the intel—I can't tell you for certain Wednesday's bombing was Al Qaida. In other words, I don't have the—I can speculate. But I can tell you a lot of the spectacular bombings have been Al Qaida. A lot of the suicide bombings have been Al Qaida. That's why I said Al Qaida is the main threat for peace, because what they're trying to do is shake the confidence of the Iraqi people and their Government and the coalition's ability to provide security, and shake our confidence.

And, you know, as I say, it is tempting to think, well, just pull out of there and everything is going to be fine. I firmly believe, however, that one of the lessons of September the 11th is that if we were to concede Iraq to basically Al Qaida, in a sense, that they would follow us here, that oceans no longer protect us. And it's also important for you to know that my thinking was deeply affected on September the 11th, 2001. And therefore, a lot of the core of my thinking is to work to protect the United States as my most solemn obligation.

Yes, sir.

*Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom*

Q. I'm wondering if you could describe your relationship with Tony Blair? [*Inaudible*—reduced troops in Basra, how has that impacted your relationship?

*The President.* No, thank you. Good question. His question was: One, the relationship with Tony Blair; two, they have reduced their troops in Basra, in southern Iraq, and has that affected our relationship?

First, I have found Tony Blair to be a stand-up man. He's the kind of person who keeps his word. He's a strategic thinker. He thinks beyond the moment, to be able to try to project out beyond the current, so that the decisions that we have made jointly are decisions that end up yielding a long-term peace.

He, of course, like a good ally, informed me of his Government's intentions to reduce their presence in Basra. I concurred with him because the conditions on the ground were such that he didn't need to keep as many troops there as were initially stationed there. Secondly, what's interesting, as he made the announcement on Basra, he also made the announcement that they're going to send more troops into Afghanistan. Blair knows what I know—Prime Minister Blair knows what I know, that we're in a global war and that we think about Afghanistan and Iraq as separate wars—they're of the same war; they're just different theaters of this war.

He also knows what I know, that our—we have got to work really closely and share intelligence, and that's one of the reasons I appreciate Pete so much. He understands the intelligence business as a key component of keeping the country safe. We've got to share intelligence. This is—Tony Blair is the Prime Minister of a country which has been attacked; so has ours. And—no, I appreciate you bringing him up; he's solid. And in my judgment, the world needs courageous leadership, like—people like Tony Blair.

Yes, sir.

*Iran and Syria/Spread of Democracy in the Middle East*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. What's the next step for the United States, or even the United Nations, in dealing with the belligerent behavior of Iran with regards to nuclear development?

*The President.* Yes, thank you. Excellent question. You go to school here?

Q. No. [Laughter]

*The President.* I was going to say, give the man an "A."

First of all, you do understand Iran is a Shi'a nation primarily. It's—interestingly enough, though, only 50 percent of the nation is Persian. A great portion of Iran is Azeri, Baloch, other kinds of nationalities make up their country.

The Iranians have defied international organizations in an attempt to enrich uranium and—we believe, because they want to have a nuclear weapon. And I believe this challenge is one of the most significant challenges we face—"we," the free world, face. There's a lot of reasons why.

One, just as an example, you really don't want a regime that funds terrorist organizations like Hizballah to have a nuclear weapon as a part of their capacity to create the conditions, for example, of diplomatic blackmail. Secondly, the current leader of Iran has—I'm not exactly sure—I can't remember exactly his words, but the sum of them were that the destruction of one of our allies was important to them—that would be Israel.

Third, it's ironic— isn't it?—that any time a democracy begins to take hold in the Middle East, extremist groups prevent that democracy from moving forward. One such democracy is Lebanon, a wonderful little country. And yet there is a Syrian influence; Syria uses not only their own agents inside the country but Hizballah to destabilize this young democracy. And Hizballah is funded by Iran. In other words, the Iranian regime's current posture is to destabi-

lize young democracies, and they're doing so in Iraq as well.

So our objective is to rally the world to make it clear to the current regime that if they continue their practices, they will continue to be isolated. And we're making interesting progress. We've passed several U.N. Security Council resolutions, the primary benefit of which is to say to the Iranian regime, and equally importantly the Iranian people, that countries as diverse as the United States and China and Russia and parts of Europe will isolate you, will deny you, the Iranian people, the benefits that you deserve. Iran is a proud country with a great tradition and good, hard-working people. And yet their Government is making decisions that endanger peace and, at the same time, will continue to lead to isolation. And so should the Iranian people worry about isolation? I think so, because you're missing economic opportunities. You're missing the chance to improve your lives. You're missing the chance to enhance your country's great history.

The choice is up to the Iranian Government as to whether or not they will be accepted into the family of nations, all aimed at promoting peace and economic prosperity. They have not—they've made a bad choice up to now. And so we'll continue to work hard with the rest of the world, all aiming at solving this very difficult problem diplomatically.

Yes, ma'am.

*Iraq Study Group/Situation in the Middle East*

Q. [Inaudible]—the name of the conference in Egypt that you were discussing?

*The President.* Sure.

Q. I think that's a great idea. I was wondering, we did have a group—a commission, I believe, here, that was discussing how to solve our Iraq problems, but we really haven't implemented the advice from—

*The President.* Baker-Hamilton.

Q. —Baker-Hamilton commission. I was wondering how we were going to be able to convince the countries that participate in this conference in Egypt that we will actually consider implementing their advice—

*The President.* Good. No. That's a good question. First, there was a couple of aspects of Baker-Hamilton; a lot of it had to do with troop posture. And they, Baker-Hamilton, recommended that, as I described, a troop presence to help keep the territorial integrity of Iraq, to embed, to train, to be over the horizon, to chase down extremists. That's pretty much what they recommended, and I agree. The problem is—and by the way, on, like, page 70—something in their book, they said: And the United States may have to increase troop levels necessary to be able to get there. And that's what I did. [*Applause*] Wait a minute, wait a minute—because I realize that we couldn't be in a position on the troop postures they recommended if the capital went into flames. That's a judgment I made.

By the way, with the advice of a lot of people—and just so you know, I spend a lot of time listening to our military. I trust our military, I like our military, I'm impressed by our military. I spend a lot of time talking to Condi Rice. I spend a lot of time talking to allies in the Congress, and I spend a lot of time listening to and talking to people who have a different point of view.

It was after this considered judgment that I made that decision, all aiming at some point in time. Now, the problem is, the Congress, many of whom think that it's a good idea, however, are unwilling to allow conditions on the ground to make the decisions as to when we can ever get there. I don't have that luxury. I must allow conditions on the ground to dictate our position in order to make decisions.

Now, a lot of what Baker-Hamilton talked about was—or some of what they talked about was the diplomatic initiatives.

There were—they talked about a regional conference, and we're happy to participate. They also suggested that the United States enter into bilateral negotiations with Syria, for example. And this is where I have a disagreement. As you know—as you may or may not know, when I was a younger lad, Jimmy Baker was in Houston and a good friend of my family's, and in spite of my deep affection for him, I invited him into the Oval Office and said, "I disagree with you." And he said, "Fine, I disagree with you." [*Laughter*]

And the reason I do is because—now, there's a difference between a regional conference, in my judgment, and—I'll tell you what I hope we can gain out of that—but I do want to address why it's—I think it would be counterproductive at this point to sit down with the Syrians, because Syria knows exactly what it takes to get better relations with the United States. It's not as if they haven't heard what we're for, and we're for making sure they leave the Lebanese democracy alone. They have undermined Lebanon's democracy. When the United States and France worked together on a U.N. resolution, the U.N. demanded that they leave Lebanon. They did, but they're still meddling.

Secondly, there's a man who was assassinated, named Hariri. It's very important that there be a full investigation of the Hariri murder, and they know we expect them to support that investigation. We believe they're hindering that investigation right now. Thirdly, they're providing safe haven for—I'll just say they've got— Hamas and Hizballah have got centers of influence in Damascus. That's unacceptable to the United States. We have made it clear to them that in order for them to have better relations that they must rid their capital of these organizations, all aimed at wreaking havoc in the Middle East and preventing, for example, the development of a peaceful Palestinian state that can live with Israel, side by side in peace.

And finally, Syria is a transit way for suicide bombers heading into Iraq. In sum, they have been particularly unhelpful in achieving peace we want. Now what happens when people go sit down with Bashar Asad, the President of Syria? He walks out and holds a press conference, and says: "Look how important I am; people are coming to see me; people think I'm vital." But he hasn't delivered on one request by the free world.

I asked our security folks, the national security folks to give me a list of all the foreign advisers and foreign secretaries of state and all the people that have gone to see Bashar Asad. And every time they send one in there, we say: Why? Why are you sending somebody there? What is your intention? What have you asked him to do? They all say basically what I just said, and nothing has happened. And my attitude is, is that I think talks would be counter-productive. I'm interested not in process; I'm interested in results. I'm interested in this leader turning Syria into a positive influence for peace, not an obstructionist to peace.

On Iran, I said we'll talk to Iran, but they've got to suspend their enrichment. Diplomacy works when people sit down at the table and need something from you. That's how diplomacy works. It is, in my judgment, just talking for the sake of talking doesn't yield positive results often. As a matter of fact, it can reaffirm behavior that is not in our interests. So we've said to the Iranians, we will talk with you, but first do what the world has asked you to do, and suspend the enrichment of uranium.

As I said in my talk here, and I'm speaking to you—I'm also speaking to the Iranian people. They must know that our beef with Iran is not with the people of Iran, it's with the Government of Iran that continues to make decisions that isolates you from the opportunities of a fantastic world.

Now what do we hope to gain out of the regional conference? It's very important

for us, first of all, for the Iraqi democracy to gain acceptance. This is a new Government. Remember, these folks were run by a tyrant for years, and now we're watching the emergence of a new government that has not been in office for a year yet, by the way. We've been there for more than a year, but the Constitution was passed in '05, late '05; the new Government was seated in June of '06. So Prime Minister Maliki—and it's important, I think, for the world to recognize, or the region to recognize that he was duly elected by the people of Iraq and represents the will of the Iraqi citizens. It's important for people to express their support for this new Government.

It's—let me just talk about a couple of countries: One, Saudi Arabia—my friend, His Majesty, the King, kindly forgave 80 percent of the debt in the run-up to this conference. Eighty percent of Saudi debt to Iraq was forgiven. That's a strong gesture. It's a gesture that I'm confident will spread good will in Iraq. And so the conference can be a success on that alone.

I will tell you, however, that the—His Majesty is skeptical about the Shi'a government in Iraq. And it's going to be very important for Prime Minister Maliki to follow through on the new de-Ba'athification law, for example, which reaches out to Sunnis. People say, what does that mean? Well, the law was passed that basically said, if you were a member of the Ba'ath party, you couldn't participate in much of civil society. And in some Provinces, that is—that's precluded people from being school teachers. In other words, in order to be a teacher, you had to sign up for Saddam's deal, and yet you might not have been a political person. And so what a lot of folks are watching is to see whether or not there's going to be a reconciliation with the Sunnis who have been affected by the de-Ba'athification.

The oil revenue sharing is a very interesting aspect, and this is what people are watching for, because most of the oil is

in Shi'a land or with the Kurds. And therefore, an equitable sharing agreement of the people's resources throughout society will send a signal that this Government is not going to take unnecessary retribution against peaceful Sunnis. And so the benchmarks that I described are important for America, but they're also important to make sure that further regional conferences are successful.

And so I talked to Condi about this last night, as a matter of fact, this very subject, about what constitutes success. And first of all, it's successful to have people come to the table and discuss Iraq and its new form of government. In other words, the region recognizes there is a new government when they come, and that's vital. And then we'll see whether or not some of the pledges, reconstruction pledges, will be met. Excellent question.

Yes, sir.

#### *Public Opinion on Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, thanks for coming to the west coast, first.

*The President.* Looking for the surfboard. [Laughter]

Q. You mentioned in your comments, sir, about the American patience. What's the Prime Minister's take on that? What is his understanding of American patience?

*The President.* Well, he is—you know, I don't know; I think he's concerned about his own country's patience, first and foremost. He's having a tough time. It's a—I will give you my take on patience. I think that if the American people fully understand the stakes of failure, they'll understand why we're doing what we're doing. And my own view of patience is that a President—and I believe Tony Blair agrees with this—must make decisions on certain principles and not try to chase opinion polls. If you make decisions based upon the latest opinion poll, you won't be thinking long-term strategy on behalf of the American people. It's a—[applause]

And Tony Blair understands that as well. At least that's what I get from him. That's—when I talk to him, that's the impression I get.

There weren't opinion polls when Abraham Lincoln was the President. Believe me, I'm not comparing myself to him, but I just don't think a President like Abraham Lincoln made a decision about whether all men were created equal based upon an opinion poll. [Laughter] Nor do I make an opinion about my strong belief that freedom is universal, and there's no debate. I believe in the universality of liberty, and I believe liberty has got the capacity to help transform parts of the world into peaceful parts of the world.

That's what I described to you at the end of—what happened at the end of World War II and at the end of the Korean conflict. I firmly believe in the power of freedom, and I firmly believe that everybody wants to be free. As a matter of fact, to take it a step further, I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a great gift to each man, woman, and child in this world is freedom. That's what I believe. It is a principle from which I will not deviate.

People said to me—the guy asked a question the other day, you don't like the opinion polls and all that stuff—I said, any politician who says they don't want to be popular, you know—you can't win if, like, 50-plus-one don't like you for a moment. [Laughter] You can't make your decisions, however, based on something that just changes; it just, poof. And when it's all said and done, I fully understand that some of the decisions I have made have created a lot of national debate. But I want you to know something, that when I go home and look in the mirror in Crawford, Texas, after my time, I will be able to have said: "He didn't change his principles to be the popular guy, you know; he stood for what he believed."



*Spread of Democracy in the Middle East/  
U.S. Foreign Policy*

Q. Mr. President, I really appreciate your emphasis on the universality of freedom. I'm wondering if and how the United States can promote liberal democratic reform in countries like Saudi Arabia and whether you could address specifically whether it is, perhaps, American support for these autocratic regimes that are creating such an Islamic backlash against the United States?

*The President.* That is a—boy, I don't want to be Mr. Gratuitous, say—fabulous question—but it's really one of the fundamental questions that has caused a lot of debate in Washington, DC, about my freedom agenda.

There are some who say that promoting democracy and liberty in the Middle East is a waste of time. I happen to believe that, kind of, managing stability doesn't address the root cause of the problems that caused 19 kids to get on an airplane and kill 3,000 of our citizens. And so part of our strategy to defend the country is the promotion of freedom around the world. I also, in my second Inaugural Address, believe in the interests of the United States to challenge tyranny wherever we find it. As an aside, and I'm not suggesting my friends here—the scribblers over here—are saying this, but some have called him hopelessly idealistic to believe in the power of freedom to transform parts of the world that seem impervious to liberty.

I believe it is the only realistic way to protect ourselves in the long term, and that is to address the conditions that create hatred, envy, and violence.

The other thing that's important to note is that societies, depending upon their past, take a while to achieve freedom as we define it. In other words, there's—some move at snail's pace, some move obviously quicker. And all the societies will reflect their own traditions and histories. So when you hear me talk about the freedom agen-

da, it's not like I expect Jefferson democracy to be blooming in the desert.

Secondly, friendship with leaders makes it easier to have a frank and candid discussion in a way that doesn't offend. And my friend—I do have a good, very close relationship with King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia, and I'm proud of that relationship. It gives me a chance to be able to share with him ideas about—in a private way, obviously not so private now—[laughter]—why I believe giving people more voice in the affairs of their Government is in the interests of their Government. Same with my friend President Mubarak of Egypt. I have made it clear, for example, that—and by the way, the Egyptians had a Presidential election that was quite modern and different. And I don't believe that it's going to be possible to be able to have a less-free Presidential election during the next round.

And so there is progress being made toward more liberty, in a part of the world that most people said had no chance to be a place for democracy to take hold. I will give you the—in Yemen, there was an election that was supervised by international bodies. They came out and said, "It's a fair election." There are women now serving in Kuwait Parliament. Jordan—the King of Jordan is making moves toward liberalizing his society. I think, slowly but surely—and by the way, this is a long process. Remember, I talked about the aftermath of the Korean war. This is like—we're talking 55 years later. It takes a while.

And the fundamental question facing the country is, will we be engaged in the Middle East helping moderates defeat and fight off radicals—hopefully, not militarily every single time, hopefully, rarely militarily—but by defeating an ideology with forms of government. And it's really going to be an interesting debate. I have staked my claim for the first part of the 21st century. I will tell you, I am worried about our country becoming isolationist and protectionist.



We have been through isolationist and protectionist spells in our history. One of my concerns is that people say, "It is not worth it to be engaged as heavily as we are in parts of the world," particularly the Middle East. I'm concerned about that. I'm concerned because I believe it will be missed opportunity to help people realize that—if you've got a Muslim brotherhood doing a better job of providing health care and education, the way to deal with that is to do a better job than they are, as opposed to ignoring the realities on the ground. And that's what open societies that have got an election process force people to do.

I was criticized by some that upon insisting that the Palestinian elections go forward. I believe elections are the beginning of the reform process, not the end. I believe elections have the capacity to show the elite what's right and what's wrong. And I believe the Hamas elections in the Middle East made it clear that the Palestinians are sick and tired of corruption and government that was not responding to their needs.

I wasn't happy with the outcome of the election. Sometimes that happens; you're not happy with the outcome of elections. [Laughter] But I was inspired by the fact that the Palestinians went to the polls and said, in the fairest way possible: "We're sick of it. Arafat has let us down; no peace. We want to live in peace. Where's the prosperity? Let's get us another bunch in there and see if they can do the job." The problem is, is that the new crowd they have in there refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, which runs contrary to our policy. And therefore, we will continue to take the posture we've taken, because we're interested in peace.

I'm interested in helping the Palestinians develop a Palestinian state. It's all along the same agenda, by the way, which is the freedom agenda. I believe the only way for Israel to have secure peace in the long run is for there to be a democracy living side by side with Israel in peace. I'm afraid

that Israel will ultimately be overrun by demographics in order for her to remain a Jewish democratic state. And yet Hamas wins. And you can't expect a Israeli democratic elected official to negotiate with a group of people who have avowed to destroy them.

And hopefully, at some point in time, the situation will get clarified, if the Palestinian people have another right to express themselves, and that right ought to be, are you for a state or not for a state? Are you going to have people that prevent a better future for emerging from you? By the way, this all started with the elections. And they said: "Oh, you shouldn't have elections; you shouldn't have been fighting against them." Why would I fight against elections? I'm for elections. I think elections are important for society. I think—and I think they're equally important here as they are in the Middle East.

And the fundamental question, really, facing in the long term on this is, will the United States believe that the value system that has enabled our country, by the way, to emerge—and it took us 100 years to get rid of slavery, for example. Far be it from us to say we're perfect. We had a great Constitution, but our history has been scarred by treating people like chattel, with slavery, which is an abhorrent part of our past. But nevertheless, it takes a while, and it takes patience. But it also takes great faith and certain value systems to help societies emerge.

The other question is on trade. And by the way, I happen to believe isolationism and protectionism go hand in hand. As you know, I'm an open-market trader. I believe in free trade. I think competition and trade not only helps the United States; I think it's the best way to alleviate poverty around the world. And yet—and that doesn't mean you don't enforce trade agreements. Recently, we've enforced trade agreements with China, not trying to shut down trade, but trying to enhance trade, trying to make trade more palatable to people in the

United States, recognizing that there is such thing as fair trade as well as free trade.

But I'm concerned about people saying: "Well, it's just not worth it; shut her down; let's make it harder to trade." There's going to be some interesting trade votes coming up in front of the Congress here—free trade agreement with Peru and Colombia are coming up. And we'll find out whether or not the leadership and both Republicans and Democrats are truly committed to not only our neighborhood but trading in a way that enhances prosperity for both sides of the equation.

We're in the middle of negotiations on the Doha round of WTO. I hope some of you are concerned about world poverty. I certainly am. And the best way to deal with world poverty is to encourage prosperity through trade and opening up markets. And we're in a complex negotiation, and I'm dedicated to getting this round completed in a way that meets our interests, but also meets other interests.

I want to share with you one other thing, then I've got to get out of here. You know, Laura says, "You get up there and all you do is talk, and you love to hear yourself talk." [*Laughter*] I want to share one other aspect of our foreign policy. I believe to whom much is given, much is required. And I want to share something about this great, generous nation, for which you deserve a lot of credit.

Whether it be on HIV/AIDS or malaria, the United States is in the lead. And when I got elected, I was deeply concerned about the fact that an entire generation of folks on the continent of Africa could be wiped out by a disease that we could not cure, but halt. And I set up what's called the Global Fund for AIDS. And yet it kind of sat there empty. It was a deal where everybody could contribute, and then the

United States would match to try to encourage commitments, but it didn't fill up. And so I went to Congress and asked that they spend your money on a unilateral initiative where we would take on, I think, the 17 most or 19 most affected countries in the world and deliver antiretroviral drugs.

Foreign policy is more than military; it is more than just spreading freedom; it's also, in my judgment, in our interest to base it upon that admonition: If you're blessed, you ought to help others. And as a result of the American people, we spread antiretrovirals or got antiretrovirals to 850,000 people. That's up from 50,000 in 3 years.

We're all interconnected in this world. What happens overseas matters here at home, from a security perspective, but I also believe it matters here at home from the perspective of keeping our spirits strong. It's in the interest of this country that we be engaged in freeing people from tyranny, the tyranny of government and the tyranny of disease and hunger.

I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit with you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. at East Grand Rapids High School. In his remarks, he referred to Larry Fisher, associate principal, East Grand Rapids High School; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Mahmud al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Iraqi House of Representatives; Fouad Ajami, director, Middle East Studies Program, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

## Statement on Earth Day *April 20, 2007*

As we observe the 38th Earth Day this Sunday, we celebrate the rich blessings of our Nation's natural resources, and we renew our commitment to protecting our environment so we leave our children and grandchildren a flourishing land.

By encouraging cooperative conservation, innovation, and new technologies, my administration has compiled a strong environmental record. This Earth Day, harmful air pollutant levels are down more than 10 percent since 2001. Millions more Americans are drinking cleaner, safer water. We have removed hazardous fuels from more than 19 million acres of Federal land. We have created, restored, or protected more than 2.5 million acres of wetlands, and we have conserved almost 200 million of acres of habitat through farm bill conservation programs. And we are taking positive steps to confront the important challenge of climate change. Our work is not done. We

also have a responsibility to pass on to future generations our commitment to the environment.

To do so, we must ensure that future generations have a strong connection to nature. This will require working together to protect and conserve not only nationally significant natural wonders but also local parks, ponds, and working lands where parents and mentors can teach young people about the outdoors through recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, biking, and nature watching. And we must also encourage Americans of all ages to get involved in conservation-related volunteer activities.

I call on all Americans to commemorate this Earth Day by recommitting to being good stewards of our land and oceans. When we do so, we take an important step forward to a more vibrant future for our country.

## The President's Radio Address *April 20, 2007*

Good morning. This week, the thoughts and prayers of millions of Americans are with the victims of the Virginia Tech attacks. We mourn promising lives cut short, we pray for the wounded, and we send our love to those who are hurting.

The day after the attack, Laura and I attended a memorial service on the campus in Blacksburg. We met with faculty members who lost students and colleagues and shared hugs with grieving moms and dads, including parents who had lost their only child. We offered what words of comfort we could, and we were moved by the solidarity and strength of spirit we found. We wanted everyone at the university to know

that this tragedy saddened our entire Nation and that the American people stand with them in an hour of darkness.

We can never fully understand what would cause a student to take the lives of 32 innocent people. What we do know is that this was a deeply troubled young man, and there were many warning signs. Our society continues to wrestle with the question of how to handle individuals whose mental health problems can make them a danger to themselves and to others.

Colleges and State and local officials are now confronting these issues, and the Federal Government will help. I've asked top officials at the Departments of Education,

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

increased my confidence in his ability to do the job.

One of the things that's important for the American people to understand is that the Attorney General has a right to recommend to me to replace U.S. attorneys; U.S. attorneys serve at the pleasure of the President. In other words, we have named them, and I have the right to replace them with somebody else. And as the investigation, the hearings went forward, it was clear that the Attorney General broke no law, did no wrongdoing. And some Senators didn't like his explanation, but he answered

as honestly as he could. This is an honest, honorable man, in whom I have confidence.

Thank you all for coming. General, it's good to have you here.

*Gen. Petraeus.* Great to be here, Mr. President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England; and Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru April 23, 2007

*President Bush.* *Que es mi honor para recibir el Presidente de Peru.* It's my honor to receive the President of Peru. I appreciate very much the President's time. I thank you for coming to visit the United States. *Es hombre muy amable.* He talks—he gives good advice.

We talked about the neighborhood. As we discussed, the United States wants the people of South America to fully understand, we care about their future, that we want there to be prosperity in the region, that we respect leaders who provide basic education and health care. So we had a very constructive conversation.

The President is here to urge the Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to pass the free trade agreement with Peru, and I urge them to vote yes. We talked about our mutual desire to succeed in preventing drugs from coming to the United States and preventing U.S. citizens from using drugs in the first place.

The President's got a very clear vision of South America, and I really appreciated

his advice and his counsel. It always helps for a person sitting here in the United States to get a clarity of what the environment is like.

And finally, I expressed our country's deepest condolence to the student, the Peruvian student who lost his life on the campus at Virginia Tech. And our prayers go to this person's family, and we ask for God's blessings on the family.

*Bienvenidos, hombre.*

*President Garcia.* Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all, we would like to express our deepest condolences to the United States and to you, Mr. President, for all the victims that died in Virginia Tech. A Peruvian student lost his life there, and our prayers and our thoughts are with their families.

Second of all, I am here in the United States to promote the FTA between the United States and Peru. It is vital for our country. It is fundamental to continue this path of growth and social redistribution that we have started in my country.



We have achieved an 8-percent annual growth in my country. This year, we're expecting a similar growth, 8 percent annually, with a 1-percent inflation, which creates more job opportunities. But this growth, as towards development, needs a greater space and a greater degree of investment, and for that, the FTA is essential. It would help us keep and maintain a strong democracy, a democracy that takes care of the poorest and that provides work to the unemployed. It is important to show the world that a democracy, with investment leads to development. And development is not achieved by becoming static and not opening our doors to the market.

The United States, ever since its Founding Fathers, has had an ideal, a mission to the world. In the forties, it sacrificed the lives of many young people to achieve the freedom of the world. Nowadays, we need to focus on democracy and free trade. And I am sure that both Republicans and Democrats would understand that this is key to the mission the United States has for the world.

President Bush and I talked about our contribution to the hemisphere and to humanity, to mankind, and that is the fight against drugs and the fight against coke. We have started a head-on fight against drug trafficking in my country, against money laundering, and against coca leaf production by offering farmers alternative crops, which is a way for them to earn a living in a just and legal way.

I have also congratulated President Bush on the very intelligent action he took against North Korea. It could have become a very serious problem for the world had it not been for the tactful intervention by the United States and his allied countries.

*President Bush.* Thank you.

*President Garcia.* In his last trip to Latin America, in spite of some political reactions, which are typical, it has been essential to see the President work with Brazil on ethanol as the new fuel. This will help us refocus on Latin America, which is very favorable for the region.

If President Bush allows me, I am sure that during the time that we will coexist as Presidents, he will achieve great things in the world. And he will visit Peru next year. But thank you very much, Mr. President, for the relationship we have of friendship. You are a very nice person, and I'm sure that our relationship will continue to grow.

Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Garcia spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits *April 23, 2007*

Thank you all for coming. Today I have been discussing the Medicare Part D reforms that Congress passed and I signed and that Mike Leavitt and a lot of other people helped to implement.

This reform of Medicare has been a great success. Most importantly, it's been a great success for our senior citizens. The cost of the prescription drug plan has been less than anticipated. The individual stories

about people saving money and getting better health care has warmed my heart.

It took a monumental effort by a lot of citizens around the country to make the options that our seniors were given easy to understand. In other words, we reformed Medicare and gave seniors a lot of choices, and it took a lot of loving Americans a lot of time to make these choices available for our senior citizens. Now that the plan is in place, 39 million have signed up for it, drug costs are less than anticipated, and the cost to the taxpayer is about \$200 billion less than anticipated.

The lesson is, is that when you trust people to make decisions in their lives, when you have competition, it is likely you'll get lower price and better quality. It is the spirit of this reform that needs to be now extended to Medicare overall.

The trustees report will be coming out today on Social Security and Medicare. It'll

make clear that senior citizens are in great shape when it comes to the government making their promises. It'll make clear that baby boomers like me are in good shape, that the government will meet its promises. But for a younger generation of Americans, it sends yet another warning signal to the United States Congress that now is the time to work to make sure the Social Security is solvent for the future, as is Medicare.

And as we begin to think through solutions for Medicare, we ought to make sure that we remember the principles inherent in this Medicare reform that has worked so well for our seniors, and that principle is, competition works. Competition can lower price and improve the quality of people who are a beneficiary of such a plan.

Thank you all very much for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Remarks Honoring the 2007 Super Bowl Champion Indianapolis Colts *April 23, 2007*

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. How about it? Like, the Indianapolis Colts here on the South Lawn, congratulations. Welcome to the Super Bowl champs.

I want to welcome Jim Irsay and Meg and Carlie, Casey, and Kalen. I had the honor of calling Jim after they won. I understand how hard it is to be an owner of a sports team and win. [*Laughter*] I never did it—[*laughter*—but he has, and I congratulate the organization. I congratulate Bill Polian as well. I want to thank all the front office personnel, the schedulers, the ticket sellers, the travel arrangers, the people who never get any credit. I appreciate you being part of a fine organization. And we're here on the South Lawn to congratulate you.

I congratulate the head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, Tony Dungy. And I'm glad his wife Lauren is here as well. Tony Dungy is the first African American coach to ever win a Super Bowl. That in itself is a great honor. But interestingly enough, he is a man who has used his—a position of notoriety to behave in a quiet and strong way in the face of personal tragedy that has influenced a lot of our fellow citizens. And I want to thank you for your courage.

Alphonso Jackson is here with us, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Prior to today, he told me he was a Cowboy fan. [*Laughter*] Like, what are you doing here, A.J.? Oh, okay, you wanted to see the coach. All right, good. Yes. I thank Randy Tobias, who was an executive from Indianapolis but ran our HIV/AIDS initiative—by the way, helped

people in Africa receive antiretroviral drugs. When we came in, there was 50,000 people receiving antiretroviral drugs; now there's 850,000 people receiving antiretroviral drugs. Tobias, thank you for your compassion. Al Hubbard, Economic Adviser to the President, is here, Indianapolis Colt fan.

I want to thank Members of the Congress who have joined us today, starting with Senator Evan Bayh and Susan. It's good to see the Bayh lads with them. Thank you all for coming; appreciate you being here. Dan Burton—appreciate you coming, Dan, and, Samia, I'm glad you're here. Thanks for coming, Samia. Mark Souder, Julia Carson, Mike Pence, Baron Hill, Joe Donnelly, and Brad Ellsworth—glad you all are here. Some of these guys get elected for the first time, and the first thing that happens is, the Indianapolis Colts win the Super Bowl. You're not taking credit, are you? *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all the coaches who are here. I want to thank the families of the Colt family who have helped this organization flourish. I want to—most of all, I want to thank the players. I am proud of you; the country is proud of you. The people from Indiana have supported you, and you didn't let them down. As a matter of fact, this is—last time you won as Colts, though, was 1971. Interesting, I thought about that. Most of you weren't even born. I was, and that's when they beat our Cowboys, A.J. *[Laughter]* But you've—as Bill put it, he said, "Finally." And a lot of Indianapolis fans said, "Thank goodness." They love to support this team, and you didn't let them down.

It was a pretty tough season, though, when you think about it. It wasn't one of these runaways. It looked like it was going to be a runaway—Secretary Rice, if you want to come in, please, yes. So, like, you're a big Dungy fan, aren't you?

*Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* That's right; that's what I thought.

So the season started off good. Like, you won the first nine games, and then it appeared this championship team was going to fizzle; it wasn't going to make it. And so they—you lost four out of seven. And they started to, like, write you off, right? They kind of say—you probably—some of these sportswriters started to say, you know, well, they don't have what it takes; they can kind of do okay until it comes to the big one, and then they just don't have the character necessary to make it work. They did okay in the wild card, and you move your way through the playoffs, and then all of a sudden, the guy on Super Bowl 41 runs the kickoff back. *[Laughter]* I'm sure a lot of those skeptics were saying: "Told you so; the Indianapolis Colts—good players, fine people—just don't have what it takes to win." But as the coach said: "Our guys just kept saying, 'We're going to fight; we're not going to be denied.' That heart will take you a long way."

And so this is a victory for good hearts, good hearts off the field and good hearts on the field. And we congratulate you. Thank you for winning.

So a lot of people here in the White House compound have been really looking forward to seeing Peyton Manning. They wanted to see a guy who gets more air time than I do. *[Laughter]* I met Peyton Manning. He said: "I'm going to be here during your Presidency. We will be here having won the Super Bowl." And sure enough, he delivered. And, Peyton, thank you for being a fine person and a good quarterback.

I'm sure Marvin Harrison and Reggie Wayne are saying, thanks for being a good quarterback; thanks for getting us the ball. After all, these two players ranked second and third in the NFL in receiving in the—during the regular season. That's called balanced attack, particularly when you added that LSU guy, Joseph. Where's Joseph? There he is. Yes, sir. *[Laughter]* Congratulations to you. Dominic Rhodes led the NFL in rushing yards in the post-season.

You had people who can catch the ball, a guy who can throw the ball, and people who can run the ball.

People held your defense as suspect, but not when it counted. I can remember all the analysts saying: "Well, the defense is a little short this year. They may have the offensive firepower, but they don't—they can't play on the other side of the ball." Until it mattered, and then the defense stood up and helped this team become a Super Bowl champ.

And so to the offense, congratulations on doing what people expected. To the defense, thanks for helping this team be here in the White House as well.

I also—it's good to be in the presence of Adam Vinatieri—again. [Laughter] The man knows how to pick a winner—[laughter]—and help contribute to a winner. You know, in 2005, he didn't make it to the White House, and I asked why. It was a simple matter of he and his wife were having a child. I hope the kid is doing well.

*Adam Vinatieri.* Thank you.

*The President.* We're glad you're here, Adam; thank you very much.

I appreciate what guard Ryan Lilja said. He said, "The whole team has fought hard the whole season, through ups and downs." Isn't that what life is about? Isn't it, really? Through the ups—it's easy to fight hard in the ups. It's when the downs come that you've got to be a fighter. He said: "I couldn't be prouder to be a part of this football team."

And I couldn't be prouder to welcome the football team to the South Lawn of the White House. I appreciate what this team does. I appreciate the example you set. I appreciate the fact that you understand that off the field, a lot of people are looking at you to determine whether or not they want to be like you.

I thank you very much for the "Bleed Blood Blue Drive." That's hard for a guy from west Texas to say—[laughter]—"Bleed Blood Blue Drive," in which you've encouraged 2,000 people to donate blood. I appreciate the book drives that you've held to promote literacy in the State of Indiana. I appreciate the food drives that you've held to fight hunger in the State of Indiana. I appreciate the Colts Football Fund.

Most of all, I appreciate you all. Thanks for coming. God bless.

*James Irsay.* Mr. President, we have a special gift to present to you from the Irsay family and the Colts organization. I knew that you'd love these specially made cowboy hats. We have some special dedications inside there for you, sir, and I hope you'll enjoy it.

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you, sir.

*Mr. Irsay.* You're welcome.

*The President.* Pretty snazzy, huh? [Laughter] Yes, thank you.

*Anthony K. Dungy.* And on behalf of the team, we got you a Bush Colts jersey. We normally go number 1, but in this case, we had to go 43.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to James Irsay, owner, Bill Polian, president, Marvin Harrison and Reginald Wayne, wide receivers, Joseph Addai, running back, Dominic Rhodes, former running back, Adam Vinatieri, kicker, and Ryan Lilja, offensive guard, Indianapolis Colts; and Meg Coyle Irsay, wife of James Irsay, and their daughters Carlie, Casey, and Kalen.

## Statement on the Death of Boris Yeltsin *April 23, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Russian President Boris Yeltsin. President Yeltsin was an historic figure who served his country during a time of momentous change. He played a key role as the Soviet Union dissolved, helped lay the foundations of freedom in Russia,

and became the first democratically elected leader in that country's history. I appreciate the efforts that President Yeltsin made to build a strong relationship between Russia and the United States. We offer our sincerest condolences to the Yeltsin family and to the Russian people.

## Statement on the Identity Theft Task Force Report *April 23, 2007*

I commend Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission Deborah Majoras for their work on the Identity Theft Task Force report released today. The report is the culmination of many months of hard work by numerous Federal Agencies. Identity

theft is a serious problem in America, and my administration is working to combat this crime and to assist its victims. I thank the Attorney General, the Chairman, and their staffs for taking on this difficult and important assignment.

## Remarks on Congressional Action on Emergency Supplemental Appropriations *April 24, 2007*

Good morning. Seventy-eight days ago, I sent Congress a request for emergency war funding that our troops urgently need. I made it clear to Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill that I'm willing to discuss our differences on the way forward in Iraq. But I also made it clear, our troops should not be caught in the middle of that discussion.

Yesterday Democratic leaders announced that they plan to send me a bill that will fund our troops only if we agree to handcuff our generals, add billions of dollars in unrelated spending, and begin to pull out of Iraq by an arbitrary date. I'm disappointed that the Democratic leadership has chosen this course.

The bill they announced yesterday includes some of the worst parts of the measures they had earlier passed with narrow majorities in the House and the Senate. They know I'm going to veto a bill containing these provisions, and they know that my veto will be sustained. But instead of fashioning a bill I could sign, the Democratic leaders chose to further delay funding our troops, and they chose to make a political statement. That's their right, but it is wrong for our troops, and it's wrong for our country.

To accept the bill proposed by the Democratic leadership would be to accept

a policy that directly contradicts the judgment of our military commanders. I strongly believe that the Democrats' proposal would undermine our troops and threaten the safety of the American people here at home. And here is why.

First, a proposal would mandate the withdrawal of American troops beginning as early as July 1st of this year, and no later than October 1st of this year, despite the fact that General Petraeus has not yet received all the reinforcements he needs. It makes no sense to tell the enemy when you start to plan withdrawing. If we were to do so, the enemy would simply mark their calendars and begin plotting how to take over a country when we leave.

We know what could happen next. Just as Al Qaida used Afghanistan as a base to plan attacks of September the 11th, Al Qaida could make Iraq a base to plan even more deadly attacks. The lesson of 9/11 is that allowing terrorists to find a sanctuary anywhere in the world can have deadly consequences on the streets of our own cities.

Precipitous withdrawal from Iraq is not a plan to bring peace to the region or to make our people safer at home. Instead, it would embolden our enemies and confirm their belief that America is weak. It could unleash chaos in Iraq that could spread across the entire region. It would be an invitation to the enemy to attack America and our friends around the world. And ultimately, a precipitous withdrawal would increase the probability that American troops would one day have to return to Iraq and confront an enemy that's even more dangerous.

Second, the Democratic leadership's proposal is aimed at restricting the ability of our generals to direct the fight in Iraq. They've imposed legislative mandates—they passed legislative mandates telling them which enemies they can engage and which they cannot. That means our commanders in the middle of a combat zone would have to take fighting directions from legislators

6,000 miles away on Capitol Hill. The result would be a marked advantage for our enemies and a greater danger for our troops.

Third, the bill proposed by Democratic leaders would spend billions of dollars on projects completely unrelated to the war. Proposed legislation does remove some of the most egregious porkbarrel projects that Democratic leaders had inserted in earlier bills. Yet it still includes huge amounts of domestic spending that has no place in an emergency war funding bill. We should debate those provisions on their own merits, during the normal process. But funding for our troops should not be held hostage while that debate unfolds.

I know that Americans have serious concerns about this war. People want our troops to come home, and so do I. But no matter how frustrating the fight can be and no matter how much we wish the war was over, the security of our country depends directly on the outcome in Iraq. The price of giving up there would be paid in American lives for years to come. It would be an unforgivable mistake for leaders in Washington to allow politics and impatience to stand in the way of protecting the American people.

Last November, the American people said they were frustrated and wanted change in our strategy in Iraq. I listened. Today, General David Petraeus is carrying out a strategy that is dramatically different from our previous course. The American people did not vote for failure, and that is precisely what the Democratic leadership's bill would guarantee.

It's not too late for Congress to do the right thing and to send me a bill that gives our troops and their commanders the funds and flexibility they need. I'm willing to meet with leaders in Congress as many times as it takes to resolve our differences. Yet if the Democratic leaders insist on using the bill to make a political statement, they will leave me with only one option:



I will veto it. And then I'll work with Congress to pass a clean bill that funds our troops without handcuffing our commanders, spending billions of dollars unrelated to the war, and forcing our Nation to withdraw on the enemy's terms.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Remarks at the Harlem Village Academy Charter School in New York City April 24, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I appreciate you making a Texan feel right at home here in Harlem. [Laughter] I have had a remarkable experience here at Harlem Village Academy Charter School.

You know, it's interesting, one of the children said: "Why here? Why did you come here, Mr. President? Of all the schools in the country, why this school?" And my answer is, because the President has an opportunity to herald excellence, and I have seized that opportunity. I have come to a school where some may say, "These children can't possibly exceed high standards," but, in fact, they are. Secondly, I wanted to be nice to the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

I think any time I can thank a teacher, I need to do so. So for the teachers here, thank you for teaching; for the principals—[applause].

Interestingly enough, this week is called National Charter School Week—I mean, next week is called National Charter School Week, so a good way to herald National Charter School Week is, come to a charter school, particularly one that's working. I'm a big believer in charter schools. I think charter schools make a lot of sense, whether it be here in Harlem or anywhere else in the United States.

And so a way to express support for a charter school is to come to one that's working and say to people, if you find ex-

cellence, you might want to take a look at why, what is it about this school that enables a parent to say, I really enjoy sending my child here. Or what is it about this school, where a child looks at the President and says, I don't mind being tested, because I know that they're going to help correct problems early, before it's too late. This school is working, and I appreciate you letting me come to talk about not only this school but also about an important piece of legislation called the No Child Left Behind Act.

Before I do so, I thank Deborah for being what I call an educational entrepreneur. That means that—[applause]. So I said to Deborah—you know, I've never met Deborah before, and I said, how did you get involved in this school? She had a personal tragedy, and rather than allowing the personal tragedy to drag her down, she said: "I want to make a contribution. And I can't think of a better contribution than to help start a charter school"—as a matter of fact, not only one but two. I also thought it was interesting, she said: "If you're going to be somebody who helps start charter schools and works to make charter schools excellent, that you better be on the frontlines of education." So she became the principal of this school.

If you're interested in helping your community—whether you be an individual, such as a Deborah, or a corporation, for example—promote school excellence, do

something for the community in which you live. A lot of times if you wait for government, things won't happen. She's proven my case. She says, "I want to be involved, and I want to start some schools." Corporate America needs to take the same interest in local schools if they expect there to be a—[applause]—if we expect our country to realize its promise.

Mateo Myers introduces Dr. Kenny and introduces me—Mateo Myers. So I said to a lot of the kids here at this school: "How many of you want to go to college?" They all rose—raised their hand. That's a good sign. In other words, this school believes in high expectations and putting in a child's mind the possibilities of achieving a dream.

I appreciate very much Joel Klein. You talk about a guy who has taken on a tough job and, in my judgment, my humble judgment, is doing it with excellence, is Joel Klein. As a result of that endorsement, he may never find work again in New York, but nevertheless—[laughter].

See, I love it when somebody heralds that which is working and takes on that which is not working. I like a man who says, "The status quo is unacceptable," when it's unacceptable, and is willing to do hard work, all aimed at making sure every child gets a good education. And we appreciate the standards you've set and appreciate the example you have shown, Joel.

I want thank Ed Lewis, chairman of Village Academies. Ed Lewis is a successful businessman who, instead of taking his successes and disappearing, has taken his successes and used that which enabled him to be successful to plow back into a community. And that's an example a lot of other people need to see.

People say to me all the time: "What can I do, Mr. President? How can I contribute?" Well, if you want to contribute, work on school excellence. I can't think of a better way to contribute to the future of the United States than to promote alternatives if the school systems in your community aren't—isn't working. In other

words, just don't set the status quo if children are not meeting standards; challenge that status quo, and do something about it.

I appreciate very much Nick Timpone, who is the principal here at Harlem Village. [Applause] That's a good sign. Like, I'd be worried about the silence, you know. [Laughter] It turns out that good schools such as this have good principals, people who work hard, people who, you know, motivate the teaching staff, people who listen to parents. And I appreciate you very much being at the center of this important school.

Traveling with me today is the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. I appreciate you coming, Madam Secretary. Her job is to work with local school districts so that the Federal, State, and local relationship is a collaborative relationship that actually works and doesn't get in each other's way. And her job is to implement No Child Left Behind. And I couldn't have picked anybody better to do so.

I want to thank, again, Charlie Rangel. He is the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. You can imagine what it's like traveling in the Presidential limousine down Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard hearing Rangel say, "I was raised over here, and here's the hotel I worked in when I was a boy." You know, the people in Harlem have got a fantastic Congressman in Charles Rangel. He cares deeply—[applause]. He could agree with me a few more times, but—[laughter]—I don't expect him to. But I do expect him to do what he does, which is work for the good of the country. And I'm really proud to be with you. Thanks for coming, Charlie.

I—Peter King—Congressmen Peter King and Vito Fossella is with us today. Both of these Congressmen care about education. I appreciate the members of the New York charter school community who have taken time to come. I want to thank the Harlem community leaders who have joined us today. Thanks for letting me be

here. I particularly want to thank the students for letting me come by to say hello. I've really enjoyed my trip here, and you've impressed me.

I do want to say something about Virginia Tech, the Virginia Tech community. It's a community that still hurts, and the people in Blacksburg, Virginia, must know that citizens, whether they be in Harlem or anywhere else in the country, still hold those folks in their prayers.

Schools should be places of safety; they should be a sanctuary of learning. And when that sanctuary is violated, the impact is felt all across the country. It's felt in every classroom. And I know you've worried about such violence here, as a result of the Virginia Tech. And I want to thank the principals and teachers for reacting and helping calm nerves and assure people that this is a place of safety and a sanctuary for learning.

I have asked people in my administration to travel around the country, to listen to folks at the State and local level to determine what lessons can be learned from the Virginia Tech horror. Margaret Spellings is going to be a part of this team, as is the Justice Department, Health and Human Services. We, of course, will provide whatever assistance we can to Virginia Tech, but we also want to be a part of a review of broader questions that have been raised.

And so they're going to travel the country. They're going to talk with mental health experts and educators and State and local officials, and come back and summarize what they have learned. And we'll share the summaries of what they've learned, all in the hopes of learning lessons from a horrible moment. It was—it's a tough time down there.

I want to talk about schools, and I want to talk about educational excellence for every single child. And I want to emphasize that in my remarks, my hopes of the public school systems in every State and every community excel. That's our goal. The public school systems have provided great op-

portunities for a lot of Americans. One of the great assets of the United States of America is a public school system that works.

I also believe that parental involvement is an important aspect of having a public school system that works, and I like the fact that charter schools encourage parental involvement. It's a—I like to be able to sit with parents and say, I have chose school for my child—chosen the school for my child—I could use a little extra help. [Laughter]

Isn't that an interesting concept? "I made the choice to send my child here." That has got a nice ring to it as far as I'm concerned. I appreciate the fact that the teachers involve the parents in the child's education. There's a lot of information flows that take place between the parent and the child, and the child and the teacher. I appreciate the fact that teachers give parents their cell phone numbers. I think that's an important way to make sure parents are involved in the education of their children.

I appreciate the fact that folks here set high standards. I know this isn't all that profound, but when you set low standards, you get bad results. I used to call it the soft bigotry of low expectations. You kind of say, well, certain people can't learn, therefore, let's make sure the standards are low. This school challenges that soft bigotry and insists upon high standards. And guess what? That's what parents want. Parents want their children challenged. Parents believe that high standards are good for their children.

I appreciate the fact that people go to school here from 7:30 in the morning until 5:45 in the afternoon. That's innovation. That means somebody here is saying, "I'm going to adjust the time the children go to school so that we can achieve high standards." I like the idea of schools having flexibility to meet the needs of their parents and their children. Maybe some schools around the country couldn't have that kind

of innovation because the rules and the process say, well, you can't adjust that way. What I like are schools that focus on results, and then adjust the process to meet the results.

I appreciate the fact that parents choose this school because it's safe. That's what parents want; they want safety for their children. I met with Vanessa Freeman. Her daughter, Krystal, goes to this school. She was struggling at her old school. The teacher said she was acting up in class in the old school. In other words, the parent, Vanessa, recognized there was a problem and—my mother probably got a few of those calls too—[laughter]—but, anyway, Vanessa transferred Krystal here to the Harlem Village Academy. She's learning algebra. She said her math teacher—her math teacher says she's—her progress has given her goose bumps.

In other words, something has changed here at this school. In other words, there is progress being made because the parent had an option to choose something different when the other school wasn't working. It's a powerful catalyst for reform, by the way, to give people those options. That's why I'm a strong supporter of the charter school movement; I appreciate providing different options.

I want you to know that it is a national objective, an important national goal to make sure every child realizes his or her full potential. And that is the whole philosophy behind the No Child Left Behind Act. You know, when we put our mind to it, actually, Republicans and Democrats can work together; we did so to get this important piece of legislation passed.

The philosophy behind the bill is this: When the Federal Government spends money, we should expect results. And by the way, when the State spends money, it ought to expect results too. Instead of just spending money and hoping for the best, the core philosophy of the No Child Left Behind says: We'll spend money, and we expect you to measure, and we expect

you to post your scores, and we expect you to meet standards, because if you don't, you're failing in your obligation to educate every child.

Now, if you believe certain children can't learn, then you shouldn't measure. In other words, if you think that, well, it's just a hopeless exercise, let's just move kids through the school system. Then that makes sense not to measure. Why would you? Why waste the time? I believe every child can learn, and, therefore, I believe every school should measure in return for Federal money, and then put the scores up early.

I'll tell you why: I want the parents to be involved with education. And one way you're involved with education is, you're able to compare the test scores of your school to your neighborhood school. It's an interesting way to determine whether or not high standards are being met. In some cases, a parent will say, "This is the greatest school possible," and yet when the test scores get posted, the reality comes home.

Secondly, I don't see how you can solve problems unless you measure problems. How do you know whether a child needs extra help in reading unless you measure? In other words, the accountability system is step one of a diagnostic process that ends up making sure that each child gets the help that's needed to meet standards, high standards. And so the No Child Left Behind Act—a simple way of describing it says, if you set high standards, we'll give you money, but we expect you to meet those standards, and if not, there ought to be different options for the parents.

I appreciate the results of this school. In other words, it's interesting—isn't it?—that the President can come and say, you've got good results here—because you measure. Teachers use the assessment to see what concepts students are mastering and which concepts ought to be continued and which concepts ought to be dropped. The data from this school that you—as a result of measurement, helps teachers tailor their

lesson plans to the specific needs of a child. Isn't that interesting? Have the education system tailoring the needs to fit the—tailor the curriculum to fit the needs of the child? That may sound simple, but it's an unusual concept for a lot of schools.

The school has a rapid-response accountability system. In other words, you don't measure once and just kind of hope for the best for the remainder of the year; you track student progress closely from week to week. When students struggle, they receive one-on-one tutoring during the school day; if a child struggles, there is extra help on a Saturday—hence, No Child Left Behind. As opposed to the old system, where you just shuffled children through and hope for the best at the end, this school measures on a regular basis to make sure that we're dealing not with guesswork, but with results.

I appreciate the fact that this school opened in the fall of 2003. I want you to hear this statistic: During the first year, less than 20 percent of the fifth graders could meet State standards in math, only 20 percent—[applause]—wait a minute; that's nothing to applaud for. [Laughter] That's, like, pitiful. Last year, 96 percent of the students—[applause]—from the same class were meeting State standards.

One of the students was Kevin Smith. His mother says that when Kevin came to the Harlem Village Academy in 2003, he struggled. And now she says: "He can do it with his eyes closed." That's a math student right there. [Laughter] Deborah Kenny says, "Our school proves that children can achieve grade level, even when they start behind." And that's the spirit.

We can see that No Child Left Behind is working nationwide. There's an achievement gap in America that better be closed if we want America to remain the leader of the world. It is unacceptable to me, and it should be unacceptable to people across the country: we have an achievement gap in America.

It's amazing what happens, though, when you measure. The percentage of New York City fourth graders meeting State standards in reading has increased by more than 12 percent over 5 years. The percentage of fourth graders doing math at grade level has increased by 19 points. Congratulations, Joel, for holding people to account. I know, people say: "I don't like the test; you're testing too much." I don't see how you can solve problems unless you diagnose the problems. I don't see how you can meet—high standards unless you test.

I appreciate the fact that, nationwide, 9-year-olds have made more progress in 5 years than in the previous 28 years combined on these tests in reading. How about that? In other words, we're beginning to make progress early. The pipeline is beginning to be full of little readers that are competent readers. And the fundamental question is, what do we do in junior high and high school? Do we keep the progress going, or do we fall off when it comes to holding people to account?

I believe strongly that we ought to bring the same standards to high school that we've had in elementary: one through eight—or three through eight. That's what I believe. I believe if you want to make sure a high school diploma means something, you better have high accountability in high schools. We want the high school diploma to say, this person is ready to compete in a world in which the graduates are going to be competing with Chinese or Indian workers. In other words, it matters what happens now in our schools, more so than ever before.

And so part of the initiative to make sure that we continue to set high standards is to bring these standards to high school. I believe strongly that we ought to—the Federal Government has a role in expanding Advanced Placement courses all across the United States of America. I'm a big believer in AP. I think AP holds people to account and challenges people to realize their full potential.



We've got an effort right now to encourage 30,000 math and science professionals to become part-time teachers. Why would you encourage math and science professionals? Because if you've got the capability of competing globally in math and science, you're going to be getting a good job, is why. It's a practical application of U.S. resources to encourage 30,000 math and science professionals to enter classrooms to encourage people to be interested in math and science.

You know, I met a math teacher here. The man went to Harvard; now, we're not going to hold that against him, but nevertheless—[laughter]—he's out there somewhere. [Laughter] He's teaching math. He could have been doing a lot of things, and he's teaching math right here at this important charter school, because he understands the importance of teaching a child math, in terms of that child's being able to find good work and be a productive citizen in this challenging 21st century.

Here are some ways we can improve the No Child Left Behind Act. My funding request has money for underperforming schools, when you recognize there's failure and these schools need help. I'm a strong believer in making sure that money follows children. And so when we find a child failing in meeting high standards, there ought to be extra tutorial money for that child. In other words, the measurement system not only helps determine who's falling behind, but it helps determine whether or not that child ought to get extra money now, early, before it's too late. That's been an integral part of No Child Left Behind. It's going to be a significant part of No Child Left Behind as we go forward.

I believe strongly that we've got to make sure that we—if a school just won't change and continues to fail, that principals ought to be given additional staffing freedom. In other words, there ought to be flexibility—more flexibility as opposed to less flexibility when a school fails.

I think we ought to empower mayors and other elected officials to take a more active hand in improving their schools. If you find failure, it's important to do something differently. And one way to do so is to encourage more power in the hands of our mayors to break through bureaucratic logjams that are preventing people from achieving educational excellence.

And we ought to make it easier for officials to reorganize failing schools into charter schools. We just cannot allow the status quo to exist when we find failure.

Another way we can help is to encourage our Nation's best teachers to take jobs in some of the toughest neighborhoods. And so we proposed increasing the investment in the Teacher Incentive Fund to nearly \$200 million next year. In other words, there's a way for the Federal Government to encourage teachers to take on jobs that are important jobs and making sure that every child gets a good education with a good teacher. The fund rewards teachers who defy low expectations. It provides incentives for people to come into districts all around the United States to challenge that soft bigotry that I was talking about.

Third, parents of students in underperforming schools must have better choices. You find your child stuck in a school that won't teach and won't change, you ought to have a different option. I can't think of a better way to get somebody's attention that we're tired of mediocrity than to give a parent an option. I think there's a better—no better way to send a signal that folks are tired of mediocrity when it comes to our classrooms than say to a parent, you should have a different opportunity for your child, whether it be a charter school—[applause]—or a better performing public school.

In Washington, DC, we did an interesting—made an interesting initiative, and that is, is that we provided scholarship money for poor students to go to any school they wanted. I like that idea. I think it makes a lot of sense. You know, we have



Pell grants for poorer students to go to college. I think we ought to have Federal taxpayers' money to go to poorer parents so they can choose a different type of school if they're dissatisfied with the school their child is going to. And so I would strongly urge Congress to reauthorize and refund the D.C. School Choice Program and take a good look at our program that intends to expand that program.

I do want to congratulate Governor Spitzer and Mayor Bloomberg for working with the Chancellor here to increase the number of charter schools here in New York. I appreciate the fact that they're taking a bold initiative. As I understand, they want to double the number of charter schools available for the students here in New York, and that's a good thing. You know, Margaret is going to help you, to the extent that she can.

So now we're in the process of rewriting this bill—reauthorizing it. Here's my attitude about this: One, Congress shouldn't weaken the bill. It's working. The No Child Left Behind Act is working. These test scores are on the rise. Accountability makes a significant difference in educational excellence.

And so therefore, when Republicans and Democrats take a look at this bill, I strongly urge them to not weaken the bill, not to backslide, not to say, accountability isn't that important. It is important. We'll work with the school districts on flexibility when it comes to the accountability system. And I mean that there are certain ways that we can make this—the accountability system actually work better than it's worked in the past.

But we will not allow this good piece of legislation to be weakened. And if you're a parent, you should insist that the No Child Left Behind Act remain a strong accountability tool so that every child in this country gets a good education. I'll reach

out to both Republicans and Democrats again. Last time I signed the bill, I was on the stage with one of Charlie's good friends and colleagues, Congressman George Miller from California, Ted Kennedy, and two Republican colleagues of theirs. And it was—we worked well together.

And so my pledge is that I will continue to reach out and work with the new leadership of the Congress, all aimed at making sure this piece of legislation goes forward and making sure it's funded, so that we can say, once again, we've got law in place that will enable us to give every child as good an education as possible so that not one child, not one, is left behind in our country.

It's such an honor to be here. I love coming to a place where people defy expectations. I love coming to a place where you said, we're going to try to do something in a different way, that the status quo is not acceptable, so here we go. I love being with educational entrepreneurs, good principals, strong teachers, caring parents, and students who are going to be leading this Nation in the 21st century.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Kenny, founder and chief executive officer, Village Academies; Mateo Myers, student, and Justin Fong, math teacher and department chair, Harlem Village Academy Charter School; Joel I. Klein, chancellor, New York City Department of Education; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; and Gov. Eliot Spitzer of New York. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The National Charter School Week proclamation of April 27 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Interagency Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes

*April 24, 2007*

The brave men and women who have volunteered to protect and defend our country deserve to receive the highest level of support from our grateful Nation. Today Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson and members of the Interagency Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes released a governmentwide action plan that sets out steps to improve our care for America's troops and veterans.

The task force has proposed specific recommendations to immediately begin addressing the problems and gaps in services that were identified across the veterans and military healthcare systems. These recommendations include directing the Department of Defense and the Department

of Veterans Affairs to develop a joint process for disability determination. Additionally, I have asked Secretary Nicholson to communicate directly with the members of the Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors to ensure that both groups exchange ideas and information that will efficiently advance reform efforts.

I commend the work of the task force, welcome its recommendations, and have directed Secretary Nicholson to work with all agencies involved on the recommendations and to report back to me within 45 days on how these measures are being implemented.

## Message on Armenian Remembrance Day

*April 24, 2007*

Each year on this day, we pause to remember the victims of one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, when as many as 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, many of them victims of mass killings and forced exile. I join my fellow Americans and Armenian people around the world in commemorating this tragedy and honoring the memory of the innocent lives that were taken. The world must never forget this painful chapter of its history.

All who cherish freedom and value the sanctity of human life look back on these horrific events in sorrow and disbelief. Many of those who survived were forced from their ancestral home and spread across the globe. Yet, in the midst of this terrible struggle, the world witnessed the indomitable spirit and character of the Ar-

menian people. Many of the brave survivors came to America, where they have preserved a deep connection with their history and culture. Generations of Armenians in the United States have enriched our country and inspired us with their courage and conviction.

Today we remember the past and also look forward to a brighter future. We commend the individuals in Armenia and Turkey who are working to normalize the relationship between their two countries [countries].\* A sincere and open examination of the historic events of the late-Ottoman period is an essential part of this process. The United States supports and encourages those in both countries who are working

---

\* White House correction.

to build a shared understanding of history as a basis for a more hopeful future.

We value the strong and vibrant ties between the United States and Armenia. Our Nation is grateful for Armenia's contributions to the war on terror, particularly for its efforts to help build a peaceful and democratic Iraq. The United States remains committed to working with Armenia and Azerbaijan to promote a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We are also working to promote democratic

and economic reform in Armenia that will advance the cause of freedom and justice.

Laura and I express our deepest condolences to Armenian people around the world on this solemn day of remembrance. We stand together in our determination to build a more peaceful, more prosperous, and more just world.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## Remarks on the Observance of Malaria Awareness Day *April 25, 2007*

Thank you for coming. Welcome to the White House. The Rose Garden has witnessed many historic events. This afternoon we gather to mark something completely new, the first ever Malaria Awareness Day in the United States, and I'm glad you're here to join us.

On Malaria Awareness Day, we focus our attention on all who suffer from this terrible disease, especially the millions on the continent of Africa. We remember the millions more who've died from this entirely preventable and treatable disease. As a compassionate nation, we are called to spread awareness about malaria, and we're called to act. That's what compassionate people do: When they see a problem, they act. And that's what we're here to talk about. On this special day, we renew our commitment to lead the world toward an urgent goal, and that is to turn the tide against malaria in Africa and around the globe.

I want to thank Laura for being my wife—[*laughter*—and taking the lead on this. Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us—Mike Leavitt, the Department of Health and Human Services. Ambassador Randy Tobias—he now runs USAID. Prior to this job, he led America's monumental

effort to confront and deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the continent of Africa. Thank you for your leadership. Karen P., it's good to see you; Ambassador Hughes is with us.

Admiral Ziemer—so if you want to solve a problem, you put a problem-solver in charge. And that's what Admiral Ziemer does; he's a problem-solver. It makes it easier for me, when I say to other nations—like with President Lula. He came to visit at Camp David. We were trying to figure out ways we can work together to show our hemisphere and the world that Brazil and the United States shares a compassion about people. And so I said, why don't we work together to eradicate malaria in parts of Africa? Call Ziemer—[*laughter*—he'll see to it that the strategy gets implemented. To show that we're a serious nation, we have named a coordinator, somebody in charge. It's important for me and Laura to know that a good man is handling this responsibility to implementing a strategy. So, appreciate what you're doing. I know you know that we take this initiative seriously.

Mr. Chairman, Donald Payne, thank you for coming. We're proud you're here. We—I respect you, and I respect your concern

for the people of Africa, and to make sure that the United States of America stays engaged in that continent in a constructive way. It's good to see Chris Smith. Thank you for coming, Chris. We're proud you're here.

I appreciate very much the fact that the World Bank is taking the lead in eradicating poverty in places like Africa. And, Paul Wolfowitz, thank you for your leadership of the World Bank. And I appreciate the fact that Ann Veneman is joining us, the Executive Director of UNICEF, which is the largest purchaser of bed nets in the world. These people are here because they're committed to joining us to solve a problem that can be solved.

I also thank other members of my administration here. Thank you for coming, and thank you for your interest. I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps for joining us. I appreciate you coming. I see ambassadors from countries that will be helped by this initiative, and I see ambassadors from countries that we expect to join us in this initiative.

I'm looking forward to—Mr. Ambassador, to talking to Prime Minister Abe about what Japan can do with the United States to solve this problem. I'm honored you're here. I'm looking forward to seeing the Prime Minister tomorrow evening for dinner. I thank our dance company that will be joining us in a minute. I know you're going to look forward to seeing them; so am I. So I'm warming up out here. *[Laughter]* I thank our domestic and international partners. I see so many people who are—who care about the lives of others and are willing to do something about it. And I really appreciate you all coming.

As we mark the first Malaria Awareness Day, it makes sense to begin with some facts. Every year, more than a million people die of malaria, and the vast majority of them are children under 5 years old. It's a sad statistic. In some countries, malaria takes even more lives than HIV/AIDS. Malaria imposes a crippling economic bur-

den in sub-Saharan Africa, where so many are struggling to lift their families out of poverty.

All of that may seem like a cause for despair, but it's not. The world knows exactly what it takes to treat and prevent malaria. We've seen this disease defeated before, right here in Washington.

I'm sure a lot of our citizens don't remember this fact, but about a century ago, malaria was a serious problem. The hot and humid summers created a dangerous breeding ground for mosquitoes, and Congress would often flee the capital for months at a time. Other than that, the consequences were all negative. *[Laughter]* Some foreign ambassadors to the United States are even reported to have received hardship pay for duties here in Washington. Yet, through the years, because of patient and persistent action, malaria was almost entirely eradicated in Washington and throughout the United States.

In other words, we've solved this problem before. And the fundamental question is, do we have the will to do the same thing on another continent? That's really what—the question that faces this country and other nations around the world. My commitment is, you bet we have the will. And we've got a strategy to do so.

Defeating malaria is going to be a challenge, but it's not going to require a miracle. That's what I'm here to tell you. It's going to require a smart and sustained campaign.

And so what does that mean? Well, first, it means distributing insecticide-treated bed nets; secondly, expanding indoor insecticide spraying; thirdly, providing antimalaria medicine to pregnant women; and delivering cutting-edge drugs to people living with the disease. Those are the four steps necessary to achieve our objective.

Thanks to our leadership in science and technology, we have a unique ability to help in all these areas. We have a responsibility to turn that ability into action. When America sees suffering and know that our

Nation—when Americans see suffering and know that our Nation can help stop it, they expect our Government to respond. Most Americans believe in this timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. And I believe in that as well.

We have a strategic interest in reducing death and disease in emerging nations of Africa. Societies with healthy and prosperous people are more likely to be sources of stability and peace, not breeding grounds for extremists and terror. It's in our strategic interests that we follow through on our pledges.

I launched the President's Malaria Initiative in 2005. Through this initiative, as Laura mentioned, we're spending \$1.2 billion over 5 years to provide bed nets and indoor spraying and antimalaria medicine in 15 heavily affected African countries. We're working toward an historic goal to cut the number of malaria-related deaths in country by half. The Admiral has got a goal. It's a measurable goal.

The key element to this initiative is accountability. I mean, it's a realistic agenda with a measurable goal. And today is a good day to report to the American people on the impact their dollars are having. During the first year of our initiative, we expanded malaria protection to more than 6 million Africans. We're still early in the second year, but so far, we've reached another 5 million people, and by the end of 2007, we expect to reach a total of 30 million. Admiral, you're doing good work, and the American people deserve a lot of credit for supporting you.

A good effort of our—of this strategy comes from the Zanzibar islands off the east coast of Tanzania. This area was once a hotbed for malaria infection. Then, with the support of our malaria initiative, local residents launched a campaign called Kataa Malaria, which is Swahili for "reject malaria." Workers went door to door to teach people how to use beds, they—how to use bed nets. They launched TV and radio ads. They spoke in mosques about malaria pre-

vention and treatment. And the efforts worked. One Zanzibar island reported that malaria cases during the first 9 months of last year dropped by a stunning 87 percent.

Another example comes from Senegal on the west coast of Africa. In one village, malaria kills half of all the children before they're age of 5. Imagine growing up in a village like that; imagine being a mom in a village like that.

Not long ago, it looked like a 2-year-old fellow named Demba Balde was going to be one of the unlucky children. His mother took him to the village health hut, which receives funding from our malaria initiative. And thanks to enhanced awareness, correct diagnosis, and prompt treatment, young Demba won his battle with malaria.

Every life matters to the American people. Every life is precious. Stories like these are cause for hope, and they would not be possible without the courage and commitment of our partners in Africa. This week, nations across Africa are marking their own Malaria Awareness Days.

In Angola, the Ministry of Health is helping to lead a "Caravan for Life," in which health workers travel the countryside in trucks loaded with bed nets and medicines and educational materials.

In Benin, almost a million dollars worth of bed nets and medicines is being distributed at an event in the capital city.

In Mozambique, local residents attended a soccer tournament that featured songs and skits on how to prevent malaria.

We're committed to helping our African partners build on these efforts, and so I want to share with you two new endeavors. First, America will expand our cooperation with the Government of Uganda and the nonprofit group Malaria No More to distribute more than a half a million bed nets in Uganda. We're going to focus this distribution on children and pregnant mothers in areas of the country with the greatest vulnerability. And when we're finished with this effort, half of all the households in

Uganda will own a bed net to protect against malaria.

The second new commitment is Madagascar. There, we will team up with Malaria No More and the American Red Cross to distribute bed nets to nearly 1.4 million children under the age of 5. This delivery campaign will include polio vaccines to promote good overall health for children across the island. We're attacking this problem one spot at a time with a comprehensive strategy.

These efforts are a good start, but on this Malaria Awareness Day, we've got to understand, it's just a start, and there's a lot of work to be done. Nations around this world have a role to play. At the G-8, I'm going to raise this issue with our partners around the table. I'm going to remind them, to whom much is given, much is required, and that the United States will lead. But we expect others to follow, side by side.

Private citizens and organizations have an important role to play. Last December, as Laura mentioned, we held the White House Summit on Malaria to urge more nonprofit groups and corporations and individuals to join the effort to wipe out this disease. The response has been encouraging. We're seeing inspiring acts of selflessness from what I've called America's armies of compassion.

There's an interesting development taking place tonight. If you happen to tune in to "American Idol," you will see the first ever "Idol Gives Back" campaign. This campaign will urge viewers to donate to a variety of charities, including groups devoted to fighting malaria. For all you "Idol" viewers, join this battle; join the cause to help save lives. I'm not so sure I'm going to watch it tonight, but this show does have a large group of viewers, and I really appreciate the producers for joining us.

I—Major League Soccer is running a promotional campaign that encourages fans to make a donation to cover the cost of bed nets for a family in Africa. College

students on more than 50 campuses are holding "Music to End Malaria" events to generate awareness and raise funds. The Magnum Photos agency has launched a photo narrative that depicts the devastating toll of malaria. Awareness is a part of solving the problem.

You don't have to be a part of an organization to make a difference. In an elementary school in Parkersburg, West Virginia, 63 children raised enough money to buy 15 bed nets. This past Christmas, our family—some of our family gathered in Camp David, and my brother gave us bed nets as a Christmas gift. You can do the same thing here in America. You can make an individual contribution to save somebody's life.

I want to tell you what this third grader explained, why he contributed to the program. He said, "I want to fight malaria because it's helpful, and I want to help kids in Africa because it's the right thing to do." And it is the right thing to do. And that's why we're gathered here in the Rose Garden, to commit this Nation to doing the right thing and to call upon citizens in this country to do the right thing.

America is a country that gives medicine to the sick and food to the hungry and protection to the threatened because it's the right thing to do. The Malaria Awareness Day is a chance for me to thank all Americans who have donated to this cause and urge others to do the same. It's a day to call on nations around the world to join us in a great humanitarian effort. And it's a day to remind our fellow citizens that when you help somebody live a life, it strengthens our soul and enhances our spirit.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to R. Timothy Ziemer, Coordinator, President's Malaria Initiative; President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; Reps. Donald M. Payne and Christopher H.



Smith of New Jersey; Japan's Ambassador to the U.S. Ryozyo Kato; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who

introduced the President. The Malaria Awareness Day proclamation of April 24 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Financial Literacy *April 25, 2007*

April is Financial Literacy Month, and so I've asked some of our Nation's most caring citizens to come and talk to us about how to develop and hone a strategy that will help more of our American citizens become financially literate. If you're not sure how interest works, it's hard to be a good homeowner. If you don't understand rates of return, it's hard to be a good investor. If you're not sure how money works, it will be missed opportunity for people from all walks of life.

It is in this country's interest that people in every neighborhood, from every background, understand the financial literacy world, understand what it means when people talks terms related to their money. The more financially literate our society is, the more hopeful our society becomes.

And ours is a great system. It is a system that means somebody can come to America or live in America with nothing and end up with a lot; a system where people can realize dreams and work hard and realize those dreams. But unless we have a financially literate society, not enough people

are going to be able to realize the great promise of America.

And so I want to thank the Secretary of Treasury and the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for agreeing to be a part of the committee to make sure the Federal effort toward financial literacy is well coordinated with the private sector. And I thank those from the private sector for joining us. We've got people from corporate America, we've got people from faith-based America, we've got people from community-based-program America. We've got people from all walks of life, all around the country, who are deeply concerned about making sure this country is as financially literate as possible, and I thank you for coming. I appreciate you joining us.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for chairing the project.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## Remarks Honoring the 2007 National and State Teachers of the Year *April 26, 2007*

She forgot to add, "and loves a teacher." [*Laughter*] I made a good move when I married a teacher, and Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the Rose

Garden. Thanks for coming, and thanks for teaching.

This is a special day for all who care deeply about education, because we fully understand that without a good teacher, it's

hard to achieve national goals and objectives. And so the Teacher of the Year ceremony is a chance to pay homage to some really fine public servants and great Americans; so we welcome you.

I appreciate the Secretary of Education joining us. I want to thank Congressman John Boozman and his wife Cathy, from Arkansas. We thank Jay Inslee, from Washington, for joining us; thank you, Congressman. Dennis Moore and Stephene, from Kansas, have joined us, as has Rick Larsen from Washington. I wonder why all these Washington Congressmen have joined us. [Laughter]

I—Laura and I just had a chance to thank every State Teacher of the Year. It's an honor to welcome you to the Oval Office. It is a shrine to democracy and a wonderful place to give our personal thanks to a job well done.

I do want to recognize the finalists this year: Justin Minkel from Arkansas; Josh Anderson from Kansas; Tamara Tiong from New Mexico; Andrea Peterson, the Teacher of the Year. And we've got to recognize Joel, the husband of the Teacher of the Year. Thank you, Joel. [Laughter] And mom and dad—I'm going to say something about mom and dad in a minute.

I want to thank Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, for sponsoring this event. Rhonda Mims, the president of ING Foundation; Tom Waldron, the executive vice president of ING; and all the chief state school officers here today: thanks for coming. Thanks for honoring the teachers.

When you really think about it, few professionals have as direct an impact on our future as our teachers. Teachers are among our children's first role models, counselors, and friends. Teachers awaken young minds, and teachers encourage ingenuity and unleash fertile imaginations.

It's demanding work to be a teacher, even during its best moments. Sometimes, teachers come across students who require them to summon every last ounce of pa-

tience and understanding. When those times come, I just ask that you remember: One day that student may become the President. [Laughter]

We ask a lot of our teachers, and we owe them a lot in return. One of the first priorities as President was to work with members of both parties to pass what's called the No Child Left Behind Act. I am—I can't tell you how important this act is to make sure every child learns to read, write, and add and subtract. The act insists upon high standards, standards that you all set in your classrooms. Otherwise, you wouldn't be a Teacher of the Year. It says that it's important to measure to determine whether or not our children are learning and meeting standards. Measurement is not a tool to punish; measurement is a tool to correct and reward.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working. In reading, 9-year-olds have made more progress in 5 years than the previous 28 years combined. A President couldn't report that to the Nation unless we actually measured to determine whether that was true. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds have earned their highest test scores ever. In both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and beginning to close the achievement gap with their peers.

The structure of the No Child Left Behind Act, the strategy of the act makes a lot of sense. And that's why the Congress needs to reauthorize this good law. But the act wouldn't be working without really dedicated teachers making sure our children learn.

Teaching is more than a profession; it's a calling. And that calling came early to our Teacher of the Year. Andrea Patterson—Peterson—knows the importance of education in her life. After all, as she explained to me in the Oval Office, her first role model was her dad, who has taught for more than 30 years. And we welcome you. And we congratulate you on being such a fine dad that your daughter stands

here in the Rose Garden as the National Teacher of the Year.

Andrea has got two sisters-in-law who are teachers and a mother-in-law who is a teacher. This is a family that really cares about good grammar. *[Laughter]* I probably wouldn't do all that well at the dinner table. *[Laughter]* When you come from a family of teachers, you tend to develop a lifelong appreciation of learning, and more importantly, a—it enables you to find creative ways to instill that appreciation in others.

Andrea has done some—a lot of amazing work as a music teacher at Monte Cristo Elementary School in Granite Falls, Washington. In her 10 years at Monte Cristo, she has built an impressive music program, almost from scratch. She helped the school purchase instruments, organized an after-school choir, and helped obtain computer programs that allow students to compose their own music. She has integrated music education into other subjects. She's taken novels that children were reading in other classes and turned them into musical productions. She's used musical notes to explain fractions. She's helped students reach out to the community by developing a music program that honored local veterans. She's used music to reach students who are not doing well in the traditional classroom setting.

She's more than a music teacher. One parent said of Andrea this: "Mrs. Peterson is passionate about her job, and it shows." In fact, like any good teacher, Andrea juggles responsibilities that would exhaust all of us. For example, in the past few months, she's taught classes full time; she carried out her obligations as Washington State Teacher of the Year, and took part in the National Teacher of the Year activities. And to top it all off, 4 weeks ago she gave birth to a daughter named Faith. That's what we call multitasking. *[Laughter]* Faith probably doesn't know it yet, but she's lucky to have a mom and a dad like the Petersons.

There are a few other teachers who I think deserve mention today, and those are the teachers at Virginia Tech. They did all they could to protect their students from a day of horror, and they're doing all they can to help them heal in the aftermath. One teacher gave his life by using his body to barricade a classroom door while his students jumped to safety from windows. Americans everywhere hold the teachers and students and parents of the Virginia Tech community in our thoughts and in our prayers.

This tragedy has affected at least one of the teachers here in a very personal way, and that would be Susan Evans, who earned her master's degree at Virginia Tech, and we thank you for wearing the Virginia Tech scarf today.

Our Nation is still seeking to make sense of this tragedy, and so are America's children. In fact, one of your hardest jobs is to explain horrific acts to the students. It's a hard job, but I want to thank America's teachers for comforting and encouraging our Nation's youth during difficult moments such as the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

We're fortunate to have teachers like we do in America, men and women who are drawn to the classroom with a desire to serve something larger than themselves. So on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your hard work and your dedication. I thank you for preparing our young children for the challenges of the 21st century. And I thank you for all you do every day to help build a better America.

Congratulations, and welcome to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas P. Waldron, executive vice president, human resources and brand, ING North America Insurance Corp.; and Susan Evans, 2007 Virginia State Teacher of the Year. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who

introduced the President. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Death of Jack J. Valenti *April 26, 2007*

Laura and I are saddened by Jack Valenti's death. Jack Valenti was a great American and a great Texan. He bravely flew combat missions during World War II and ably served in the White House. From protecting families by creating the movie rating system to advocating for intel-

lectual property rights, Jack Valenti helped transform the motion picture industry. He leaves a powerful legacy in Washington, in Hollywood, and across our Nation.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jack's wife Mary Margaret, his children, and his friends and colleagues.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at Camp David, Maryland *April 27, 2007*

*President Bush.* Thank you. Welcome. Mr. Prime Minister, Shinzo, welcome to Camp David. I thank you very much for making the long journey. I also thank you for bringing your gracious wife to dinner last night.

The Abes and Laura and I had a really good dinner. It was very relaxed. The Prime Minister married very well. I was so impressed by Akie's compassion, her intelligence. And I will tell you, Shinzo, that Laura feels like she has a new friend now, and so do I. So we're really glad you're here.

We had a—the kind of discussion you'd expect allies to have. I would describe the talks as—first of all, Shinzo and I met alone for a good period of time. Our talks were very relaxed, but they were strategic. We think about the interests of our country, and we think about the interest of maintaining peace in the world. The alliance between Japan and the United States has never been stronger, and the Prime Min-

ister and I will work hard to keep it that way. It's in the interests of our peoples that we work closely.

I told Shinzo one way to do so, of course, is to visit. I hope he comes to my ranch soon. I looked forward to welcoming him to Camp David, but I also look forward to taking him down there, where one might call it a little slice of heaven.

We talked about the fact that our alliance—and it is a global alliance—is rooted in common values, especially our commitment to freedom and democracy. We discussed ways we can continue to partner together. There's no more important partnership than that through the six-party talks. We spent a lot of time talking about North Korea and our mutual desire for North Korea to meet its obligations. Our partners in the six-party talks are patient, but our patience is not unlimited. We expect North Korea to meet all its commitments under the February 13th agreement,

and we will continue working closely with our partners.

In Iran, we speak with one voice to the regime in Iran. Our nations have fully implemented the sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council in response to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Further defiance by Iran will only lead to additional sanctions and to further isolation from the international community.

Japan is the second largest donor to the people of Iraq and the third largest donor nation to the people of Afghanistan. And I thank you, Shinzo, and I thank the people of Japan for helping these young democracies survive in a troubled world. I firmly believe that we're helping lay a foundation for peace for generations to come.

Over lunch, the Prime Minister and I will discuss his upcoming trip to the Middle East. I will remind him, he'll be traveling into an important region, where extremists and radicals are trying to prevent the hopes of moderate people, of trying to stop the peaceful societies from emerging. I'm looking forward to hearing about your trip before you leave, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you after you've been there.

Shinzo and I talked about trade and the Doha round. We have a lot of bilateral trade between our two nations. Last year, it totaled more than \$270 billion, and that's positive for the American people and the people of Japan.

Any time you have a lot of trade, there's always complicated trade issues. One such issue, of course, I brought up to the Prime Minister is, I'm absolutely convinced the Japanese people will be better off when they eat American beef. It's good beef; it's healthy beef. As a matter of fact, I'm going to feed the Prime Minister and his delegation a good hamburger today for lunch.

But we also talked about the World Trade Organization and the Doha round and how Japan wants to be constructive in getting this round completed, not only to enhance the prosperity in our own coun-

tries but to help the developing world, help lift millions of people out of poverty.

We talked about the environment and energy. I appreciated very much Shinzo's vision of using technologies to help our energy security, our economic security, and at the same time, be responsible stewards of the environment. There's a lot of work that Japan and the United States can do together, particularly in fields like emission-free nuclear energy, nuclear power. I mean, the truth of the matter is, if people really want to solve the issue of greenhouse gases, civilian nuclear power, powering our energy grids by nuclear power is the best alternative available. We can work on new technologies through our joint nuclear energy action plan and through the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership to bring technologies on the market as quickly as possible to assure people that we can deal with the waste, for example, in a responsible way.

We—over lunch I'm going to also remind Shinzo about my deep desire to have our folks driving automobiles powered by ethanol and biodiesels. And I'm going to share with him our strategy about reducing gasoline consumption in the United States by 20 percent over the next 10 years as a result of ethanol, as well as our cellulosic ethanol technologies that are, hopefully, coming to market quickly.

All in all, we've had a very constructive, strong dialog, and I am really pleased you came. Mr. Prime Minister.

*Prime Minister Abe.* Last night we were invited by George and Laura, and myself and my wife were able to enjoy a very wonderful time together. And today we had one-on-one meeting and also had a larger meeting. And we had very substantive discussions. The greatest—the biggest objective of this visit this time was to reaffirm the irreplaceable Japan-U.S. alliance and to make—grow this stronger as an unshakable alliance.

President and the—I would like to thank the President and the American people for

their very warm welcome yesterday. I visited Bethesda Navy Hospital and the Arlington Cemetery and prayed for the repose of the souls of those who died for the cause of stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan and prayed for early recovery of those injured. And I would like to pay respect and express gratitude for the noble sacrifice the United States is making.

And in our meeting, the President expressed his strong determination to carry through the task of Iraq's reconstruction. And I told the President that Japan understands and supports U.S. efforts of further stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, and Japan will carry on its own efforts to the same end. I also told him that Japan will be with the United States at all times and that we feel proud as an ally of the United States.

Through this meeting, I've renewed my determination to work with the United States on various challenges facing the international community on the basis of our common values. We were able to speak our minds with regard to our respective political convictions in the midst of this very open and free atmosphere at Camp David and I—and deepen our mutual trust.

I explained to the President that as the mission of my administration, I will strive to move Japan beyond the post-war regime. As part of this endeavor, I explained to the President that I launched on the eve of this trip a blue-ribbon panel for the purpose of reshaping the legal foundation for national security in a way that will benefit—that will befit the times, now that the security environment surrounding Japan is undergoing major change.

With regard to the economy, I told the President that I'm determined to carry it through, structural reforms in Japan, because Japan's growth is important for the growth of the United States as well as the entire world. And I received strong words of support from the President for this direction that Japan is seeking.

Now, we agree that we need to build on response to—we agreed that we need to build our response to the North Korean nuclear issue and the numerous challenges in East Asia on the Japan-U.S. alliance. And we agreed to step up cooperation in security, economic and cultural exchanges, and many other areas to further strengthen this irreplaceable alliance between Japan and the United States. And I welcomed the conclusion of documents that provide for the strengthening of concrete cooperation in such areas as the economy, cultural exchange, and nuclear energy.

We did take a lot of time to discuss North Korean nuclear issues. We agreed to work together to realize a more peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula by making North Korea completely give up its nuclear weapons and programs through the six-party talks.

With regard to the abduction issue, President Bush once again expresses unvarying commitment to support the Government of Japan, saying that to this day, the strong impressions he got when he met Mrs. Yokota around this time last year still remains. And I told President that before my departure this time, Mrs. Yokota had told me, ever since she last heard from her daughter Megumi that the most moving moment was her meeting with President. So President expressed his, as I said, unvarying commitment to support of the Government of Japan on this abduction issue.

We agree that the current state of the six-party talks as well as North Korea's attitude towards the abduction issue are regrettable. And we'll work for closer coordination between our two countries to achieve progress.

Let me also point out, as President mentioned earlier, that an important progress has been made on the climate change issue. And I finalized with the President a joint statement on the subject matter. It is gratifying that we agreed—Japan and the United States agreed at the leaders' level



to study jointly an intensified dialog on ways and means to make progress towards the ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, to resolve the environmental issues, and to resolve the greenhouse gas issue. I believe this represents an important progress.

It is essential that the world community act on the climate change issue in concert, and Japan and the United States agreed to work together on this front. Thank you.

*President Bush.* Two questions a side. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press], would you start off, please?

#### *Six-Party Talks*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Some people are concerned that you're going soft on North Korea. You said you had——

*President Bush.* Said—what did you just say? There's an echo in here.

*Q.* Some people say you're going soft on North Korea.

*President Bush.* Oh, okay. Yes.

*Q.* You said you had unlimited patience with the regime. They've missed their deadline on shutting down their nuclear reactor——

*President Bush.* No, I said our patience is not unlimited.

*Q.* Not unlimited. My question, sir, is how long are you willing to wait to have them shut this down? Are we talking days, weeks, months? And——

*President Bush.* No, I appreciate that very much. Do you want to ask the Prime Minister something too? It's an old U.S. trick here.

*Q.* Prime Minister Abe——

*President Bush.* Keep plowing through it. [Laughter]

*Q.* ——are you worried that America is softening its stance on Kim Jong Il?

*President Bush.* I have always believed that the best way to solve these difficult problems is through diplomacy. That's the first choice of the United States, to solve difficult problems diplomatically. I also be-

lieve that the best way for—and the difficult problem, of course, was to convincing the leader of North Korea to give up his nuclear weapons program.

I also felt the best way forward was not for the United States to carry this diplomatic mission alone, and, therefore, worked very hard and closely with our Japanese allies to convince others to come to the table beside the United States. And now we have what we call the six-party talks, which is the United States, Japan, and China and South Korea and Russia, all saying the same message to North Korea, that we expect you to honor agreements you made, which include not only stopping their—locking down their plant but also dismantling their programs—and all programs—giving up weapons programs and weapons. That's what they've said they would do.

We recently had a bump in the road to getting them to honor their agreement, and that is, there is a financial arrangement that we're now trying to clarify for the North Koreans, so that that will enable them to have no excuse for moving forward. And that's where we are right now.

The interesting thing about our position is that if it looks like the North Korean leader is not going to honor his agreement, if it looks like that there are reasons other than the financial arrangements that will cause him to say, "Well, I really don't mean what I said," we now have a structure in place to continue to provide a strong message to the North Korean. We have the capability of more sanctions. We have the capability of convincing other nations to send a clear message.

So I like our position in terms of achieving this mission in a diplomatic way. And I want to thank the Prime Minister for being a strong advocate of sending a clear message to the North Korean leader that there's a better way forward than to defy the world.

On all issues, there is a—whether it's this issue or any other issue—is that we

will work with our partners to determine how long. But as I said, our patience is not unlimited. And that's the operative word for the leader in North Korea to understand. We hope he moves forward soon, obviously. Just like in—somebody asked me the other day, how long in Darfur? Well, the leaders will find out the definition of how long when we make it clear we're moving in a different direction. There's still time for the North Korean leader to make the right choice.

*Prime Minister Abe.* Well, today on this issue, we had very candid exchange of views. And our understanding of the issue and the direction we are pursuing, we completely see eye to eye on this matter. And completely with that same attitude, we'll continue to deal with the North Korean issue.

Well, we have to make the North Koreans understand that unless they keep up their promise, the difficult conditions they are—they find themselves under—the food situation and economic situation—they'll not be able to resolve those difficulties. And in fact, the situation would only worsen. So they need to respond properly on these issues; otherwise, we will have to take a tougher response on our side.

In agreement with the procedures set down by the six-party talks, we'll have to continue to watch whether the North Koreans will actually act. In our negotiations with North Koreans, we now have learned full well their negotiating ploys. And between Japan and the United States, we'll maintain close coordination for the resolution of this issue.

#### *North Korea/Abduction of Japanese Citizens*

*Q.* Once again, allow me to ask questions related to North Korea. In Japan, the interpretation is that the United States have become softer on the BDA, Banco Delta Asia issue, and some people are concerned. Now, Mr. Abe, in your meeting today, did you ask President Bush to step up the American pressures on North Korea?

And a question for Mr. President, I understand the United States has agreed with North Korea to start negotiations on lifting the terrorist state designation. And is it right to consider that a precondition for lifting would be the abduction issue resolution?

*Prime Minister Abe.* Well, to resolve the North Korean issues, of course, dialog is needed. But in resolving those issues and in negotiating with North Koreans, there is a need for pressure. And on that score, we—George and I—fully agree. And we reaffirmed that point today. Should the North Koreans fail to keep their promise, we will step up our pressures on North Korea. And on that point, again, I believe we see eye to eye.

As for the importance of the abduction issue, George and our American friends, I'm sure, are fully aware, and they understand our thinking, and they support our position. In resolving that abduction issue, as well, Japan and the United States will cooperate with each other—or we need to cooperate with each other. And the President thinks the same way.

*President Bush.* We have shown the North Korean leader that obstinance on this issue, that there's a price to pay. In other words, we have come together as a group of nations, all aiming to achieve the same objective, and that is for the leader to—of North Korea to verifiably give up the weapons programs that he has, just like he said he would do. And we have proven that we can work in a collaboration to deny certain benefits to the North Korean Government and people. That's what we've shown so far.

I think it's wise to show the North Korean leader, as well, that there is a better way forward. I wouldn't call that soft; I'd call that wise diplomacy. It's his choice to make, ultimately—not our choice—as to whether he honors the agreement he agreed to. Our objective is to hold him

to account. But he's got different ways forward, and we have made that avenue available for his choice. And so the meeting today, of course, is to hope for the best and plan for the worst. We're hoping that the North Korea leader continues to make the right choice for his country. But if he should choose not to, we've got a strategy to make sure that the pressure we've initially applied is even greater. That's our plan.

And so it is—he ought to know that if he makes right choices, there is a way for him to be able to deal with a listing that our Government has placed on him; in other words, there's a way forward. And this is—what you're referring to is the beginning of a process; it's the beginning of an opportunity for him to be in a different position, vis-a-vis the United States Government, on a variety of fronts.

Any discussion about ways forward, however, shouldn't—should not obscure my strong sentiment about the abductee issue. The Prime Minister mentioned how Mrs. Yokota was affected by her visit to the Oval Office. Well, I was affected by her visit to the Oval Office. It broke my heart to be in the presence of a Japanese mother whose love for her daughter has not diminished over time, and her grief is sincere and real. I remember her bringing the picture of the child as she remembers her, right there where I go to work every day, and sitting it on the couch next to her.

So I'm deeply affected by her. She needs to understand that her visit added a human dimension to an issue which is obviously very important to the Japanese people. And I will never forget her visit, and I will work with my friend and the Japanese Government to get this issue resolved in a way that touches the human heart, in a way that—it's got more than just a kind of a diplomatic ring to it, as far as I'm concerned. It's a human issue now to me; it's a tangible, emotional issue. And thank you for bringing the question up.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

### *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

*Q.* Mr. President, the Democrats have voted for a withdrawal timetable from Iraq, which you have said that you will veto. What ideas do you have for breaking this logjam going forward? And would you be willing to veto a second bill?

*President Bush.* Well, first of all, I haven't vetoed the first bill yet. But I'm going to. And the reason why I'm going to is because the Members of Congress have made military decisions on behalf of the military. They're telling our generals what to do. They're withdrawing before we've even finished reinforcing our troops in Baghdad. They're sending, in my judgment, a bad message to the Iraqis and to an enemy and, most importantly, to our military folks. And so I made it clear, I'd veto.

And, by the way, they're adding spending that shouldn't belong in the bill in the first place. Maybe they're important issues, but they ought to be—these spending bills ought to be—or spending issues ought to be debated in the normal course of business. And so I've said this all along; my position has been consistent.

I'm sorry it's come to this. In other words, I'm sorry that we've had this, you know, the issue evolve the way it has. But nevertheless, it is what it is, and it will be vetoed, and my veto will be sustained. And then the question is the way forward. And my suggestion is that—and I invite the leaders of the House and the Senate, both parties, to come down soon after my veto so we can discuss a way forward. And if the Congress wants to test my will as to whether or not I'll accept a timetable for withdrawal—I won't accept one. I just don't think it's in the interest of our troops.

I think it—I'm just envisioning what it would be like to be a young soldier in the middle of Iraq and realizing that politicians have all of the sudden made military determinations. And in my judgment, that would put a kid in harm's way, more so

than he or she already is. I really think it's a mistake for Congress to try to tell generals, our military experts, how to conduct a war.

And furthermore, the idea of putting all kinds of extraneous spending on a bill, the bill—purpose of which is to fund our troops, is—I just don't accept that. So if they want to try again, that which I have said was unacceptable, then of course I'll veto it, but I hope it doesn't come to that. I believe we can work a way forward. And I think we can come to our senses and make sure that we get the money to the troops in a timely fashion. It's important to have a political debate, but as I've consistently said, we don't want our troops in between the debate. And Congress needs to get this money to the Pentagon so the Pentagon can get the money to the troops and so our readiness will be up to par and people—training missions will go forward.

I know Congress, no matter what their position is on the war, doesn't want to affect readiness, and they don't want to affect the military families—I understand that—but they're going to if they keep trying to pass legislation that is—that just doesn't—that withdraws troops or micro-manages the war.

And so I'm optimistic we can get a bill, a good bill, and a bill that satisfies all our objectives, and that's to get the money to the troops as quickly as possible.

#### *Japan's Comfort Women*

Q. Well, a question on the wartime comfort women issue. Mr. Prime Minister, on this issue, did you explain your thoughts to President Bush? And on this matter, did you talk about further factual investigations on the matter and any intent to apologize on the issue?

Also, a question for Mr. President on the comfort women issue. From the view—perspective of human rights and Asian history perceptions, I wonder if you could express your thoughts or views.

*Prime Minister Abe.* Well, in my meeting with the congressional representatives yesterday, I explained my thoughts, and that is, I do have deep-hearted sympathies that the people had to serve as comfort women, were placed in extreme hardships, and had to suffer that sacrifice; and that I, as Prime Minister of Japan, expressed my apologies, and also expressed my apologies for the fact that they were placed in that sort of circumstance.

Now, the 20th century was a century that human rights were violated in many parts of the world. So we have to make the 21st century a century—a wonderful century in which no human rights are violated. And I myself and Japan wish to make significant contributions to that end. And so I explained these thoughts to President.

*President Bush.* The comfort women issue is a regrettable chapter in the history of the world, and I accept the Prime Minister's apology. I thought it was a very—I thought his statements, Kono's statement, as well as statements here in the United States were very straightforward and from his heart. And I'm looking forward to working with this man to lead our nations forward. And that's what we spent time discussing today.

We had a personal visit on the issue. And he gave his—he told me what was on his heart about the issue, and I appreciated his candor. And our jobs are to obviously learn lessons from the past. All of us need to learn lessons from the past and lead our nations forward. And that's what the Prime Minister is doing in a very capable way.

Listen, we thank you all for coming. Appreciate your time. Have a nice weekend. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:09 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Akie Abe, wife of Prime Minister Abe; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; Yohei Kono, Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives; and Sakie Yokota, mother of

Megumi Yokota, who was kidnaped by North Korean authorities. Prime Minister Abe and

some reporters spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Joint Statement by the United States of America and Japan on Energy Security, Clean Development, and Climate Change *April 27, 2007*

President Bush and Prime Minister Abe agreed today that confronting the inter-linked challenges of energy security, clean development, and climate change requires sustained and effective global action. The United States and Japan are working to ensure that the energy on which our economies depend remains reliable, affordable, and secure by encouraging efficiency, diversity of supply, and advances in technology. At the same time our nations are making meaningful progress in addressing air pollution and greenhouse gases from our power and transportation systems. We remain committed to the ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and will further explore the steps forward to this objective.

The United States and Japan are also advancing the clean energy technology needed to change for the better the way we power our homes, businesses, and automobiles. We are accelerating the development and deployment of these technologies by providing policy incentives to reduce the cost barriers to their full commercialization. We especially note the importance of advancing: energy efficiency and renewable energy, alternative and renewable fuels, hydrogen, near-zero emissions coal, nuclear energy, and fusion energy. We will work together to advance our nationally-defined objectives in these areas, taking advantage of a wide range of policy tools and measures including mandatory programs, incentives, and public-private technology partnerships. We will conduct a joint quantitative

study on the economic, technological, and climate benefits of energy efficiency, in recognition of the trend toward national energy efficiency goals and programs throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The United States and Japan will work constructively with our international partners, in particular the major energy consuming nations, to promote the commercialization of advanced clean energy technologies. In this regard, we will also use the G8, the UNFCCC, the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, the International Energy Agency, APEC, the Commission of Sustainable Development, and other multilateral partnerships. We reaffirm the goals of the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3R) Initiative set at the G8 Summit at Sea Island in 2004. This includes the reduction of barriers to the international flow of goods and materials for recycling and remanufacturing, recycled and remanufactured products, and cleaner, more efficient technologies, consistent with existing environmental and trade obligations and frameworks. We also note that a report on the Gleneagles Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development will be received at the G8 summit meeting to be hosted by Japan in 2008.

We will also endeavor under the Montreal Protocol to ensure the recovery of the ozone layer to pre-1980 levels by accelerating the phase-out of HCFCs in a way that supports energy efficiency and climate change objectives. We will continue to exercise leadership in the development of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).



The United States and Japan recognize the value of our bilateral High-Level Consultations on Climate Change and will enhance, strengthen, and streamline that dialog. The United States will send a delegation of senior-level officials to Japan before

the G8 Summit in June to discuss further implementation of this statement.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on North Korea Freedom Week *April 27, 2007*

I send greetings to all those observing North Korea Freedom Week. Those living in North Korea regrettably know firsthand the meaning of deprivation of freedom. I have met in the Oval Office with some of the courageous few who have managed to escape from the country. I have heard firsthand accounts of their suffering in North Korea and of their dangerous journeys to freedom. And I have seen how they now live in freedom's light. We will continue to strengthen our commitment to

bring freedom to all repressed peoples. I believe the 21st century will be freedom's century for all Koreans. One day every citizen of that peninsula will live in dignity, freedom, and prosperity at home and in peace with their neighbors abroad. Until that day comes, we will not rest in our efforts to support the North Korean people as they strive to achieve the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled as human beings.

## The President's Radio Address *April 28, 2007*

Good morning. This weekend I am traveling to Florida to address the graduating class of Miami Dade College. This college serves one of our Nation's most vibrant and diverse communities. Miami is home to people whose families have been in our country for generations and to people who have only just arrived. This diversity is one of the great strengths of that city, and it is one of the great strengths of our country.

The opportunities America offers make our land a beacon of hope for people from every corner of the world. America's ability to assimilate new immigrants has set us apart from other nations. In this country, our origins matter less than our dreams. What makes us Americans is our shared belief in democracy and liberty. Our Nation

now faces a critical challenge: to build an immigration system that upholds these ideals and meets America's needs in the 21st century.

In Washington, we are in the midst of an important discussion about immigration. Our current immigration system is in need of reform. We need a system where our laws are respected. We need a system that meets the legitimate needs of our economy. And we need a system that treats people with dignity and helps newcomers assimilate into our society.

We must address all elements of this problem together or none of them will be solved at all. And we must do it in a way that learns from the mistakes that caused



previous reforms to fail. So I support comprehensive immigration reform that will allow us to secure our borders and enforce our laws, keep us competitive in the global economy, and resolve the status of those already here, without amnesty and without animosity.

I know convictions run deep on the matter of immigration. Yet I am confident we can have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate. My administration is working closely with Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. We are addressing our differences in good faith, and we are working to build consensus. And I am pleased that some of those who had doubts about comprehensive reform last year are now open to supporting it.

There is a desire on the part of Republicans and Democrats alike to get this problem solved. And by working together, we

can enact comprehensive immigration reform this year.

Our Nation deserves an immigration system that secures our borders and honors our proud history as a nation of immigrants. By working together, we will enforce our laws and ensure that America forever remains a land of opportunity and a great hope on the horizon.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:40 p.m. on April 26 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 27, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Commencement Address at Miami Dade College—Kendall Campus in Miami, Florida *April 28, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thank you very much, Mr. President. You're on your way. [Laughter] Christopher, thank you for your fine introduction. I know your—see your mom over there. I know she's awfully proud of you. [Laughter] Dr. Padron; Dr. Gray; members of the board of trustees; members of the administration; faculty and staff; former Governor Bush—always *mi hermano*—[laughter]—Senator Martinez; Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart; *y tambien* Mario Diaz-Balart; proud alumni, especially Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; distinguished guests; family, friends, and members of the class of 2007: Thank you for your warm welcome, and thank you for the honor of addressing you.

This is a joyous day for the graduating class at Miami Dade College. Yet on cam-

puses across America, our thoughts turn to the students and faculty and staff at Virginia Tech. We remember lives cut short, teachers taken from their students, and young men and women who will never attend their commencement ceremonies. Members of the Miami-Dade community share this sense of loss. One of the young victims was a former Miami Dade student who transferred to Virginia Tech, Daniel Cueva. Daniel's family knows, or should know, that we pray for them today, and we offer our comfort to the families who grieve the loss of a loved one during this commencement season.

It's always a pleasure to be back here to Miami, and I thank Dr. Padron for asking me. It hasn't escaped my attention that

when you were looking for Bushes to invite—[laughter]—I came in fourth. [Laughter] Laura spoke at your North Campus commencement in 2004, my mother spoke—[laughter]—brother Jeb has spoken here twice. [Laughter] Before I stepped on the stage, I asked him for some advice. I said, “Jeb, give me some advice.” He said, “Floridians hold their politicians to strict term limits: 8 years for a Governor and 15 minutes for a commencement speaker.” [Laughter] I will do my best.

This afternoon, some of you are graduating with high honors, and I congratulate you. I have to—[applause]—that’s something I never experienced. [Laughter] Of course, today I have done something that most of you have never experienced; I made it to campus with absolutely no traffic. [Laughter] And I found a nice parking spot. [Laughter]

The members of the class of 2007 have worked hard for this day. When you arrived on this campus, you set a goal for yourselves, and you met that goal with determination and discipline. Today you’re leaving this fine college with a degree with your name on it and a promise of a better future. And I congratulate you on this important achievement.

To reach this day, you had the support of outstanding professors. They taught you well; they gave you extra help when you needed it; and they inspired you to aim high. I thank the faculty members for their dedication to their students and for their dedication to the teaching profession.

To reach this day, you also had the support of loving families. Many of you had moms and dads who sacrificed to put you through school and to give you this opportunity. Others of you put yourselves through school while providing for your own families. Those of you with young children found yourselves keeping tabs on two sets of homework—yours and theirs. I ask all the families—the moms and dads, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, to

receive—to stand and receive the thanks of the class of 2007.

As this graduating class goes forward, you enter a world of unbounded opportunity. America’s economy is prospering; our trade with the world is flourishing; and new possibilities are opening every day. And the key to unlocking those possibilities is a good education.

Here at Miami Dade, the college administration has teamed with local industries, from health care to aviation to information technology, to make sure the students who leave here do so with the skills that will enable them to succeed. The school slogan is, “Opportunity changes everything.” And in newspapers and billboards and buses around this city, people can see how high you can rise with a degree from Miami Dade.

Kathy Sparger graduated from Miami Dade with a degree in nursing, and today she is vice president of patient services and chief nursing officer at South Miami Hospital. Jimmie Allen graduated from Miami Dade with a degree in architectural technology and went on to start his own architecture firm. Robert Parker graduated from Miami Dade with a degree in criminal justice, and today he is the director of the Miami-Dade Police Department. These people have followed different paths in life, but they all have one thing in common: their road to success began right here at Miami Dade.

And today you join their ranks as proud graduates of this fine college. If you leave here determined to succeed, as they did, you will achieve your dreams as well. I ask you to dream big, to be confident in your future, and use the diploma you receive today to stake your claim in this land of opportunity.

The opportunities of America make our land a beacon of hope for people from every corner of the world. It says something about this college that more than half of the students were raised speaking a language other than English. Some of you are

the children and grandchildren of immigrants who risked everything to give you opportunities they never had. Others of you are immigrants yourself, who came to this country with the hope of a better life and the determination to work for it. Over the years, this school has helped open the door for opportunity for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, and that is why Miami Dade proudly calls itself “democracy’s college.”

This college has had a significant impact on thousands of our citizens. Take, for example, Gwen Belfon, who graduates today. As a single mother in Trinidad and Tobago, Gwen dreamed of attending college. But she put her own dreams on hold to raise her four children. A few years ago, Gwen came to the United States and enrolled at Miami Dade. Today this proud mother fulfills a lifelong dream. When Gwen crosses the stage this afternoon, she will receive her associate’s degree in education. And she’s not done yet. Next January, she will return to Miami Dade to start on her bachelor’s degree.

For—[*applause*!—another immigrant who knows what a Miami Dade degree can do is the president of this college, Dr. Padron. At age 15, he left his home and family in Cuba for a new life in the United States. He arrived with a desire to learn and a will to succeed. At Miami Dade, he earned a degree in economics, while still learning the English language. Today, he is the first president of this college to speak English as a second language. Some people might say I am the first President of the United States who can make the same claim. [*Laughter*] Dr. Padron has gone on to serve as a leader in the academic community and an inspiring example for immigrants studying at this school today.

Immigrants like Gwen and Eduardo Padron came from different countries, at different times, under different circumstances. They are evidence that in America, your origins matter less than your dreams. They prove that if you work hard and make a commitment to learning, you

will find that the doors have a way of opening for you. So my call is this: Use the degree you earn today as the first step in a lifetime of learning. By doing so, you’ll build a brighter future for yourselves and your families and help maintain the promise of the United States of America.

Maintaining the promise of America requires that we remain an open and welcoming society. This college serves the City of Miami, which is one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in our Nation. Miami is home to people whose families have been in Florida for generations and to those who have only just arrived. This diversity is one of the great strengths of this city, it is one of the great strengths of this college, and it is one of the great strengths of America.

Over the years, America’s ability to assimilate new immigrants has set us apart from other nations. What makes us Americans is a shared belief in democracy and liberty. And now our Nation faces a vital challenge: to build an immigration system that upholds these ideals and meets America’s needs in the 21st century.

In Washington, we are in the midst of an important discussion about immigration. Our current immigration system is in need of reform; it is not working. We need a system where our laws are respected. We need a system that meets the legitimate needs of our economy. And we need a system that treats people with dignity and helps newcomers assimilate into our society.

We must address all elements of this problem together or none of them will be solved at all. And we must do it in a way that learns from the mistakes that caused the previous reforms to fail. I am a strong supporter of comprehensive immigration reform that will allow us to secure our borders and enforce our laws once and for all, that will keep us competitive in a global economy, and that will resolve the status of those who are already here, without amnesty and without animosity.

At Miami Dade, you know firsthand the contributions that immigrants make to our country. You see every day the values of hard work and family and faith that immigrants bring. This experience gives you a special responsibility to make your voices heard. One of the great strengths of America is that the most important issues are decided by the will of the people. That's why an educated citizenry is so vital to the success of our country. As graduates of Miami Dade, you are well-equipped to make a contribution to these vital debates. Speak out on the issues that matter to you. Participate in your Nation's civic life. By taking part in American democracy, you will be active and responsible citizens and you will make our country stronger.

Many of the graduates of the class of 2007 have roots in countries where the opportunity to participate in an open debate does not exist. One of those countries lies just 90 miles from our shores, on the island of Cuba. In Havana and other Cuban cities, there are people just like you who are attending school and dreaming of a better life. Unfortunately, those dreams are stifled by a cruel dictatorship that denies all freedom in the name of a dark and discredited ideology.

Some of you still have loved ones who live in Cuba and wait for the day when the light of liberty will shine upon them again. That day is nearing. The reign of every tyrant comes to an end, yet the desire for freedom is never ending. In Cuba and across the world, all who struggle for freedom have a friend in the United States, and we will stand with them until that struggle is won.

The advance of liberty is the great story of our time. Some of your fellow students have played an important part in that story. Hundreds of veterans of the United States Armed Forces are taking classes at Miami Dade. Sixteen veterans graduate from this campus today. We thank all these brave men and women for their service and for

their courageous decision to wear the uniform of the United States of America.

One of those veterans is a young man named Jimmy Zapata. Jimmy's family emigrated from Colombia when he was 14. After he finished high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. In 2003, Sergeant Zapata helped provide convoy security and supplies for units pushing toward Baghdad as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sergeant Zapata fought for his adopted country with honor and valor. He has earned the gratitude of his Nation, and today he earns his associate's degree from Miami Dade College. The United States will always be proud to have immigrants like Sergeant Zapata, and I know Miami Dade will always be proud to call him one of your own.

I ask every member of the class of 2007 to learn from Sergeant Zapata's example; step forward to serve a cause larger than yourself. Volunteer in a local soup kitchen or shelter. Take time to check in on an elderly neighbor. Be a mentor to a child in need. Use the skills you have learned here to help build a better nation. Our armies of compassion need men and women like you. The great test of this generation will be how you answer the call to extend the promise of America and make our Nation a more hopeful place for all. The character of the class of 2007 gives me great faith in your success and confidence in the future of a nation that makes one people from out of many.

Congratulations on your achievement. *Que Dios les bendiga.* May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher Miles, president, Student Government Association, and Gregory Gray, president, Miami Dade College—Kendall Campus; Eduardo J. Padron, president, Miami Dade College; and former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

## The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders April 30, 2007

*President Bush.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the Rose Garden. I want to welcome Angela Merkel and Jose Barroso here. Thank you all for your friendship. Thank you for what has been a serious set of discussions.

I told the Chancellor and the President that the EU-U.S. relations are very important to our country, that not only is it important for us to strategize how to promote prosperity and peace, but it's important for us to achieve concrete results. And we have done so.

[*Inaudible*]*—the* Chancellor and Jose very much for the transatlantic economic integration plan that the three of us signed today. It is a statement of the importance of trade. It is a commitment to eliminating barriers to trade. It is a recognition that the closer that the United States and the EU become, the better off our people become. And so this is a substantial agreement, and I appreciate it.

We also talked about Doha, and I thank Peter Mandelson and Susan Schwab for briefing us. The first thing I told the group in the Cabinet Room was that I am firmly dedicated to a successful Doha round. I believe it's in this country's interests that we reject isolationism and protectionism and encourage free trade. I'm under no illusions as to how hard it will be to achieve the objective, but the first thing is, there must be a firm commitment by the leadership to get a deal.

Secondly, I reminded the people that this country is dedicated to working to eliminate poverty and disease, and the best way to help the developing world is through a successful Doha round. We told our trade ministers, "Work hard, work often, work constructively." And I believe we can be successful. And we're committed to reducing our agricultural subsidies in order to

advance the process. We expect others to follow suit and market access.

Anyway, I am optimistic we can achieve the objective. And today's meetings gave us a chance to discuss a way forward. We talked about the visa waiver program. We talked about Iran and the need for our nations to continue to work closely together to send a unified message to the Iranians that their development of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable to peace. We talked about Darfur.

We talked about Afghanistan and Iraq. And I appreciate very much the EU's support of the International Compact that will be meeting on Iraq here in Sharm el-Sheikh. We talked about Cuba and the importance for Cuba to be a free society, a society that respects human rights and human dignity, a society that honors the rule of law.

We also talked about climate change, and here we share a common interest. One, we recognize that we have a problem with greenhouse gases; two, we recognize we have a problem with a dependence on oil; three, we recognize that we can use technologies to help solve this problem; and, four, we recognize we have an obligation to work together to promote the technologies necessary to solve the problem and encourage that the developing world that to use those technologies.

And so I found the discussion refreshing and interesting, and I appreciate the candid conversations we had.

Madam Chancellor, welcome back here to the Rose Garden, and I'm looking forward to your comments.

*Chancellor Angela Merkel.* Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President, dear George. Thank you for the hospitality. Thank you for the hospitality you accorded to the European Union and also for the fact that you made it possible to hold this summit



meeting between the EU and the United States of America, which already has a very good and rich tradition.

It was a very interesting debate and one that was actually—we were talking about a lot of issues, about transatlantic economic integration, obviously, first and foremost. And let me thank you very warmly for the fact that we've been able to enjoy such substantial progress in such a relatively short time. That was only possible because the American administration—but in particular, you, Mr. President—were behind, full square behind this project and because we not only agreed on general frameworks but on very concrete projects.

And I think that's exactly what the people in our country expect from us, all the representatives of our respective business communities. They ask us, "What can we do in order to really pool our resources and make sure that we work on one and the same level playing field as regards, for example, our shared values?" So I am confident that what with the Economic Council that we have set up, we will be able to make progress on very concrete projects, for example, mutual recognition of standards and other areas. It is, as I see it, a significant step forward.

I would also like to thank you for the progress we've been able to make on climate and energy issues. There is a common basis. We are aware of the fact that we do have a problem here, that we need to solve this problem. There are different approaches obviously as to how to solve that.

But we have been able, actually, to find a lot of common ground. And one of the issues we talked about, for example, was a commitment of the United States of America to introduce 20 percent biofuels over the next few years to come, until 2020, and to have this at their disposal. And for that, too, we need to develop a common market, common standards which, as I see it, has been, again, giving a more—a very important impetus to that particular industry and that technology.

Now, on climate, we will also need to work on this in view of the upcoming G-8 summit, where we will make it clear, as European Union, as United States of America, that we don't want to isolate ourselves or shut ourselves off against the rest of the—rest of the world, but where we want to enlist the support of others, invite them to join us.

And I also note that the trade talks have been taking place here on the margins of this meeting. They also obviously will then have to take part—place in the more wider group, the multilateral group. Let me just tell you, this agreement between the European Union and the U.S. is not in any way against free trade. No, not at all. And what we need to do here is really to look at the larger picture. And I feel it's so good that the President is committed to make a step forward also on reducing non-tariff barriers to trade. All of the partners will have to be in on this, but we will do our bit to make this true.

I don't want to go through the whole agenda of international issues. And let me just tell you, it was an open and candid discussion that clearly showed us that we need to work together, that diplomacy can only be successful if we stand together, be this on the Middle East, on other issues.

And let me tell you that we have been talking at greater length also about the situation in Darfur, which we consider to be totally unacceptable, and that we need to do everything we can in order to help the people there on the ground who suffer immensely, because we have not made progress so far and that we ought to use all of our possibilities in order to achieve progress also in the European—in the United Nations.

Thank you yet again for your hospitality, for the commitment that, I think, the number of documents that we have been able to agree on here today show—is born out—it's a good day for EU-U.S. relations.

*President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso.* [Inaudible]—a very friendly exchange, the



one we had today, covering the whole range of European Union-United States relations and also some international issues. President Bush and Chancellor Merkel already mentioned the basic points, so let me just underline one or two that I believe are specifically important, namely in terms of economic relations and also on climate.

On economic relations, we signed very important framework for advancing transatlantic European integration. This was already welcomed by business community on both sides of Atlantic. Our economic relation is by far the most important in the world. Transatlantic trade in goods and service totals over 1.7 billion euros a day. But we can work together more to make that relation even easier. And I believe there is some untapped potential, namely if we can achieve more regulatory cooperation, in some cases regulatory convergence, put down some barriers to trade and investment on both sides, and to fight, of course, protectionism and isolationism that sometimes happens on both sides of the Atlantic as well.

So this is, indeed, a very important agreement and an agreement that also brings with it a Transatlantic Economic Council to be a permanent body, with senior people on both sides of Atlantic as we look at all those issues in a concrete manner, in which way we can make it move forward.

On European Union side, I decided to appoint Vice President of the Commission Gunter Verheugen as our leading personality in that council.

Another important point linked with this, it will be signed later this afternoon, is the Air Transport Agreement. It is a very important first-stage agreement on air transport, but it also brings with it the same idea of putting, in an easier footing, the relations—economic relations, people's relations—between United States of America and the European Union. And I think it's also very important, is by far the most important, in terms of air traffic liberalization,

since the convention of Chicago so many years ago.

But trade—we also welcomed very strong statement that President Bush made during our meeting and—just now. We are very committed to a successful conclusion to Doha round. We believe we can do it. We should do it. It will be good for trade, for the economy globally, but also for developing world and also for having all the main players in a true multilateral system for trade. So we are going to make efforts to get that done.

Regarding climate, I really welcome the fact that there was progress in this meeting. We agree there is a threat; there is a very serious and global threat. We agree that there is a need to reduce emissions. We agree that we should work together. That's why I decided to have a forum where we are going to address many of these issues, namely technology and other issues that are important to fight climate change. And let's be frank: Without the United States and Europe working together, we cannot engage others so that we can have a real global effort to face this very important threat to our economy but also to our security. So climate and energy security are important in the agenda. And I'm very happy with the progress that we have achieved in this meeting today.

Once again, President Bush, dear George, thank you very much for all the preparations and all the support you are giving personally to these very deep and strong relations.

*President Bush.* Thank you, Jose. Two questions for the three of us, starting with Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

#### *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

*Q.* Mr. President, you're about to veto a bill that would force troop withdrawals from Iraq. How much of a voice are you willing to give Congress in the way that you conduct the war?

*President Bush.* Yes. I am about to veto a bill that has got artificial timetables for

withdrawal, but that's not the only bad thing about the bill. It also imposes the judgment of people here in Washington on our military commanders and diplomats. It also adds domestic spending that's unrelated to the war. I have made my position very clear; the Congress chose to ignore it, and so I'll veto the bill.

That's not to say that I'm not interested in their opinions; I am. I look forward to working with members of both parties to get a bill that doesn't set artificial time-tables and doesn't micromanage and gets the money to our troops. I believe that there's a lot of Democrats that understand that we need to get the money to the troops as soon as possible. And so I'm optimistic we can get something done in a positive way.

#### *Russia/Missile Defense System*

Q. Mr. President—

*President Bush.* How could we ever forget your face? [Laughter]

Q. That's great. Thank you very much. I remember yours too. [Laughter]

*President Bush.* Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, concerning the nuclear—the dispute about missile defense, the missile defense with Moscow, what concrete steps are you planning to convince President Putin that this is a good idea of NATO and the U.S.? And can the German Chancellor help you on this issue?

*President Bush.* As you know, I'm having a regular conversation with the German Chancellor. We have a secure video that is beamed in the White House and her office, and so we consult regularly. And she expressed her concerns that the U.S. position wasn't very clear about the missile defense systems and that there were some people concerned in Germany, as well as Europe, about our intentions. And she also suggested that it might make sense for me to share my intentions more clearly with President Putin. And I took her advice very seriously.

Our intention, of course, is to have a defense system that prevents rogue regimes from holding Western Europe and/or America to hostage. Evidently, the Russians view it differently. And so upon the advice of the Chancellor, I asked Secretary Gates to go to Moscow, where he had a very constructive meeting with President Putin. I called President Putin and asked him to see Secretary Gates, and that we would put forth an interesting information-sharing proposal.

Our intention is to say to Russia that the system is something you ought to think about participating in. It's in your interests to have a system that would—could prevent a future Iranian regime, for example, from launching a weapon—it's in Russia's security interests. And therefore, we have started a dialog that, as a result of Secretary Gates's visit, that, hopefully, will make explicit our intentions and, hopefully, present the—an opportunity to share with the Russians, so that they don't see us as an antagonistic force, but see us as a friendly force.

#### *Trade/Iran*

Q. If I could ask you, President of the Commission, first of all, on the trade agreement you've reached. Presumably this is an agreement that's going to make wealthy countries richer, yet there's no progress to report on Doha to help the plight of poor countries. Aren't your priorities wrong?

And on a separate issue, your foreign policy chief has said that the U.S. should talk to Iran. I wondered whether you could tell us exactly what the U.S. should be talking to Iran about.

President Bush, if I can just add a question on that, your Secretary of State is going to a conference in Iraq where the Foreign Minister from Iran is going to be present. Do you expect her to have conversations with the Foreign Minister of Iran? What will she talk about? And if she does have a conversation, is there going

to be a change of U.S. policy? Thank you very much.

*President Durao Barroso.* Regarding the framework for advancing transatlantic-European integration, we said it very clearly—and it is clearly stated in the declaration and also in all our conversations—that this is not detrimental to the global trade talks. On the contrary, you just heard President Bush, Chancellor Merkel, and myself saying it clearly that completion of Doha round remains a priority for all of us.

But there are some artificial barriers to trade and investment—it's more about investment than to trade, to be frank—still between United States and Europe. And through harmonization of standards, through a giant effort, for instance, to promote the enforcement of intellectual property rights, through some common approaches to investment, to capital markets integration, to common—or at least commonly accepted rules for accounting—we are trying to untap a lot of potential that exists in the United States-European Union relations.

So this is not at all against global trade talks. On the contrary, we remain and we, in fact, we are urging for a completion of the Doha trade talks, not only because they are about trade, but because they are about development. And today we had extensive conversations about it. And as President Bush has said, we've heard a complete briefing by Susan Schwab on the American side and Peter Mandelson on the European Union side.

Regarding Iran, we also share the same views, basically, about how to deal with Iran. And it's not only the United States and Europe, I'll say—there are several resolutions with the United Nations Security Council. And the Iranians should understand that this message they are receiving from the global community—by the United States, by Europe, but from others; the Security Council adopt several resolutions. Proliferation, nuclear proliferation is, indeed, a threat, not only to regional stability

but to the global peace and global stability. So I believe we are united in sending this very clear message here, but also in United Nations, to the Iranian authorities.

*President Bush.* Should the Foreign Minister of Iran bump into Condi Rice, Condi won't be rude. She's not a rude person. I'm sure she'll be polite. But she'll also be firm in reminding this representative of the Iranian Government that there's a better way forward for the Iranian people than isolation. My hopes, of course, is that the Foreign Minister would see the resolve of our Government, through Condi, to continue to rally the world to convince the Iranians to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions. I happen to believe a significant threat to world peace, today and in the future, is the Iranian threat if they were to end up with a nuclear weapon, I—"today" is the wrong word—"in the future." They don't have a weapon today.

And so I—if, in fact, there is a conversation, it will be one that says, if the Iranian Government wants to have a serious conversation with the United States and others, they ought to give up their enrichment program in a verifiable fashion. And we will sit down at the table with them, along with our European partners and Russia as well. That's what she'll tell them.

*Chancellor Merkel.* Allow me, if I may, one remark on the transatlantic economic partnership and how that tallies with the Doha round. The Doha round actually is mainly about reducing tariffs. And the transatlantic economic partnership has to do more with standards that have nothing to do, actually, with tariffs.

What we are after is to see to it that we try for convergence on standards in many, many areas where we do not have mutual recognition of standards or areas where we can actually harmonize those standards and, therefore, reduce costs by millions, for example, in drug testing, in crash tests for automobiles. And if we look at where the challenges lie, I am firmly convinced that both the United States and

the European Union would be far more competitive and need to be far more competitive with, vis-a-vis, the emerging countries.

So in this way, this will liberate money to put into new technologies, into developing techniques that can enable us to do that. And we're actually squandering money that could be put to better use. So the two are complementary, but they also serve strengthening competitiveness of both the European Union and the United States.

*World Bank President Paul D. Wolfowitz*

*Q.* For all three of you, did you at any point today, either informally or not, have discussions about the fate of World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz? Should he resign? keep his job? And your reason for that, please.

*President Bush.* The answer is, no, we didn't have a discussion. My position is, is that he ought to stay. He ought to be given a fair hearing. And I appreciate the fact that he has advanced—he's helped the World Bank recognize that the eradication of world poverty is an important priority for the bank.

*Chancellor Merkel.* Well, today we did not address that issue; and my position is, and this is going to be relayed by a minister in the board—in the individual bodies of the World Bank, and they have the respective commissions as well, that this ought to be a very transparent, very candid conversation. This is, I think, where this belongs, this particular issue.

*Alternative Fuel Sources*

*Q.* A question addressed to you, Mr. President, also to the Chancellor. You were speaking of progress that you have been able to achieve on climate. Are these true and genuine—is this true and genuine progress if we still don't agree on the instruments to get there? The Europeans seem to be banking more on limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, sort of national limits that are imposed by governments. You seem to be

more in favor of, sort of, a voluntary regime. But apparently, we're sort of reaching the 11th hour.

*President Bush.* Actually, that's not an accurate portrayal of my position. For example, take tailpipe emissions from automobiles. I have said we'll have a mandatory fuel standard—not a voluntary fuel standard, but a mandatory fuel standard—that will reduce our uses of gasoline by 20 percent over a 10-year period of time. We believe that ethanol and biodiesel—the spread of ethanol and biodiesel are—the goal of spreading ethanol and biodiesel is achievable. That's what we believe. And we're spending a lot of money to achieve that goal.

Now, the spread of ethanol in the United States is not going to be achievable if we rely only upon corn. There is a limit to the amount of ethanol we can produce with corn as the feedstock. So our research dollars are going to what they call cellulosic ethanol, and that means the ability to make ethanol from switchgrasses or wood chips. And we're spending a lot of money to that end.

And it is a mandatory approach. And the reason why I laid it out is because, one, I do believe we can be better stewards of the environment, and, two, I know it's in our national interest to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil. The fundamental question is, will America be able to develop the technology necessary for us to achieve the goal? I think we can. It's in our interest to share that technology, not only with our partners who are wealthy enough to spend money on research dollars but also with the developing world.

Now, you talk about helping alleviate poverty in the developing world. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the developing world could grow crops that would enable them to power their automobiles so they wouldn't have to be dependent on foreign oil either? And that's the message I took down to South America, with Lula, and to Central America. For example, sugar cane is the

most efficient—you're learning a lot about ethanol here—but sugar cane is the most efficient way to make ethanol. It turns out, in Central America, there is a lot of land and opportunity to continue to produce cane, which means that the Central American countries could be eventually net exporters of energy. And so we've got a lot of common ground and a lot of area to work on.

As to how each country approaches it, that's an interesting question. And I think that each country needs to recognize that we must reduce our greenhouse gases and deal obviously with their own internal politics to come up with an effective strategy that, hopefully, when added together, that it leads to a real reduction.

Finally, you've got to recognize that in order to make—achieve progress on greenhouse gases, we've got to make sure that the developing nations, which are significant emitters, are a part of the process. As I reminded the people around the conference table today, the United States could shut down our economy and emit no greenhouse gases, and all it would take is for China, in about 18 months, to produce as much as we had been producing, to make up the difference about what we reduced our greenhouse gases to.

So it's a—this is a very important issue. It's got global consequences. The good news is, is that we recognize there's a problem. The good news is, we recognize technology is going to lead to solutions, and that we're willing to share those technologies. And we all recognize we've got to deal with the developing world, particularly China and India.

*Chancellor Merkel.* I feel—just look back a year ago. I feel that we would have had a lot more difficulty actually bringing about language that describes this problem adequately than we have to now. And it is thanks to the President and his team clearly mentioning what the problem is in this document. It says clearly: We need to do everything we can in order to work against

these detrimental consequences. A lot is being done discussing this issue; for example, we need to discuss possible pricing of CO<sub>2</sub>. How can we translate this into a market-economic-compatible scheme?

And we are also agreed that we, as industrialized country, need to address this issue; need to develop the necessary technology. But we, alone, without the emerging countries, will not be able solve this problem. And this is why—how it's—why it's so important that this EU-U.S. result is translated into the G-8, debated together with the outreach countries—China and South Africa, Brazil, among others, and India—because if we were not doing that, we will—we would not be able to combat this problem that is truly a global one.

But what is also true is that if the developed countries who have the best technology don't do anything, it will be even harder to convince the others. But without convincing the others, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide will not go down. And I do think that we, together, need to define steps. We have done it. For example, we said we need a proper agenda for the Indonesian talks at the end of this year. That's an enormous step forward. And I think this is where we should be clear about the glass being half full instead of half empty. So think again for this.

#### *U.S.-EU Cooperation on the Environment*

*Q.* For Mr. Barroso, I would like to know how happy the European Union is, really, with the final document on climate change? Is it as ambitious as you were planning? Thank you.

*President Durao Barroso.* To be very frank, it's better than what I was planning. I think it was real progress. Of course, it's working in progress, but as President Bush said, we agree there is a global threat; it's a serious threat. We agree there is the need to establish a limit to greenhouse gases. We agree with many of the mechanisms, namely the market-based mechanisms, the technology cooperation. We have agreed to



establish a high-level group, a forum, between the European Union and the American administration to look at those issues. And as Chancellor Merkel just said, we have to engage others. So now we can go to the G-8 summit in Heiligendamm in June, in Germany, to discuss this issue also with others that are very relevant for a global solution to a global problem.

So I really believe that there was progress and very concrete progress. For instance, standards for biofuels—it's good. The idea to have a conference on renewables between the European Union and the United States, it will be next year here in Washington. And some concrete—it's very detailed in our document—some concrete mechanisms, in terms of energy efficiency.

So I really believe that by linking those different files—climate protection, energy security—we can really achieve a very important goal of having a sustainable development that is friendly to our environment. But I think it was a very important progress, and we are working along the

same lines. But it is, of course, still work in progress.

*President Bush.* Good. Thank you all very much. Madam Chancellor, thank you.

*Chancellor Merkel.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* Mr. President, thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:18 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. Participating in the event were Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, in her capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. President Bush referred to European Union Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; Minister of Foreign Affairs Manuchehr Motaki of Iran; and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. A reporter referred to European Union Foreign Minister Javier Solana Madariaga. Chancellor Merkel and a reporter spoke in German, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida

*May 1, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you all for letting me come by to say hello. I am proud to address the CENTCOM Coalition Conference. CENTCOM's Coalition Village is a welcome reminder that in the fight against radicals and extremists and murderers of the innocent, we stand as one. We appreciate your country's contributions to this enormous challenge in the 21st century.

I appreciate the fact that your work has helped to liberate millions of people. I appreciate the fact that your work has helped keep millions of people safe. And so I thank you for defending the security of the civilized world.

I appreciate the fact that Fox Fallon has taken on this very important command. I can remember visiting him on the Hawaiian Islands. He had a house that overlooked the Pacific. It was quite a luxurious place. I told him, though, Tampa Bay is a good place to live, and the mission is vital. And so I thank you for taking it on, Admiral.

I appreciate General Doug Brown, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command. I'm proud to be here with General David Petraeus, commander, Multi-National Force—Iraq. I thank the coalition members here. I welcome the ambassadors who have joined us. I thank Dr. Rubaie, National Security Adviser to the Prime



Minister of a free Iraq. It's good to see you, sir. Please give my very best to the Prime Minister. I thank the other Iraqis who are here with us. Thank you for your courage; thank you for your determination; thank you for making history.

CENTCOM has built an impressive record of achievement in a short period of time. This command was established by President Ronald Reagan to deter a Soviet invasion of the Middle East in the latter days of the cold war. That era is receding into memory, but it was a long struggle, one of constant dangers and one of fierce debates. Victory often seemed elusive. Yet victory did come, because America and her allies stood firm against an empire and an ideology that vowed to destroy us.

Once again, history has called on great nations to assume great responsibilities. And once again, it is vital that allies, despite occasional disagreements, hold firm against vicious and determined enemies.

We saw the action of this vicious and determined enemy here in America on September the 11th, 2001. Terrorists murdered citizens from more than 80 countries. Since that September morning, acts of terror have appeared in places like Mombasa and Casablanca and Riyadh and Jakarta and Istanbul and London and Amman and Madrid and Beslan and Bali and Algiers and elsewhere. September the 11th was not an isolated incident. These terrorists bring death to innocents all across the globe. They bring death to commuters on subway trains and guests who have checked into the wrong hotel and children attending their first week of school.

Our main enemy is Al Qaida and its affiliates. Their allies choose their victims indiscriminately. They murder the innocent to advance a focused and clear ideology. They seek to establish a radical Islamic caliphate so they can impose a brutal new order on unwilling people, much as Nazis and Communists sought to do in the last century. This enemy will accept no compromise with the civilized world. Here is

what Al Qaida charter says about those who oppose their plans, "We will not meet them halfway, and there will be no room for dialog with them." These enemies have embraced a cult of death. They are determined to bring days of even greater destruction on our people. They seek the world's most dangerous weapons. Against this kind of enemy, there is only one effective response: We must go on the offense, stay on the offense, and take the fight to them.

America is joined in this fight by more than 90 nations, including every country represented in this room. An era of new threats requires new forms of engagement, new strategies, and new tactics. So we've reinvigorated historic alliances, such as NATO, and formed new and dynamic coalitions to address the dangers of the—of our time. Our broad coalition has protected millions of people. We have worked to stop the spread of dangerous weapons. We have taken the fight to the enemy where they live so we don't have to face them where we live. This is a record that all our countries can be proud of, and the United States of America is proud to stand with you.

Working together, America and our allies have shared intelligence that helped thwart many attacks. We uncovered and stopped terrorist conspiracies targeting Embassies in Yemen and Singapore and ships in the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits of Gibraltar. We stopped a Southeast Asian terrorist cell grooming operatives for terrorist attacks. We stopped an Al Qaida cell seeking to develop anthrax. British authorities disrupted a plot to blow up aircraft flying over the Atlantic toward the United States.

Working together, coalition forces have captured or killed key leaders of terrorist networks. Philippine forces killed top leaders of an Al Qaida affiliate. Spanish police captured fugitives wanted in the connection—in connection with the Madrid train bombings. Terrorist cells have been broken

up by countries including Britain and Canada and Denmark and Italy and France and Indonesia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey. We must stay on the offense. We must defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them in our countries.

Working together, America and our allies have shut down funding channels and frozen terrorist assets, making it harder for our enemies to finance attacks. It makes it hard for the enemies to purchase weapons, to train and move around their recruits. The international community, through the United Nations, has imposed measures to identify terrorist financiers and prevent them from using international financial systems to fund their acts of murder and terror.

Working together, America and our allies are training local forces to conduct counterterrorism activities in their own regions. We are helping key nations stop terrorists from establishing safe havens inside their borders, including Indonesia and the Philippines and Yemen. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership provides counterterrorism and military assistance to Chad and Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The East African Counterterrorism Initiative provides border security and police training to Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Uganda.

We're active. We're working together to make this world a safer place. Working together, our coalition is taking steps to stop terrorists from obtaining the world's most dangerous weapons. More than 80 nations have joined the Proliferation Security Initiative. We're working to stop shipments of materials related to weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea, and in the air.

Working together, America and other nations have acted boldly to confront adversaries who threaten international security. In Afghanistan, coalition forces drove the Taliban from power, removed Al Qaida

training camps, and helped bring freedom to 25 million people.

Since their liberation, the Afghan people have made enormous strides. Afghans chose the first democratically elected President in their history. They've held free elections for a National Assembly. The Afghan economy has doubled in size. And more than 4.6 million Afghan refugees have come home. It's one of the largest return movements in the history of the world.

The Taliban and their Al Qaida allies are actively working to undermine this progress. They want power to impose their vision. Our coalition, led by NATO, is going on the offense against them. Coalition and Afghan forces have conducted dozens of operations over the past few months to go after enemy strongholds, including an operation launched this week targeting the Taliban in Helmand Province in the south of Afghanistan. We've seized dozens of caches of weapons and ammunition and improvised explosive devices. We're making progress in training the growing Afghan National Army. At least 20 other nations are supporting efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. We appreciate these contributions. And we will stand with our partners and the Afghan people until this important work is done.

Just as America and our allies are standing together in Afghanistan, a determined coalition is committed to winning the fight in Iraq. Four years ago, we confronted a brutal tyrant who had used weapons of mass destruction, supported terrorists, invaded his neighbors, oppressed his people, and tested the resolve and the credibility of the United Nations. Saddam Hussein ignored every opportunity to comply with more than a dozen resolutions passed by the U.N. Security Council. So coalition forces went into Iraq, removed his vicious regime, and helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people.

In 2005, nearly 12 million Iraqis demonstrated their desire, their deep desire to live in freedom and peace. Iraqis voted in

three national elections—choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world, and then electing a Government under that Constitution. In 2006, a thinking enemy, a brutal enemy responded to this progress and struck back, staging sensational attacks that led to a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal in Baghdad.

As sectarian violence threatened to destroy this young democracy, our coalition faced a choice. One option was to help the Iraqi Government tamp down the sectarian violence and provide them with the breathing space they need to achieve reconciliation, provide them the breathing space they need to take the political and economic measures necessary to make sure our military efforts were effective. The other option was to pull back from the capital before the Iraqis could defend themselves against these radicals and extremists and death squads and killers. That risked turning Iraq into a cauldron of chaos. Our enemy, the enemies of freedom, love chaos. Out of that chaos, they could find new safe havens.

Withdrawal would have emboldened these radicals and extremists. It would have confirmed their belief that our nations were weak. It would help them gain new recruits, new resources. It would cause them to believe they could strike free nations at their choice.

Withdrawal would have increased the probability that coalition troops would be forced to return to Iraq one day and confront an enemy that is even more dangerous. Failure in Iraq should be unacceptable to the civilized world. The risks are enormous.

So after an extensive review, I ordered a new strategy that is dramatically different from the one we were pursuing before. I listened to our military commanders; I listened to politicians from both sides of the aisle. I made a decision. And I appointed our new commander, General David

Petraeus, to carry this—carry out this strategy. This new strategy recognizes that our top priority must be to help the Iraqi Government secure its capital so they can make economic and political progress.

The Iraqis cannot yet do this on their own. So I ordered reinforcements to help Iraqis secure their population, to go after those inciting sectarian violence, and to help the Iraqis get their capital under control.

This strategy is still in its early stages. Some of the reinforcements General Petraeus requested have not yet arrived in Baghdad. He believes it will take months before we can adequately gauge the strategy's potential for success. Yet at this early hour, we are seeing some signs that give us hope. Coalition forces have captured a number of key terrorist leaders who are providing information about how Al Qaida operates in Iraq. They stopped a car bomb network that had killed many citizens of Baghdad, and destroyed major car bomb factories. There has been a decline in sectarian violence. And in some areas of the capital, Iraqis are returning to their neighborhoods with an increased feeling of security.

Terrorists and the extremists continue to unleash horrific acts of violence. Al Qaida is playing a major role. Last week, General Petraeus called Al Qaida “probably public enemy number one” in Iraq. He said that Al Qaida has made Iraq “the central front in their global campaign.” And that’s why success in Iraq is critical to the security of free people everywhere.

There are those who say America is engaged in this fight alone. Each of you here knows better. The Iraqis are suffering a lot, but they’re in this fight. I’m impressed by the courage of the Iraqi people. Today there are more than 30 nations supporting the operations in Iraq. I appreciate the 17 NATO nations that have contributed forces or been part of the NATO Training Mission to help the Iraqis. I appreciate Georgia’s recent decision to contribute 2,000 troops.

America joins in honoring the coalition troops who have been killed in Iraq and the others who have been wounded in combat. I want your countries to know that the sacrifices made by these brave soldiers are for a noble cause, a necessary cause, and we grieve for them as we grieve for our own. Your countries have risked too much and fought too hard for anyone to dismiss or disregard your contributions. Our nations are standing together in this fight, and I want your citizens to know, America is deeply grateful.

America is also grateful for the increasing contributions international organizations are making for Iraq's stability. On Thursday, the United Nations will host a conference in Egypt to sign an International Compact for Iraq, an agreement that will bring new economic assistance in exchange for greater economic reform. Then on Friday, Iraq's neighbors will meet to discuss ways to promote political reconciliation in Iraq, to promote stability in Iraq. These meetings will be attended by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and senior officials from other G-8 nations. Iran and Syria have been invited to attend, and this will be an important test of whether these regimes are truly interested in playing a constructive role in Iraq.

Everyone in this room knows the consequences of failure in Iraq, and that we should also appreciate the consequences of success because we have seen them before. Following World War II, many nations helped lift the defeated populations of Japan and Germany and stood with them as they built representative governments from societies that had been ravaged and decimated. We committed years and resources to this cause, and that effort has

been repaid many times over in three generations of prosperity and peace. During the cold war, the NATO alliance worked to liberate nations from Communist tyranny, even as allies bickered, and millions marched in the streets against us, and the pundits lost hope. We emerged from that struggle with a Europe that is now whole and free and at peace.

We look back at that history and marvel at what millions of ordinary people accomplished. Yet success was not preordained, and the outcome was not certain. Only now we can see those eras with the proper perspective. And I believe that one day, future generations will look back at this time in the same way, and they will be awed by what our coalition has helped to build. They will see that we strengthened alliances, offered new relevance to international institutions, encouraged new forms of multilateral engagement, and laid the foundation of peace for generations to come.

These are difficult times. These are tough times. These are times that test the resolve of free people. These are times that require hard work and courage and faith in the ability of liberty to yield the peace we want. And so I thank you for your contributions. Thank you for standing for what's right. Thank you for helping the liberated. And thank you for working for peace.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to William J. "Fox" Fallon, USN, commander, U.S. Central Command; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Remarks on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007"

*May 1, 2007*

Good evening. Twelve weeks ago, I asked the Congress to pass an emergency war spending bill that would provide our brave men and women in uniform with the funds and flexibility they need. Instead, Members of the House and the Senate passed a bill that substitutes the opinions of politicians for the judgment of our military commanders. So a few minutes ago, I vetoed the bill.

Tonight I will explain the reasons for this veto and my desire to work with Congress to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. We can begin tomorrow with a bipartisan meeting with the congressional leaders here at the White House.

Here is why the bill Congress passed is unacceptable. First, the bill would mandate a rigid and artificial deadline for American troops to begin withdrawing from Iraq. That withdrawal could start as early as July 1st, and it would have to start no later than October 1st, regardless of the situation on the ground.

It makes no sense to tell the enemy when you plan to start withdrawing. All the terrorists would have to do is mark their calendars and gather their strength and begin plotting how to overthrow the Government and take control of the country of Iraq. I believe setting a deadline for withdrawal would demoralize the Iraqi people, would encourage killers across the broader Middle East, and send a signal that America will not keep its commitments. Setting a deadline for withdrawal is setting a date for failure, and that would be irresponsible.

Second, the bill would impose impossible conditions on our commanders in combat. After forcing most of our troops to withdraw, the bill would dictate the terms on

which the remaining commanders and troops could engage the enemy. That means American commanders in the middle of a combat zone would have to take fighting directions from politicians 6,000 miles away in Washington, DC. This is a prescription for chaos and confusion, and we must not impose it on our troops.

Third, the bill is loaded with billions of dollars in nonemergency spending that has nothing to do with fighting the war on terror. Congress should debate these spending measures on their own merits and not as a part of an emergency funding bill for our troops.

The Democratic leaders know that many in Congress disagree with their approach and that there are not enough votes to override the veto. I recognize that many Democrats saw this bill as an opportunity to make a political statement about their opposition to the war. They've sent their message. And now it is time to put politics behind us and support our troops with the funds they need.

Our troops are carrying out a new strategy with a new commander, General David Petraeus. The goal of this new strategy is to help the Iraqis secure their capital so they can make progress toward reconciliation and build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law, and fights extremists and radicals and killers alongside the United States in this war on terror.

In January, General Petraeus was confirmed by a unanimous vote in the United States Senate. In February, we began sending the first of the reinforcements he requested. Not all of these reinforcements have arrived in Baghdad. And as General Petraeus has said, it will be the end of



summer before we can assess the impact of this operation. Congress ought to give General Petraeus's plan a chance to work.

In the months since our military has been implementing this plan, we've begun to see some important results. For example, Iraqi and coalition forces have closed down an Al Qaida car bomb network; they've captured a Shi'a militia leader implicated in the kidnaping and killing of American soldiers; they've broken up a death squad that had terrorized hundreds of residents in a Baghdad neighborhood.

Last week, General Petraeus was in Washington to brief me, and he briefed Members of Congress on how the operation is unfolding. He noted that one of the most important indicators of progress is the level of sectarian violence in Baghdad. And he reported that since January, the number of sectarian murders has dropped substantially.

Even as sectarian attacks have declined, we continue to see spectacular suicide attacks that have caused great suffering. These attacks are largely the work of Al Qaida, the enemy that everyone agrees we should be fighting. The objective of these Al Qaida attacks is to subvert our efforts by reigniting the sectarian violence in Baghdad and breaking support for the war here at home. In Washington last week, General Petraeus explained it this way: "Iraq is, in fact, the central front of all Al Qaida's global campaign."

Al Qaida's role makes it—the conflict in Iraq far more complex than a simple fight between Iraqis. It's true that not everyone taking innocent life in Iraq wants to attack America here at home, but many do. Many also belong to the same terrorist network that attacked us on September the 11th, 2001, and wants to attack us here at home again. We saw the death and destruction Al Qaida inflicted on our people when they

were permitted a safe haven in Afghanistan. For the security of the American people, we must not allow Al Qaida to establish a new safe haven in Iraq.

We need to give our troops all the equipment and the training and protection they need to prevail. That means that Congress needs to pass an emergency war spending bill quickly. I've invited leaders of both parties to come to the White House tomorrow and to discuss how we can get these vital funds to our troops. I am confident that with good will on both sides, we can agree on a bill that gets our troops the money and flexibility they need as soon as possible.

The need to act is urgent. Without a war funding bill, the military has to take money from some other account or training program so the troops in combat have what they need. Without a war funding bill, the Armed Forces will have to consider cutting back on buying new equipment or repairing existing equipment. Without a war funding bill, we add to the uncertainty felt by our military families. Our troops and their families deserve better, and their elected leaders can do better.

Here in Washington, we have our differences on the way forward in Iraq, and we will debate them openly. Yet whatever our differences, surely we can agree that our troops are worthy of this funding and that we have a responsibility to get it to them without further delay.

Thank you for listening. May God bless our troops.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Qais Khazali, member, Khazali network. He also referred to H.R. 1591.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the  
“U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq  
Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007”

*May 1, 2007*

*To the House of Representatives:*

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1591, the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007.”

This legislation is objectionable because it would set an arbitrary date for beginning the withdrawal of American troops without regard to conditions on the ground; it would micromanage the commanders in the field by restricting their ability to direct the fight in Iraq; and it contains billions of dollars of spending and other provisions completely unrelated to the war.

Precipitous withdrawal from Iraq is not a plan to bring peace to the region or to make our people safer here at home. The mandated withdrawal in this bill could embolden our enemies—and confirm their belief that America will not stand behind its commitments. It could lead to a safe haven in Iraq for terrorism that could be used to attack America and freedom-loving people around the world, and is likely to unleash chaos in Iraq that could spread across the region. Ultimately, a precipitous withdrawal could increase the probability that American troops would have to one day return to Iraq—to confront an even more dangerous enemy.

The micromanagement in this legislation is unacceptable because it would create a series of requirements that do not provide the flexibility needed to conduct the war. It would constrict how and where our Armed Forces could engage the enemy and

defend the national interest, and would provide confusing guidance on which of our enemies the military could engage. The result would be a marked advantage for our enemies and greater danger for our troops, as well as an unprecedented interference with the judgments of those who are charged with commanding the military.

Beyond its direction of the operation of the war, the legislation is also unacceptable for including billions of dollars in spending and other provisions that are unrelated to the war, are not an emergency, or are not justified. The Congress should not use an emergency war supplemental to add billions in spending to avoid its own rules for budget discipline and the normal budget process. War supplemental funding bills should remain focused on the war and the needs of our men and women in uniform who are risking their lives to defend our freedoms and preserve our Nation’s security.

Finally, this legislation is unconstitutional because it purports to direct the conduct of the operations of the war in a way that infringes upon the powers vested in the Presidency by the Constitution, including as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. For these reasons, I must veto this bill.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 1, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 2.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia

May 2, 2007

*President Bush.* It's been my honor to welcome a true democrat, a strong leader, and a friend, the President of Colombia. We had a long discussion.

First, Mr. President, Laura and I remember fondly our trip to your beautiful country. It was my second trip to Colombia, my first to your capital, and it was a very special occasion. And we thank you and the First Lady for such gracious hospitality.

Secondly, we had a discussion today about an important vote that our Congress must take, and that is a vote to confirm a free trade agreement with Colombia. This agreement is good for the United States. It's good for job creators, farmers, workers. This agreement is good for Colombia. It's good for job creators and workers and farmers.

This agreement has strategic implications. It is very important for this Nation to stand with democracies that protect human rights and human dignity, democracies based upon the rule of law. So the free trade agreement with Colombia and Peru and Panama, these agreements are more than just trade votes, they're signals to South America that we stand with nations that are willing to make hard decisions on behalf of the people.

The President is here to speak strongly about his record, and it's a good, solid record. I thank the Members of Congress for giving him a hearing. We expect them to be openminded, to listen to his record. And I urge the Congress to pass a trade agreement with Colombia and Peru and Panama because it's in our interest that they do so.

And so, Mr. President, it's great to see you. *Bienvenidos.*

*President Uribe.* *Muchas gracias, Presidente.*

Good morning, distinguished journalists. I want to thank President Bush for the new meeting. It has been, as always, very constructive. This meeting has given my team and myself the opportunity to reiterate our commitment with democracy.

We have three main objectives in our administration: to consolidate democratic security, to create more and more confidence in Colombia for people to invest in our country, and to fulfill very important social goals, to fulfill social goals before the deadline of the social millennium goals.

Many people ask me, why you call your policy on security democratic security? Because it is security with human rights, because it is security for all Colombians, because it is security for trade union leaders, for those member of the opposition, for those who agree in their ideas with my Government, security for all Colombians.

During my 5-year term, we have healthy elections, and Colombians have enjoyed effectiveness of our freedoms because of our policy on security. Before my administration, many Colombians had the idea that the only way for my country to reach peace, it was by private criminal organizations. Today, because of the efficacy of our administration, the vast majority of Colombians are convinced that we will defeat terrorists by institutional ways, that the only way Colombia has for the future is the way of our democratic institutions.

It is very important that the United States considers the necessity to advancing Plan Colombia. We haven't won yet in eradicating illicit drugs, but we are winning. And it is very important, the free trade agreement. I will explain in Capitol Hill, and I will explain to the American citizens the same I explain to President Bush this morning: The more our country can export, the better for my country to have high-

quality jobs with affiliation to the social security system.

We are doing our best to defeat terrorists in an open country. Everyone in the world can go to Colombia; can oversight what our country is doing. And what our country does today is in favor of democracy.

I want to thank President Bush, his team, the people of Congress, and the American citizens for the help all of you have given our country. This integration is very important to promote democracy, to promote freedoms—freedom, to promote

social justice. This is—these are our commitments.

Thank you, President Bush.

*President Bush. Gracias, amigo.*

*President Uribe. Muchas gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:51 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lina Maria Moreno de Uribe, wife of President Uribe. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks to the Associated General Contractors of America and a Question-and-Answer Session

May 2, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Please be seated. Steve, unlike you, I have trouble finding the front end of a front-end loader. *[Laughter]* Thanks for having me. I'm proud to be here with the AGC. It's the oldest and largest construction trade association in our country. I understand I'm not the first Bush to have ever addressed the AGC convention; a person I now refer to as 41 addressed you. *[Laughter]* And I appreciated your hospitality to him then, and I appreciate your hospitality to me today.

I want to talk about—a little bit about our economy, and I want to talk a lot about our security. And I thank you for giving me a chance to come by. What I thought I would do is try to keep my remarks relatively brief and then maybe give you all some time to ask some questions.

First, I want to thank Steve. Steve is a Virginia Tech grad, and our hearts are still heavy as a result of that terrible incident there on the campus. And yet the amazing thing about that campus—and a lot of other places around the country—is we've got a great resiliency; people bounce back from tragedy. And so, Steve,

you can tell the Virginia Tech community, we're still thinking about them and appreciate very much the great kind of strength of spirit there—at least I saw that there in Blacksburg, Virginia.

I want to thank two Members of the Senate who have joined us. First, John Warner, from Virginia. Senator, thank you for coming; ranking member of the House military committee he is a—Armed Services Committee—he is a strong supporter of the troops. And I appreciate Senator Joe Lieberman. John's a Republican; Senator Lieberman is an Independent. Joe Lieberman is one of these—I would call him a unique soul who followed his conscience, stood for what he believed in, in the face of a political firestorm. And he proved that if you stand on conviction, the people will follow. And I look forward to working with these two really fine public servants to make the decisions necessary to protect the United States. And I'm honored you all are here, and thank you for coming.

I like to be in the room of builders and doers and problem-solvers and entrepreneurs. And I thank you for what you

do every day. Your job is to improve infrastructure and provide work for people. Our job is to provide an environment so that you can build infrastructure and provide work for people. Our job is not to try to create wealth in government, our job is to create an environment that encourages small businesses and entrepreneurs—entrepreneurs.

I believe this administration has done that, particularly since we cut taxes. You know, most small businesses and self-employed people, or people in your line of work, or many of them, are not corporations. They're sole proprietorships or subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships that pay tax at the individual income-tax level.

And therefore, when you cut taxes, we not only—individual rates, we're not only cutting them on the people who work for you or work with you; we're cutting them on you. And my attitude is the more money you have in your treasuries, the more likely it is you'll be able to expand. The more incentive you have to buy a piece of equipment, the more likely it is you'll buy one, which means that somebody is going to have to build it for you.

The best way to enhance progrowth economic policies is to cut the taxes on the American people, and that's exactly what we did. These taxes are set to expire. In my judgment, if Congress really wants to create a progrowth attitude for a long time coming, they ought to make the tax relief we passed permanent. They ought not to let them expire.

My attitude is this about the budget: The best way to balance the budget is to keep taxes low, encourage growth, which enhances tax revenues, and be wise about how we spend money. I worry about the attitude: "Don't worry, we're just going to raise the taxes on some to balance the budget." No, they'll raise the tax on some and figure out new ways to spend the money. And we're proving that progrowth economic policies with fiscal discipline can

work, and our budgets are shrinking. The best way to keep them shrinking is keep the economy growing and be wise about—and setting priorities with your money.

There's other things we can do in Washington. We've got to make sure health care is affordable and available, without inviting the Federal Government to run the health care system. Got to do something about these junk lawsuits that I'm sure you're concerned about. We've got to continue to invest in the Nation's infrastructure.

We also need an immigration system that upholds the rule of law and treats people with respect. We need an immigration system that secures our borders and meets the needs of our economy. As I said in the speech down in Florida the other day, we need an immigration system without amnesty and without animosity. In other words, we need a comprehensive immigration reform. I want to thank you for the stand you have taken in working with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform. I join you.

I will work with both Republicans and Democrats to get a bill to my desk before the summer is out, hopefully. And I thank the leadership in the Senate that's working through this issue. I want to thank Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona for working hard on this, Mel Martinez, Arlen Specter, there's a—Lindsey Graham. There's a series of Senators who are working with Ted Kennedy, who is a strong advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. And I appreciate the leadership he's taken, along with Ken Salazar of Colorado. We're making progress. There's a lot more work to be done, and your help is important. And so I want to thank you for coming up with a rational, reasonable, logical plan.

I want to talk to you about the other main issue we have here in America, and that is your security. The most important job we have is to secure the United States of America. That's the most important job of the Federal Government. You expect us



to spend enormous amounts of energy protecting you, and that's what we're doing. I vowed to the American people we would not tire when it came to protecting you, and we're not going to. Matter of fact, I spend a lot of time thinking about this issue. I wish I didn't have to spend time thinking about the issue, but I do because there's still an enemy out there that would like to do America harm. And therefore, at this hour, we've got men and women in uniform engaging our enemies around the world. Our strategy is, we've got to keep the pressure on them. We would rather fight them there so we don't have to face them here.

And the most visible and violent front of this global war is Iraq. And it's a tough fight. It has been a difficult year for the American people, and I understand that. It reached—last year was—this battle reached its most difficult point to date. The terrorists and extremists and radicals set off a wave of sectarian violence that engulfed that young democracy's capital. It threatened to destabilize the entire country.

So earlier this year, I laid out a new strategy in Iraq. I named a new commander to carry it out: General David Petraeus. I want to give you some facts about the new strategy and talk about why Iraq relates directly to the safety of the American people.

The most important fact about our new strategy: it is fundamentally different from the previous strategy. The previous strategy wasn't working the way we wanted it to work. It's interesting: They run polls—and I accept that—and it said, you know, "We don't approve of what's happening in Iraq." That was what the poll said last fall and winter, you know. And had they polled me, I'd have said the same thing. *[Laughter]* I didn't approve of what was happening in Iraq, and so we put a new strategy in that was fundamentally different.

And first of all, Petraeus, General Petraeus, is an expert on counterinsurgency, and his top priority is to help the

Iraqi leaders—who, by the way, were elected by nearly 12 million of their citizens—secure their population. And the reason why is, is that this young democracy needed some time to make important political decisions to help reconcile the country. After a thorough review, we concluded the best way to help Iraq's leaders to provide security was to send more troops into the nation's capital, into the country; was to send reinforcements to those troops which were already there. And their job was to go after the extremists and radicals who were inciting sectarian violence. Their job was to help get Baghdad under control. And their job was to continue to train Iraqi forces for the day they can secure the country on their own.

Last week, General Petraeus came to Washington, and he updated me, and he updated the Congress on the early stages of this new strategy. And I repeat: early stages. He reminded us that not all the reinforcements he'd requested has—have arrived, that it's going to be at least until the end of this summer that he will know whether or not the new strategy has achieved successes. And that means the strategy is in early stages.

My view is, the Congress and the country ought to give General Petraeus time to see whether or not this works. You know, it's interesting; he goes up in front of the Senate and gets confirmed unanimously. And he said, "I need more troops"—during his testimony—"send me more troops, and I will go implement a new plan." They said, okay, fine, we confirm you. And yet there are some doubts in Washington whether or not they ought to send the troops. The troops are going. The strategy is new. And the general said: "Let's give it some time to work to see whether or not it's successful, and I'll be able to report back to the country by the end of this summer."

The most significant element of the new strategy is being carried out in this—in the capital. The whole purpose is to secure the capital. Our theory is—and it's a good

one—is that if the capital is in chaos, the country can't—it's going to be difficult for the country to survive.

It's—the strategy is also being carried out in what's called surrounding belts. This is the areas that kind of arc around the capital, and it's a place where there's been a lot of planning and plotting and attacking. Three American brigades, totaling about 12,000 reinforcements, have taken up their positions in the Baghdad area. The fourth brigade—fourth of five—is heading into Baghdad this week. And the fifth is on its way. In other words, you just don't take five brigades and move them in overnight. There's a sequencing that has to take place, and that sequencing is now being completed.

The Iraqis, by the way, have increased their own forces. In other words, this is a joint operation. This is the Americans and coalition forces helping the Iraqis provide security so that the average person can live a peaceful life. That's what they want. And so we've got about a total of 80,000 combat forces now in the Baghdad area, U.S. combined with the Iraqi forces. The position of the forces is shifting. We used to have our forces live in bases outside the city. They would go in at night, or during the day, and then leave and go back home at night. They did a fine job, as you'd expect our U.S. forces to do, or the Iraqi forces would do so. And then when they would leave, killers would move back in.

And so now, we've got—American troops are now living and working in small neighborhood posts called joint security stations. This is what's fundamentally different from the strategy. Our troops, along with the Iraqis, go into a neighborhood, and they stay. They operate side by side with the Iraqi forces.

What's interesting is, is that the plan, General Petraeus's plan, is to help build trust. And when you build trust, you end up getting people buying into a centralized government, a unity government, a country that is united. And not only that, you end

up getting cooperation from people. Remember, most people want to live peaceful lives. I hope this make sense to you because I firmly believe that Iraqi moms want their child to grow up in a peaceful world, just like American moms do.

The—and so we're seeing some gains. The interesting thing about this is that the nature of this strategy is that the most important gains are often the least dramatic. It doesn't generate much attention when violence does not happen. Instead, some important indicators of progress in the security plan are less visible. I would like to share some with you.

The level of cooperation from local residents is important. It's an indication as to whether or not we're making progress: our ability to take weapons off the street and break up extremist groups. The willingness of Iraqis to join their security forces is an interesting measurement, and, finally, it's important to measure the level of sectarian violence. If the objective is to bring security to the capital, one measurement is whether or not sectarian violence is declining. These measures are really not flashy. In other words, they're not headline-grabbing measures. They certainly can't compete with a car bomb or a suicide attack, but they are interesting indications. And as General Petraeus reported, these are heading in the right direction.

For example, General Petraeus reports that American and Iraqi forces received more tips from local residents in the past 4 months than during any other 4-month period on record. People are beginning to have some confidence, and they're beginning to step forth with information, information that will help them live normal lives.

Thanks to these tips the number of weapons caches that are being seized are growing each month. Better intelligence has led American and Iraqi forces in Baghdad and the surrounding belts to conduct operations against Sunni and Shi'a extremists. My attitude is, if murderers run free, it's

going to be hard to convince the people of any society that the government is worth supporting. And therefore, the Iraqis and U.S. forces and coalition forces are after murderers, regardless of their religious affiliation.

American and Iraqi forces captured the head of a major car bombing ring recently, the leader of a bombing network with ties to Iran, members of a death squad that terrorized a Baghdad neighborhood, the leader of a secret militia shell—cell that kidnaped and executed American soldiers. These are just some examples of what happens when you start to earn the confidence of the people.

Baghdad residents see actions, they grow more confident. Interestingly enough, General Petraeus reported that in his short time he's been there, and in the short time that this plan is being implemented and the—remember, it's not fully implemented. Three of the brigades are present; are in place. The fourth brigade has just moved into Baghdad, and it will be in place relatively soon. And the fifth is on its way. Then, in spite of the fact that we haven't fully implemented the plan, the number of sectarian murders in Baghdad has dropped substantially.

Even as the sectarian attacks have declined, the overall level of violence in Baghdad remains high. Illegal armed groups continue to—continue their attacks; insurgents remain deadly. In other words, as we report progress, it's very important for us to make sure that the American people understand there's still issues; there's still challenges. Illegal armed groups need to be dealt with, and we are.

The primary reason for the high level of violence is this: Al Qaida has ratcheted up its campaign of hope—high-profile attacks, including deadly suicide bombers carried out by foreign terrorists. In the past 3 weeks, Al Qaida has sent suicide bombers into the Iraqi Parliament. Or they send a suicide attack into an American military base. These attacks may seem like random

killing; they're not. They're part of Al Qaida's calculated campaign to reignite sectarian violence in Baghdad, to discourage the Iraqi citizen, and to break support for the war here at home. This is what these murderers are trying to achieve.

I don't need to remind you who Al Qaida is. Al Qaida is the group that plot and planned and trained killers to come and kill people on our soil. The same bunch that is causing havoc in Iraq were the ones who came and murdered our citizens. Now I've got to tell you, that day deeply affected my decisionmaking. And I vowed that I would do anything that I possibly could, within the law, to protect the American citizens against further attack by these ideologues, by these murderers.

And so when I'm talking about Al Qaida in Iraq, I fully recognize what happens in Iraq, matters here at home. Despite their tremendous brutality, they have failed to provoke the large-scale sectarian reprisals that Al Qaida wants. The recent attacks are not the revenge killings that some have called a civil war, they are a systematic assault on the entire nation. Al Qaida is public enemy number one in Iraq. And all people of that society ought to come together and recognize the threat, unite against the threat, and reconcile their differences.

For America, the decision we face in Iraq is not whether we ought to take sides in a civil war, it's whether we stay in the fight against the same international terrorist network that attacked us on 9/11. I strongly believe it's in our national interest to stay in the fight.

As you watch the developments in Baghdad, it's important to understand that we will not be able to prevent every Al Qaida attack. When a terrorist is willing to kill himself to kill others, it's really hard to stop him. Yet, over time, the security operation in Baghdad is designed to shrink the areas where Al Qaida can operate, it's designed to bring out more intelligence about their presence, and designed to allow

American and Iraqi forces to dismantle their network.

We have a strategy to deal with Al Qaida in Iraq. But any time you say to a bunch of coldblooded killers, "Success depends on no violence," all that does is hand them the opportunity to be successful. And it's hard. I know it's hard for the American people to turn on their TV screens and see the horrific violence. It speaks volumes about the American desire to protect lives of innocent people, America's deep concern about human rights and human dignity. It also speaks volumes about Al Qaida, that they're willing to take innocent life to achieve political objectives.

The terrorists will continue to fight back. In other words, they understand what they're doing. And casualties are likely to stay high. Yet, day by day, block by block, we are steadfast in helping Iraqi leaders counter the terrorists, protect their people, and reclaim the capital. And if I didn't think it was necessary for the security of the country, I wouldn't put our kids in harm's way.

We're seeing significant progress from our new strategy in Anbar Province as well. That's a largely Sunni area west of Baghdad. It's been a hotbed for Al Qaida and insurgents. According to a captured Al Qaida document—in other words, according to what Al Qaida has said—and by the way, in a war to protect America, it's really important to take the words of the enemy very seriously—according to this document, the terrorists' goal is to take over Anbar and make it their home base in Iraq. According to the document we captured—that is a document from Al Qaida, the same people that attacked us in America—their objective is to find safe haven in this part of Iraq. They would bring them closer—it would bring them closer to their objective, their stated objective, which is to destroy the young Iraqi democracy, to help them build a radical Islamic empire based upon their dark ideology, and launch new attacks on the United States, at home and

abroad. That's what they've said they want to do.

Al Qaida has pursued their objective with a ruthless campaign of violence. They can't persuade people through logic; they have to terrorize people and force people to try to allow them to impose their point of view. And not long ago, it looked like they might prevail in Anbar; looked pretty grim, it really did. Then something began to change because we were steadfast, because our troops and our diplomats are courageous people. Tribal sheiks finally said, enough is enough. Their local leaders said, we're tired of it. And they joined the fight against Al Qaida.

The sheiks and their followers knew exactly who the terrorists were, and they began to provide highly specific intelligence to American and Iraqi forces. In asymmetrical warfare, you've got to have good intelligence in order to be able to deal with the enemy. In the old days, you could see platoons moving; you could see ships floating along, aircraft in formation flying to a location. In this war, it's different. In this war, you have to know specifically where a IED factory may be. You have to know in advance that somebody's getting ready to slide into society and kill innocent in order to achieve an objective. Intelligence is important, and so they began to provide intelligence, all aiming to secure their part of Iraq so they could live in peace.

They began to encourage their young men to volunteer for the security forces. The number of Iraqi Army and police recruits in Anbar has skyrocketed. It's an interesting measurement, isn't it? There's a threat to the security of their people. The local leaders said: Why don't you join up to help defend us? And the number of recruits is significant.

Our commanders saw this as an opportunity to step up the pressure on Al Qaida. Our commanders made the recommendation from the field that they could use more troops to help secure Anbar. And so

I ordered additional U.S. marines and special operation forces to Anbar; as part of our reinforcement package, 4,000 of the troops are going into Anbar.

Together, American and Iraqi forces are striking powerful blows. We've cleared out terrorist strongholds like Ramadi and Fallujah. We're there with the Iraqis so that they can't take those cities back—"they," the enemy. American and Iraqi forces are operating in places that have been too dangerous to go before, and people are beginning to see something change.

In Ramadi, for example, our forces have seized nearly as many weapons caches in the past 4 months as they did in all of last year. We've captured key Al Qaida leaders. We're on the hunt. We're keeping the pressure on them, in Iraq and everywhere else in the world in which they try to hide. Their—these Al Qaida leaders are revealing important details about how their network operates inside of Iraq.

Al Qaida has responded with sickening brutality. They've bombed fellow Sunnis in prayer at a mosque. They murdered local residents with chlorine truck bombs. They recruited children as young as 12 years old to carry out suicide attacks. But this time, the Sunni tribes in Anbar are refusing to be intimidated.

They are showing that Al Qaida's ideology lacks popular appeal and staying power. Ultimately, what matters is what you believe. The United States and our coalition and most Iraqis believe in liberty. Al Qaida believes in imposing their dark vision on others and are willing to use death and murder to do so.

I appreciate the determination of the Iraqi people. I appreciate their courage. I appreciate the fact that these tribal sheiks have stood up in Anbar, and we will stand with them. Our men and women in uniform took Al Qaida's safe haven away in Afghanistan, and we're not going to let them reestablish a safe haven in Iraq.

The military gains achieved by our new operations are designed to give Iraq's Gov-

ernment time to make political progress. We fully recognize that the military cannot solve this problem alone, that there has to be political reconciliation and economic process—progress.

You know, the Iraqi Government has been in office about a year. It—and they're beginning to make some progress toward political benchmarks it has set, political benchmarks I support. The legislature has passed a budget that commits \$10 billion for reconstruction projects. That's \$10 billion of the Iraqi people's money; that's a positive sign. The assembly met. They appropriated money for the good of the Iraqi people. They spent \$7.3 billion to train and equip their own security forces. The council of ministers has approved legislation that would provide a framework for equitable sharing of oil resources. We strongly believe—by the way, both Republicans, Democrats, and Independents believe strongly that a good oil bill will help unite the country. That's why it's a benchmark. And they're making—this Government is making progress toward an important piece of legislation that would help the security track progress, as well as the political and economic track.

The Government has formed a committee to organize Provincial elections. That's important; you want people buying into government. There needs to be Provincial elections, so that when the money is distributed from the central government, there's a representative government there to spend the money. Leaders have taken initial steps toward an agreement on de-Ba'athification policy. That's an important piece of reconciliation that we think ought to go forward. A committee is meeting with all major Iraqi groups to review the Constitution. And there's a key conference tomorrow and Friday in Egypt, where Prime Minister Maliki will work to build greater support from Iraq's neighbors and the international community. It's in the world's interest that this young democracy survive.



It's certainly in the interest of the neighborhood that Iraq be a country that can govern itself and sustain itself and defend itself, a Government which rejects radicalism. And it's in the world's interest.

And so Condoleezza Rice—I talked to her last night on her way out of town—is heading over to Egypt. And she's going to represent our country—and she represents it well, by the way—and will do so in Egypt. It's going to be an important international conference, and I'm looking forward to seeing the outcome of that conference.

Iraq's leaders still have got a lot to do, don't get me wrong. Yes, there's progress, but they've got a lot more to do. And the United States expects them to do it—just like I expect them to remain courageous and just like they expect us to keep our word. And what's interesting is, is that the Iraqis are making a calculation: Will the United States of America keep its word? Because if not, they want to do something different. And I think it's going to be important for us to keep signaling them as they make progress, we appreciate the progress. More to do? No question about it. And we expect them to do it. But they can also count on us to keep our word.

The stakes are high, really high in Iraq. General Petraeus is beginning to carry out the strategy, yet the Democrat leaders in Congress have chosen this time to try to force a precipitous withdrawal. In other words, I was presented a bill last night that said: "There's a timetable. You had to leave—start leaving by July 1st and definitely be leaving by October 1st." That didn't make any sense to me, to impose the will of politicians over the recommendations of our military commanders in the field. So I vetoed the bill.

That phase of the process is now over, and a new phase has begun. Later on this afternoon, leaders from both parties and both chambers are coming down to the White House. And I look forward to meeting with them. I am confident that with

good will on both sides that we can move beyond political statements and agree on a bill that gives our troops the funds and the flexibility they need to do the job that we have asked them to do.

As we move forward the debate, there are some other things that all of us in Washington should keep in mind. First of all, debate is good. I have no problem with debates. I—this issue of Iraq and this war on terror deserves a serious discussion across the United States. We don't agree on every issue, but one of the things I have heard here in Washington is that people understand the consequences of failure in Iraq.

If we were to leave Iraq before the Government can defend itself, there would be a security vacuum. Extremists and radicals love vacuums and chaos. It gives them a chance to use their tactics, tactics of death, to spread their ideology. The more chaotic a region, or for example—or the less control there is in a region, the more the state looks like a failed state: these people that attacked us on September the 11th can be emboldened. It will encourage them. It will enable them to achieve objectives. I'm deeply concerned about a vacuum in Iraq encouraging rival extremist factions to compete for power.

I worry about a situation where if radicals took control of a country like Iraq, they would have oil resources to use at their disposal to try to achieve their objectives. You can attack a nation several ways: One, you can get 19 kids to fly airplanes into buildings. Or you can gain control of something a country needs and deny that country access to that—in this case, oil—and run the price of oil up, all attempting to inflict serious economic damage.

It's a—and by the way, an opportunity for radicals and extremists to gain resources would not only enable them to inflict economic damage, it would enable them to achieve other objectives. They'd have more resources at their disposal. It—look, all the radicals and extremists in Iraq don't want

to attack America; I'm not saying that. But many do. And that's—therein lies the danger to our country.

Al Qaida terrorists who behead captives and order suicide bombings in Iraq would not simply be satisfied to see us gone. A retreat in Iraq would mean that they would likely follow us here. A retreat in Iraq would say to a lot of people around the world, and particularly in the Middle East, America can't keep its word. It would certainly confirm Al Qaida's belief that we're weak and soft as a society. It would embolden them to be able to recruit. It would more likely enable them to find safe haven and sanctuary.

No responsible leader in Washington has an interest in letting this happen. Whether you are a Republican or Democrat, there is no benefit in allowing a widespread humanitarian nightmare to consume Iraq. There would be no benefit in allowing chaos to spill out of Iraq and into the broader Middle East. There would be no benefit in emboldening Iran and endangering our allies in the region. And there would be no benefit in allowing the same terrorist network that attacked America on 9/11 to gain a safe haven from which to attack us again. Even if you think it was a mistake to go into Iraq, it would be a far greater mistake to pull out now.

This is a frustrating war. Nobody likes war. You know, I know full well how many Americans react to what they see on their TV screens. I wish there was an easy way out; that's what people wish. But there is no easy way out. The easy road would be the wrong road, in my opinion. Leaving now would be short term—would bring short-term satisfaction at the cost of long-term disaster. The outcome in Iraq will have a direct impact on the security of our people here at home. And no matter how tempting it might be, it would be unforgivable for leaders in Washington to allow politics and impatience to stand in the way of protecting the American people.

Success in this fight is going to be difficult. It will require sacrifice. It's going to require time. But for all the—all we hear about the consequences of failure in Iraq, we also shouldn't forget the consequences of success. I share with people—and I do this quite often—but I find it incredibly ironic that during my time as President, certainly one of my best friends, and soon to be another best friend, are—were the Prime Ministers of Japan. I had a very close personal relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi. And last weekend at Camp David, I—Laura and I had a chance to—at the White House, and then eventually at Camp David, we hosted Prime Minister Abe. At—you know, my dad fought the Japanese. He was an 18-year-old kid right out of high school, went into the Navy, was a torpedo bomber. Many of your relatives did the same thing. They fought the Japanese with all their soul and all their might in a bloody, bloody conflict. Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. I doubt in 1948 or '49 anybody could have hardly predicted that a President would stand up and say: I have found that these two Prime Ministers of Japan are good to work with to achieve peace.

It's an interesting statement—isn't it?—about the possibilities of liberty to change history. And so with Prime Minister Koizumi and Prime Minister Abe, we talked about security. We talked about working closely together to convince the leader of North Korea to give up his nuclear weapons ambitions and programs. We talked about helping the young democracy of Iraq survive in the midst of the Middle East. We fully understand that the long-term way to protect America is to defeat an ideology of hate with an ideology of hope. I learned firsthand the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally.

I firmly believe that a democracy can survive in the Middle East, and I believe it is a necessary part of laying a foundation of peace for generations to come.

Good to be with you. [Applause] Thank you all. Sit down. Thank you. I'll take some questions. Yes, sir. You get to start since you're the boss. [Laughter]

*Military Operations in Iraq/Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

Q. Thank you. In May of 2006, my second cousin was on his second tour in Iraq. Corporal Cory Palmer—he's a—in the Marines—he was on patrol in a Humvee, and they ran over a roadside bomb. He and three others in that Humvee perished. What do I need to do—what do we need to do to help you, so that my second cousin and others like him have not died or been injured in vain?

*The President.* Thank you. The horrors of war come home to every—to a lot of families in America. Yesterday I had the honor of meeting with moms and dads and wives, in this case, who—children, who have lost a loved one. And I've met with a lot of families, sadly enough. Most of the time, I hear that very question. Actually, it's not a question, it's a statement.

Here's what I've heard: One, my loved one died doing what he or she wanted to do. Two, do not allow that loved one to have died in vain. In other words, it is an interesting spirit amongst the—now, listen, I visited with some who said: "Get out; I wish you hadn't have done this in the first place." But by far the vast majority reflect what you asked: What does it take?

First of all, it takes, in order to make sure your loved one doesn't die—didn't die in vain, is to have the will and determination necessary to succeed. One of the reasons I've come to speak to you is because I must continually explain to the American people the stakes in this war, the consequences of failure, and the consequences of success. In order for me to do my part to make sure your second cousin and anybody else who lost a loved one in Iraq didn't die in vain, is to continue to take the case to the American people, why what happens in Iraq matters to them.

Secondly, one way to make sure that your second cousin didn't die in vain is to remind legislators that regardless of their position on the war, that they have got to fund our troops, that they have got to make sure that—without conditions of—that say you've got to withdraw by a certain date.

Now, here's the reason that doesn't make any sense. I'm sure a lot of Americans know intuitively it doesn't make any sense for people on Capitol Hill to say, "You must withdraw." The reason why is, first of all, we ought to rely upon conditions on the ground, and we ought to rely upon our military commanders and our diplomats on the ground to give us advice. It's the best way to conduct a war.

Secondly, imagine what a thinking enemy is doing when they hear timetables. Oh, you've got to be out by a certain date? Well, why don't we just wait. [Laughter]

Thirdly, what does it say to the Iraqis? Remember, there are a lot of people who basically wonder whether or not a coalition is going to stand with them as they make difficult choices. And you're—if you're an Iraqi thinking: "Well, I may have some support; I may not. And if not, I better start hedging my bet." The Government isn't quite ready to provide the security necessary for people to be comfortable with a reduced coalition presence.

And therefore it—and, by the way, in order to make a unified government work, there has to be people willing to commit to that government. There have to be people willing to commit to civil society. Remember, these people are recovering from a brutal tyrant, and they have to make a—they've got to commit, in their soul that it's worthwhile, that this Government is worthwhile. And they're not willing to make that commitment yet because they're uncertain about their future.

And so a artificial timetable of withdrawal is—really affects the psychology of the Iraqis as well. That's why I vetoed the bill. And I believe we can work together

in Congress to get it done. I think that Senators would tell you there's an opportunity. And first of all, they got to fund the troops because the longer they wait in funding the troops, it's going to hurt our military. The military is spending money over in Iraq as we speak, and they need money. And if they don't get the money from the supplemental, they'll start taking it from other accounts, which could affect readiness. And it begins to affect the overall strength of our military.

And that's one reason I keep explaining that to the American people, so that they understand that this—these delays, they make nice politics in some quarters, but it's lousy for our military and the military families.

Anyway, good question; thanks for asking it. Yes, ma'am.

*Freedom of the Press/War on Terror  
Strategy/Iraq Study Group*

Q. I'd like to know, like a lot of other people in this room, we have family members who are actively involved in the security of this country in various ways. From them, we've received positive information who we consider credible, who say about the success and the good things that are happening as a result of us being in Iraq. I would like to know why and what can be done about we, the American people, receiving some of that information more from the media, more from the overall media.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—

*The President.* Probably ask—[*ap-  
plause*]—if you're trying to goad me into attacking the media, you're crazy. [*Laugh-  
ter*]

It's interesting, people get their news all different kinds of ways. This is an interesting, different type of war. I mentioned asymmetrical warfare. That means an enemy can use inexpensive weapons to try to defeat expensive defensive armament. A car bomb, a suicide bomber, an IED: these

are inexpensive weapons that create—help them achieve strategic objectives.

It's also different in that this is a volunteer army that we have fielded. And therefore, the role of government is to make sure that our families are well supported—our military families are well supported, that the veterans get everything they deserve, and that the health care is perfect as possibly can be. And we're working toward it.

By the way, I was proud of our Secretary of Defense the other day. When he found a inadequate health care, he responded, because he knows—and the Congress shares the same view—is that if—when we have somebody volunteering to be in combat, they and their families deserve the best that we can possibly provide.

Thirdly, back to your question. You thought I was kind of doing one of these—[*laughter*]—Washington, DC, dodges. [*Laughter*] I talk to a lot of families who have got a loved one in Iraq or Afghanistan or anywhere else in this global war on terror, and they are in constant communication with their loved one. That's amazing; isn't it? You've got a kid in Iraq who is e-mailing mom daily, talking about the realities of what he or she sees. Information is moving—you know, nightly news is one way, of course, but it's also moving through the blogosphere and through the Internets. It's amazing how many e-mails I see from people that are writing in what they think and what they hear.

We've all got—believe—those of us who believe that we're doing the right thing must continually speak. Joe Lieberman's been great about continually speaking about the consequences. And—[*applause*]—wait—no, you didn't give me a chance to say something nice about Chairman Warner. [*Laughter*] He too has been strong.

And I—[*applause*]—it's just a—I can't answer your question beyond that people just need to be—the best messenger, by the way, for us is David Petraeus, because he's actually there in Baghdad. And Ryan

Crocker who's actually—he's the Ambassador who is there in Baghdad. And freedom of the press is a valuable freedom here, and it's just something that we've all got to live with and value it for what it is and just continue to speak the truth as best as we can without trying to gloss over the inherent dangers.

The interesting thing I find is that our—as the president here mentioned, there have been multiple rotations. People have gone back to Iraq. In other words, they've reupped, and the reenlistment rate is high. People are signing up for the first time as well. And it's just an interesting statement—isn't it?—about the character of our military, a character which is—says that we've got people willing to serve a cause greater than themselves.

I saw a marine yesterday and—came out of Anbar. His brother, who was in the Army, was lost. And I was comforting his family as best as I possibly can or could. And he said: "We're making great progress in Anbar; I just wanted to tell you that, President." You know, is he the kind of guy that tells the President what he wants to hear? I don't know. All I can tell you is what he told me. And I told that to David Petraeus, who confirmed it.

And—but slowly but surely, the truth will be known. Either we'll succeed, or we won't succeed. And the definition of success as I described is sectarian violence down. Success is not "no violence." There are parts of our own country that have got a certain level of violence to it. But success is a level of violence where the people feel comfortable about living their daily lives. And that's what we're trying to achieve.

I'm asked all the time about strategies. I liked what James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton reported back after a serious investigation of Iraq. I liked their ideas. And it's something that we should seriously consider. And their idea was, is that at some point in time, it makes sense to have a U.S. presence configured this way, embedded with Iraqi forces, training Iraqi forces,

over-the-horizon presence to provide enough security to know that people will have help if they need it, but put the—more onus on a sovereign government of Iraq, a presence to keep the territorial integrity of Iraq intact, a special ops presence to go after these killers who have got their intentions on America. It's an interesting idea.

By the way, in the report, it said, it is—the government may have to put in more troops to be able to get to that position. And that's what we did. We put in more troops to get to a position where we can be in some other place. The question is, who ought to make that decision: the Congress or the commanders? And as you know, my position is clear: I'm a commander guy.

Yes, sir.

#### *Reconstruction Efforts in Iraq/President's Faith*

Q. We're General Contractors of America, and what are we doing—I don't hear anything about the reconstruction of Iraq.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. Could you fill us in on that? Are we doing enough, as general contractors? And we are at your disposal.

And second is a personal question: What do you pray about? And how we can we pray for you?

*The President.* Thank you. The first question: Our reconstruction strategy initially was to do big projects, and then those big projects would be destroyed by the enemy. In other words, they blow them up. And it became very frustrating. And some of the big projects were successful; a lot of them weren't. So therefore we restructured, and we said that the best way to help the Iraq—remember, Iraq has now put out 10 billion of their own money. So, step one, they're a sovereign government, and if you want to—if we want to do business with Iraq, we can figure out how you can go do it—business with Iraq. In other words,



they're spending their own money. That's what's important to remember.

And that's actually a hopeful sign, that they appropriated money in a constitutionally elected assembly, and hopefully, that money is spent in a way that encourages all Iraqis to have some faith that the central government can function rationally. I guess what I'm telling you is, the security situation was such that it made the initial phases of our reconstruction not as effective as we would have liked.

Now we're giving reconstruction money to two different groups of—or two groups of people, not different—two groups. One, our military commanders. It's called CERP money. They go into a neighborhood in Baghdad that had been ravaged by sectarian violence; they bring order with the Iraqis; they stay in place; they gain the confidence of the people; and there is some reconstruction money to help provide jobs of cleaning up neighborhoods and rebuilding storefronts.

The other reconstruction money goes to what's called Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These are teams of diplomats living out in the hinterlands, working with local folks to meet objectives of the local folks, so that the people begin to see that there is one, security; two, hope; and three, tangible benefits. And that's how we're using—I'm not exactly sure what a proper role could be for you. I just—I—the good news is, I can find out pretty quick—[laughter]—ly, quickly. [Laughter]

The fact that you would ask the question: How can I pray for you? Speaks volumes about the United States of America. I have been amazed by the fact that millions of Americans of all faith, all political backgrounds, pray for me and Laura. And it is unbelievably sustaining; it is comforting. It is humbling to be prayed for. Wisdom and strength and my family is what I'd like for you to pray for.

Yes, sir.

*Spread of Democracy/Freedom Agenda*

Q. [Inaudible]

*The President.* Okay, we've got dueling questions. [Laughter] You just lost, because he's got the mic. [Laughter] It's the possession deal, you know. [Laughter]

Q. You talked about the terror of 9/11, and what I wanted to share with you, my wife and I had our first child 2 months after 9/11. We named her Grace because we felt that the world needed some grace at the time. And what I wanted to—wish to bestow upon you—is the fact that our appreciation at keeping my family and all those families of America safe for the past 5 years is—[inaudible].

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you. Grace will live—the question is, will Grace live in a peaceful world, today and tomorrow? Today, we will continue to stay on the pressure. And we're sharing intelligence, and we're on the offense. And my attitude is, is that if the United States ever let up, it would embolden; it would send the wrong signal. So we're pressuring. And I'm—I would hope whoever takes my place would have that same sense of urgency. I—you know, no matter what you may be hearing, it's—people, when they get in that Oval Office and take a look at the realities of the world will, I suspect, subscribe to the—that we just need to be not only vigilant but pressuring.

You know, the interesting debate that we're now confronted with is this ideological debate about whether or not it's worth it to spread freedom. Should we spread freedom? Can the spread of freedom take root in dangerous parts of the world? And is it worth it? Does it make sense?

I—as you can tell, I'm a strong proponent of spreading freedom, first of all. And I've got confidence that freedom can be spread in parts of the world where it may look difficult at this moment in history to see freedom take root.

I've got confidence for a couple of reasons. One, I believe in the universality of

freedom. That means I believe everybody desires to be free. I don't think freedom is uniquely American, nor do I think it's uniquely Methodist—[laughter]—I think it is universal.

I told you—I also obviously believe in the universality of motherhood. I believe mothers in Iraq want their children to grow up in peace, just like mothers in America do. I also believe people in Iraq want to live in a free society. I am—my—I wasn't surprised; I was pleased when 12 million people went to the polls. That statement to me was: freedom.

Secondly, can it take hold in parts of the world that some suspect that it can't root? I would remind people of, for example, of—I mentioned Japan. There are other examples in our history. One of the unique aspects of my Presidency is I can predict to you that—with relative certainty that a violent part of the world, the Far East, is stable and headed in the right direction, absent one spot.

That—in 1950, that would have been a hard prediction to make. Shortly before 1950, I mentioned, thousands of U.S. citizens had died in a war with Japan. Mao Zedong was beginning an ascendancy where the form of government was repressed and that no such thing as a marketplace—was repressive, and there was no such thing as a marketplace. And Korea had just been—the Peninsula of Korea had just been torn asunder, where thousands of U.S. soldiers had died as well.

Today, Japan, as I mentioned, is a strong ally, an important economic partner and security partner. South Korea is a strong ally, important trading partner, and important security partner—albeit their democracy went through a difficult period of time. Democracies don't emerge on a straight line; neither did ours. Our great democracy enslaved people for 100 years. All men were created equal, except some. We're reconfirming the belief that all men are created equal.

And so it takes a while for freedom to take root. It's hard work for societies to adopt the habits necessary for a free society to emerge. Interesting enough, in China, there's certainly not a free society, but there is a free marketplace emerging. And in 1950, that would have been a difficult prediction to make.

And so I believe liberty can take hold in parts of the world because history has shown it to be. Different time, no question; a different part of the world, no question. But if you have faith in the universality of freedom, and if you've seen history—liberty take hold before, it should give us confidence.

Finally, it's necessary for free societies to emerge, free societies in the image of a country's own history and tradition. And why is it in our interest that that happen? There is a root cause. There is a reason why 19 kids got on an airplane to come and kill us, and that is because societies in that part of the world have bred resentment and lack of hope.

I don't believe you can have a comfortable and secure society if half the people are not treated equally. There's something universal in our demands to be treated with respect. It matters what the form of government is, in terms of whether or not peace will emerge.

And so I believe that the liberty agenda, freedom agenda can take root, and I know it's necessary to make sure Grace can live in peace. I think people will look back at this period of time and make one or two judgments. They'll either say: What happened to them in 2007? How come they couldn't see the impending dangers that the little Graces of America would have to live with? How come they couldn't spot the radicalism that would emerge even more violent than it had been? How come they couldn't see the fact that Iran would become emboldened if the United States of America didn't keep its commitments in Iraq? What was it that prevented them from recognizing that nations in the Middle

East would tend to choose up sides and back violent regimes—violent groups in order to protect their own selves? How come they couldn't remember the lesson of September the 11th—which said: What matters overseas, matters at home. Or they'll look back and say they had faith; they had faith in the ability of liberty to transform a region into a region of hope that yielded the peace so little Grace can be amazed that this generation has done its job.

And those are the risks, and that's the task, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. at the Willard Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Steve L. Massie, president, Associated General Contractors of America; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Haytham Kazim Abdallah Al-Shimari, head of the Rusafa Al Qaida-Iraq bomb network; Qais Khazali, member, Khazali network; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. He also referred to H.R. 1591.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen

*May 2, 2007*

*President Bush.* It is my honor to welcome the President of Yemen to the Oval Office. I have gotten to know the President over the past 6 years of my Presidency. I feel comfortable saying, welcome, my friend.

I had the privilege of calling President Salih after the elections of Yemen. I told him, I said it was a remarkable occurrence that his great country had a free and open election. I've had a chance to congratulate him and thank him in person today.

We had a very good discussion about the neighborhood in which the President lives. And we spent a lot of time talking about our mutual desire to bring radicals and murderers to justice. And I thanked the President for his strong support in this war against extremists and terrorists.

So I'm glad you're here.

*President Salih.* Thank you very much, Mr. President, for the good reception and hospitality and also for the excellent and fruitful talks that we had. I'm very pleased for the limitless support by President Bush and the United States for Yemen in the

field of combating terror. Yemen is an essential partner with the United States of America and the international community in combating terror. We will continue in this path, in—on this track.

We had the chance to discuss a number of issues with Mr. President, including a number of issues in the Middle East region, the Palestinian-Israeli problem and the situation in Somalia, the situations in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan. We found a complete understanding on the issues that we have discussed with Mr. President Bush. We also discussed the bilateral relations between Yemen and the United States.

I would like, on this occasion, to highly express my gratification and my appreciation for the brave position taken by President Bush since the first moment he took power in this country, since he expressed his belief in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, side by side with the State of Israel. And I wish that His Excellency would pursue his effort and will continue his efforts in implementing the Arab initiative, which was adopted in the

summit of Beirut, to maintain peace in the region. I am sure that adopting such initiative would end 70 percent of the problems in the region.

Of course, you will be in history if you can be successful in establishing the independent Palestinian state before leaving the White House.

*Shukran.*

*President Bush. Shukran.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Salih spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders May 2, 2007

I thank the leaders and—from Congress for coming down to discuss the Iraq funding issue. Yesterday was a day that highlighted differences. Today is a day where we can work together to find common ground. I will inform the Speaker and the leader of our serious intent, and to that end, I am going to name our Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, along with Steve Hadley and Rob Portman, to work with members of both parties to fund our troops.

I think it's very important we do this as quickly as we possibly can. I'm confident

that we can reach agreement. I know that it's going to require good will, but we all care deeply about our country and care about this issue. And so I want to thank the Members for coming down again. I'm looking forward to our discussions. I'm looking forward to what will be constructive set of discussions and negotiations.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

## Remarks on the National Day of Prayer May 3, 2007

Good morning, and welcome to the White House. I'm honored to join you for this National Day of Prayer. I'm sorry Laura is not here. She is camping in one of our national parks. *[Laughter]* I appreciate the chairman—chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, Shirley Dobson. Thank you for your leadership on this important day. And I see you brought your husband Jim.

The 2007 honorary chairman is with us, and that's Chuck Swindoll. Thank you, Chuck, for being here, and I'm glad you brought Cynthia as well. Welcome. I appreciate the members of the Cabinet who have

joined. I appreciate the Members of the Congress. Thank you all for being here.

And the mayor—Mr. Mayor, thank you, sir. It's good to see you. Thanks for joining us. It means a lot that you're here. I appreciate Mayor Ron Rordam, Blacksburg, Virginia. Mr. Mayor, we're honored you're here. Thanks for bringing Mary.

Members of the United States military have joined us. Thanks for wearing the uniform. I appreciate those who are participating. Rabbi, thank you for your really kind remarks and strong statement. I am glad that one of my fellow Texans has made it. Mike, thanks for coming from

Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. And you married a woman named Laura. [Laughter] Chaplain Houston Yu, Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, proud to have you here. Bishop Coles, thank you for bringing Leona. Proud you all are here too. Thanks for joining us.

Appreciate the United States Army Chorus. By the way, Sergeant First Class Alvy Powell, friend of Presidents 41, 42, and 43. [Laughter] The man's got some longevity. [Laughter]

As Shirley mentioned, since the days of our founding, our Nation has been called to prayer. That's exactly what our first President did, George Washington. "It's the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and to humbly implore his protection and favor." It's interesting that the first President said those words.

For two centuries, Americans have answered this call to prayer. We're a prayerful nation. I believe that makes us a strong nation. Each day millions of our citizens approach our Maker. We pray as congregations in churches and in synagogues and mosques and in temples. We welcome people of all faiths into the United States of America.

We pray as families, around the dinner table and before we go to sleep. We pray alone in silence and solitude, withdrawing from the world to focus on the eternal, spending time in personal recollection with our Creator.

We pray for many reasons. First, we pray to give thanks for the blessings the Almighty has bestowed upon us. We pray to give thanks. We give thanks for our freedom. We give thanks for the brave men and women who risk their lives to defend it. We give thanks for our families who love and support us. We give thanks for our plenty. We give thanks for our Nation.

Second, we pray for the strength to follow God's will in our lives and for forgiveness when we fail to do so. Through prayer,

each of us is reminded that we are fallen creatures in need of mercy. And in seeking the mercy and compassion of a loving God, we grow in mercy and compassion ourselves.

We feel the tug at our souls to reach out to the poor, the elderly, the stranger in distress. And by answering this call to care for our brothers and sisters in need, our hearts grow larger, and we enter into a deeper relationship with God.

Third, we pray to acknowledge God's sovereignty in our lives and our complete dependence on Him. This is probably the toughest prayer of all, particularly for those of us in politics. In the humility of prayer, we recognize the limits of human strength and human wisdom. We seek the strength and wisdom that comes from above. We ask for the grace to align our hearts with His, echoing the words of Scripture: "Not my will, but thine be done." We ask the Almighty to remain near to us and guide us in all we do, and when He is near, we are ready for all that may come to us.

Finally, we pray to offer petitions, because our Father in heaven knows our cares and our needs. We trust in the promise of a loving God: "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find." Inspired by this confidence, we pray that the Almighty will pour out His blessings on those we love. We ask His healing for those who suffer from illness, those who struggle in life. We ask His comfort for the victims of tragedy and that the injured may be healed and the fallen may find comfort in the arms of their Creator. We implore His protection for those who protect us here at home and in far away lands. We pray for the day when His peace will reign in every nation and in every land until the ends of the Earth.

The greatest gift we can offer anyone is the gift of our prayers, because our prayers have power beyond our imagining. The English poet Tennyson wrote: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Prayer has the power to change



lives and to change the course of history. So on this National Day of Prayer, let us seek the Almighty with confidence and trust, because our Eternal Father inclines his ear to the voice of his children and answers our needs with love.

May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Rabbi Michael Siegel, Anshe Emet Synagogue, Chicago, IL; Mike Fechner, minister of global outreach, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas, TX; and Bishop Neavelle A. Coles, Sr., Washington, District of Columbia, Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, Church of God in Christ. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on Immigration Reform *May 3, 2007*

I want to thank my fellow Americans for joining me today to discuss a very important issue, and that is immigration.

In my discussions, I've talked to clergy that recognize that our country needs a comprehensive immigration reform. And part of that is to help people learn English. I've talked to people who've worked for corporate America. Andy works for Marriott International, a corporation that understands that it's very helpful; it's in their interest to help people assimilate.

I've talked to Emilio, who works for the Government. He's the head of the old INS, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. He has the opportunity often to swear in new citizens, and he sees the great hope that people have. I've talked to church workers who are reaching out in their communities to help people learn the benefits of the language—the English language. And thank you for tutoring and being kind.

I've talked to people that are raising families, that have come from other countries, that are now U.S. citizens and understand the benefit of what it means to have learned English. Francisco said, "When you learn English, doors open up for you." And I appreciate that beautiful sentiment because it's true.

I strongly support comprehensive immigration reform. One aspect of comprehen-

sive immigration reform is to help people assimilate into America. And part of that is to have a comprehensive strategy to help people learn the English language and to learn the history and traditions of the United States.

Comprehensive immigration reform requires us to uphold law and enforce our borders in a humane way. Comprehensive immigration reform means that we need a temporary-worker program for workers who will be coming into our country. It's a program that treats people with respect, a program that helps meet the economic needs of our country. Comprehensive immigration reform means that employers have got to obey the law. Comprehensive immigration reform means that we've got to be humane about the nearly 11 or 12 million people who are already here. As I said in a speech down in Miami, We need to treat these people not with amnesty and not with animosity. So it's got to be a rational way forward.

And I'm looking forward to working with both Democrats and Republicans to get a comprehensive immigration bill done this year. We have a good chance to get it done. It's important for our fellow citizens to understand, comprehensive immigration reform is in the Nation's interest. And I'll

continue working with Members of Congress to encourage them to do the hard work necessary to make sure a system that is not working is reformed in a way that meets our national needs and listens to our national heart. After all, America is a land of immigrants. Immigration helps renew our soul. It helps redefine our spirit in a positive way.

And I'm so proud to be with you, and I thank you for your time. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. at the Asamblea de Iglesias Cristianas, Centro Evangelistico. In his remarks, he referred to Andy Chavez, youth programs director and manager of workforce effectiveness and diversity, Marriott International, Inc.; Emilio T. Gonzalez, director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; and Francisco Lara, heavy equipment operator, Covanta Energy. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on World Press Freedom Day *May 3, 2007*

On this day, we commemorate World Press Freedom Day. The United States values freedom of the press as one of the most fundamental political rights and as a necessary component of free societies. In undemocratic societies where governments suppress, manipulate, and control access to information, journalists are on the frontlines of the people's battle for freedom. The danger journalists face in such repressive states can be great, and even deadly.

On behalf of the American people, I salute those in the press who courageously do their work at great risk. No independent media are allowed in countries such as Cuba and North Korea, and those who attempt to report are often imprisoned. Re-

pressive laws severely restrict journalists and freedom of speech in countries such as Belarus, Burma, Iran, Libya, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. We condemn the harassment, physical intimidation, and persecution that journalists, including bloggers and Internet reporters, have faced in China, Egypt, Tunisia, and Vietnam and the unsolved murders of journalists in Lebanon, Russia, and Belarus.

Bringing unfiltered information, news, and facts to the people and accountability to their governments is the hallmark of the fourth estate. Today we salute the free press for its dedication to the people's right to know.

## Statement on the Death of Walter M. Schirra, Jr. *May 3, 2007*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Wally Schirra. Wally was a member of the original seven, our Nation's first class of astronauts. "Jolly Wally," as he was affectionately known, was the fifth American to go into space, and holds the distinction as the only astronaut to fly in each of NASA's

pioneering space flight programs: Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo. His ventures into space furthered our understanding of manned space flight and helped pave the way for mankind's first journey to the Moon. Laura and I join Wally's family and

friends and the NASA community in mourning the loss of an American hero.

## Message to the Senate Transmitting the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks

May 3, 2007

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith for the Senate's advice and consent to ratification the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks (the "Treaty" or "Singapore Treaty") adopted and signed by the United States at Singapore on March 28, 2006. I also transmit for the information of the Senate a report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

If ratified by the United States, the Treaty would offer significant benefits to U.S. trademark owners and national trademark offices, including the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The beneficial features of the Trademark Law Treaty of 1994 (the "1994 TLT"), to which the United States is a party, are included in the Singapore Treaty, as well as the improvements to the 1994 TLT that the United States Government sought to achieve through the revision effort. Key improvements allow for national trademark offices to take advantage of electronic communication systems as an efficient and cost-saving alternative to paper communications, at such time as the office is ready to embrace the technology. The Treaty also includes trademark license recordation provisions that reduce the formal-

ties that trademark owners face when doing business in a country that is a Contracting Party that requires trademark license recordation. The goal of these provisions is to reduce the damaging effects that can result from failure to record a license in those jurisdictions that require recordation. These and other improvements create a more attractive treaty for World Intellectual Property Organization Member States. Consequently, once the Treaty is in force, it is expected to increase the efficiency of national trademark offices, which in turn is expected to create efficiencies and cost savings for U.S. trademark owners registering and maintaining trademarks abroad.

Ratification of the Treaty is in the best interests of the United States. I recommend, therefore, that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 3, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4.

## Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore

May 4, 2007

*President Bush.* Now, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. Welcome back. Every time

I visit with the Prime Minister of our friend Singapore, we have a strategic dialog.

And today I talked to Prime Minister Lee about America's desire to stay in close contact with not only Singapore but our partners in what we call the ASEAN nations; those would be Southeast Asian nations.

To this end, the Prime Minister has invited me and I've accepted an invitation to go back to Singapore to talk to our partners and friends about trade and security, and we'll do so on my way to the APEC meetings in Australia.

*Prime Minister Lee.* Yes, in September.

*President Bush.* So thanks for the invitation in September. That's right.

We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about our bilateral relations, which are very strong, and thank you for your leadership on that issue. We talked about Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank the Singaporean Government and the people of Singapore for supporting a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, which will help that—the people of that young democracy realize a brighter future. It's a strong commitment, Mr. Prime Minister. And I also thank you for the missions and the help you've provided to the people of Iraq.

We talked about the Iranian issue. We, of course, talked about North Korea. Now, there is no better person to talk about the Far East with than Prime Minister Lee. He's got a very clear vision about the issues, the complications, and the opportunities.

And so I welcome you back, and thanks so much for the amount of time that you're willing to give.

*Prime Minister Lee.* Well, thank you, President Bush. We had a very good discussion. Our bilateral ties between Singapore and America are in very good repair, so we spent very little time discussing that. But I thanked the President for the steadfastness and resolve with which he's tackling the very complicated problems in the Middle East and Iraq, as well as the Israel-Palestinian issue.

It's critical for us in Southeast Asia that America does that and that the President continues to give strong leadership on that because it affects America's standing in Asia and the world and also the security environment in Asia, because extremists, the jihadists, watch carefully what's happening in the Middle East and take heart or lose heart depending on what's happening there.

We discussed America's relations in Asia, with China, with Japan, Korea. Those two are important to Southeast Asia because they set the context within which Southeast Asia can prosper. And good relations between America and the major countries, China and Japan, are critical because the Southeast Asian countries want to be friends with both and do not want to have to choose sides with either.

Within Southeast Asia, I encouraged the President to deepen and strengthen the already good ties with—between the Southeast Asian countries, ASEAN, and America, both as a group and also bilaterally, individually with single countries. The President is going to come to Singapore for the commemorative 30th anniversary meeting of the dialog between ASEAN and the United States. And I suggested to the President that we should consider suitable new initiatives which perhaps would be able to take our relations another step forward.

But overall, the relations are in good repair. More can and will be done. But I look forward to deepening and strengthening not just relations but also the friendship between our two countries.

*President Bush.* Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

*Prime Minister Lee.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*President Bush.* Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 4, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. *Sientese.* [Laughter] *Bienvenidos.* Thank you for coming. Welcome to *el jardin de las rosas*. It's a great place to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. As a matter of fact, I've been looking forward to celebrating this so much that we decided to have our own *cuatro de Mayo*. [Laughter]

Thanks for coming. Welcome. I'm honored to celebrate this important holiday with you all. On Cinco de Mayo, we remember our close friendship with Mexico, and we honor and remember the many contributions Mexican Americans have made to our Nation.

I'm sorry Laura couldn't be here. She's coming back from having camped out in a national park with high school classmates. I'm honored to be here with the Attorney General of the United States, *mi amigo*, Alberto Gonzales, *y tambien* the Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez, *y su esposa*, Edi. I'm glad to be here with Dr. Emilio Gonzalez, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Gloria. I appreciate my friend, Emilio Estefan, for arranging this entertainment here in the Rose Garden. I welcome the Ambassador to—Mexico, Arturo. *Bienvenidos.* I'm glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

As you can see, I'm standing up here with a mariachi band, initially from Monterrey, Mexico—Los Hermanos Mora Arriaga. Welcome.

*Band members.* Thank you. *Gracias.*

*The President.* *Si.* Brothers and sisters—I think you told me you had 13 brothers and—

*Band members.* Fifteen.

*The President.* —15 brothers and sisters. [Laughter] We believe in family values. [Laughter]

I want to thank those who wear the uniform of the United States. Thank you for serving.

Cinco de Mayo celebrates a great Mexican victory at the Battle of Puebla. On May 5th, 1862, an outnumbered band of Mexican soldiers held their ground against a professional European army. They triumphed against overwhelming odds. The victory inspired Mexican patriots in their heroic fight for liberty and for democracy. Cinco de Mayo is a joyful day in Mexican history, and it's an important milestone in the history of freedom.

The people of the United States are proud to celebrate Cinco de Mayo with our Mexican neighbors. Our two countries continue to stand for the principles that the Mexican Army defended at Puebla. We believe that democracy represents the true will of people. We believe that freedom is God's gift to every man, woman, and child on the face of this Earth. And we believe that both our nations have a responsibility to share the blessings of liberty.

The United States and Mexico are bound by strong family ties. Mexican Americans have enriched our culture by sharing their musical and artistic talents. They've strengthened our economy by opening new businesses and expanding trade. And they have made our Nation more hopeful by leading lives of faith and family.

Mexican Americans have also defended the United States by wearing our Nation's uniform. Today, Mexican Americans in uniform answered the call to advance the cause of liberty, and this Nation is really grateful for your service and your sacrifice.

The patriotism of Mexican Americans reminds us that one of our greatest strengths is the character and diversity of our Nation's immigrants. Immigration has made our land a great melting pot of talent and ideas. It has made America a beacon of hope for people in search of a better life.



In Washington, we're now in the midst of an important discussion about immigration. Our current immigration system is in need of reform. It is not working. We need a system where our laws are respected. We need a system that meets the needs of our economy. And we need a system that treats people with dignity and helps newcomers assimilate into our society.

We must address all elements of this problem together, or none of them will be solved at all. We must do it in a way that learns from the mistakes that caused previous reforms to fail. I support comprehensive immigration reform that will allow us to secure our borders and enforce our laws, to keep us competitive in the global economy, and to resolve the status of those already here, without amnesty and without animosity.

Comprehensive immigration reform is a vital goal for our Nation, and it is a matter of deep conviction for me. I will continue

to work closely with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to build a consensus for reform so Congress can pass and I can sign a comprehensive immigration bill into law *este año*.

The United States and Mexico share a great border, and we share a hopeful future. Tomorrow people on both sides of that border will celebrate freedom and the courage of all who defend it. I wish you a happy Cinco de Mayo. *Que Dios los bendiga a los Estados Unidos y tambien Mexico.*

And now, Los Hermanos Mora Arriaga.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Emilio Estefan, Jr., chairman, Estefan Enterprises, Inc.; and Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Resignation of Jack D. Crouch II as Deputy National Security Adviser May 4, 2007

Dr. J.D. Crouch II came to the White House in January 2005 to serve as my Deputy National Security Adviser. J.D. has served our country with great distinction during a critical period in our history, as we confront new challenges and pursue a global war on terror. In the past 2½ years, his accomplishments have been many. He was at the forefront in devising and implementing the new strategy to help build a peaceful, stable, and secure Iraq. He was

instrumental in developing the new national security strategy that charts a course for advancing our interests abroad, enhancing global security and liberty, and protecting the American people. J.D. is leaving the White House, but Steve Hadley, all his colleagues, and I have benefited greatly from his wise counsel and tireless commitment to public service.

**Message on the Observance of Cinco de Mayo, 2007**  
*May 4, 2007*

I send greetings to those celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

The story of Cinco de Mayo represents the triumph of liberty over tyranny and a joyful moment in Mexican history. In 1862, Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza and his militia defended their independence and won an important victory for freedom. Because of their courage, Mexican citizens would come to know the full blessings of liberty, and their triumph at the Battle of Puebla remains an inspiration to all who thirst for freedom.

Cinco de Mayo is also an opportunity to celebrate the warm ties between Mexico and the United States. Geography has made us neighbors, but our friendship is

based on shared values of family, democracy, and faith. Our country is grateful for the countless contributions of Mexican Americans whose hard work and strong character have strengthened our country. On Cinco de Mayo and throughout the year, may we remember that together we can build a better life and a future of hope for both our peoples.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a festive Cinco de Mayo.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this message. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Remarks on Physical Fitness Month in Beltsville, Maryland**  
*May 5, 2007*

Thank you all for coming. This is Physical Fitness Month, and I'm with members of the President's Physical Fitness Council. Their job is to encourage all Americans, young and old, to exercise.

I love exercise. Today I'm going to ride with a group of friends on a mountain bike. But the message to all Americans is to find time in your schedule to walk, run, swim, bike, to take care of yourselves.

I appreciate Mike Leavitt, who is the Secretary of Health and Human Services, is joining us today. He knows what I know, that if someone takes care of their body through good exercise, that it is—it's the beginning of really good health policy for the United States.

It doesn't take much time to stay fit—30 minutes, 5 days a week: 30 minutes of walking, 30 minutes of running, 30 min-

utes of biking, 30 minutes of swimming on a regular basis will help deal with a lot of health issues here in America. I have found that exercise not only is a good excuse to get outdoors; it helps relieve stress as well. And so, on behalf of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, I say to America: Get outside, take time out of your life, schedule yourself, be disciplined, and exercise.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:19 a.m. at the U.S. Secret Service Training Facility. The National Physical Fitness and Sports Month proclamation of May 1 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Radio Address May 5, 2007

Good morning. At this hour, America's brave men and women in uniform are engaging our enemies around the world. And in this time of war, our elected officials have no higher responsibility than to provide these troops with the funds and flexibility they need to prevail.

On Wednesday, I met with congressional leaders from both parties here at the White House. We discussed ways to pass a responsible emergency war spending bill that will fully fund our troops as quickly as possible. It was a positive meeting. Democratic leaders assured me they are committed to funding our troops, and I told them I'm committed to working with members of both parties to do just that.

I've appointed three senior members of my White House staff to negotiate with Congress on this vital legislation: my Chief of Staff Josh Bolten, National Security Adviser Steve Hadley, and Budget Director Rob Portman. By working together, I believe we can pass a good bill quickly and give our troops the resources and flexibility they need.

Earlier this week, I vetoed the bill Congress sent me because it set a fixed date to begin to pull out of Iraq, imposed unworkable conditions on our military commanders, and included billions of dollars in spending unrelated to the war. And on Wednesday, the House voted to sustain my veto by a wide margin.

I recognize that many Democratic leaders saw this bill as an opportunity to make a statement about their opposition to the war. In a democracy, we should debate our differences openly and honestly. But now it is time to give our troops the resources they are waiting for.

Our troops are now carrying out a new strategy in Iraq under the leadership of a new commander, General David Petraeus. He's an expert in counterinsurgency war-

fare. The goal of the new strategy he is implementing is to help the Iraqis secure their capital so they can make progress toward reconciliation and build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law, and fights extremists alongside the United States in the war on terror. This strategy is still in its early stages, and Congress needs to give General Petraeus's plan a chance to work.

I know that Republicans and Democrats will not agree on every issue in this war, but the consequences of failure in Iraq are clear: If we were to leave Iraq before the Government can defend itself, there would be a security vacuum in the country. Extremists from all factions could compete to fill that vacuum, causing sectarian killing to multiply on a horrific scale.

If radicals and terrorists emerge from this battle with control of Iraq, they would have control of a nation with massive oil reserves, which they could use to fund their dangerous ambitions and spread their influence. The Al Qaida terrorists who behead captives or order suicide bombings would not be satisfied to see America defeated and gone from Iraq. They would be emboldened by their victory, protected by their new sanctuary, eager to impose their hateful vision on surrounding countries, and eager to harm Americans.

No responsible leader in Washington has an interest in letting that happen. I call on Congress to work with my administration and quickly craft a responsible war spending bill. We must provide our men and women in uniform with the resources and support they deserve. I'm confident that leaders of good will can deliver this important result.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:50 a.m. on May 4 in the Cabinet Room at the White

House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the radio address, the President re-

ferred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks on Tornado Damage in Greensburg, Kansas May 6, 2007

Our hearts are heavy for the loss of life in Greensburg, Kansas. A tornado devastated that community. It just basically wiped it out.

I spoke to the Governor and Senator Pat Roberts about the extent of the devastation. They said to me: “It’s hard to describe how bad this community was hit.”

I have declared a major disaster for that community, and I hope that helps. It’s going to take a long time for the community to recover. And so we’ll help in any way we can. There’s a certain spirit in the

Midwest of our country, a pioneer spirit that still exists, and I’m confident this community will be rebuilt. To the extent that we can help, we will. The most important thing now, though, is for our citizens to ask for the good Lord to comfort those who hurt.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:26 a.m. at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas.

## Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom May 7, 2007

*President Bush.* Good morning. Laura and I are honored to welcome back to the White House Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

The United Kingdom has written many of the greatest chapters in the history of human freedom. Nearly 800 years ago, the Magna Carta placed the authority of the government under the rule of law. Eighty years later, the first representative assembly of the English people met to debate public policies. Over the centuries, Parliaments in Britain established principles that guide all modern democracies. And thinkers from Britain like Locke and Smith and Burke

showed the world that freedom was the natural right of every man, woman, and child on Earth.

As liberty expanded in the British Isles, British explorers helped spread liberty to many lands, including our own. In May of 1607, a group of pioneers arrived on the shores of the James River and founded the first permanent English settlement in North America. The settlers at Jamestown planted the seeds of freedom and democracy on American soil. And from those seeds sprung a nation that will always be proud to trace its roots back to our friends across the Atlantic.

Our two nations hold fundamental values in common. We honor our traditions and our shared history. We recognize that the strongest societies respect the rights and dignity of the individual. We understand and accept the burdens of global leadership. And we have built our special relationship on the surest foundations: our deep and abiding love of liberty.

Today, our two nations are defending liberty against tyranny and terror. We're resisting those who murder the innocent to advance a hateful ideology, whether they kill in New York or London or Kabul or Baghdad.

American and British forces are staying on the offense against the extremists and terrorists. We're supporting young democracies. Our work has been hard. The fruits of our work have been difficult for many to see. Yet our work remains the surest path to peace, and it reflects the values cherished by Americans and by Britons and by the vast majority of people across the broader Middle East.

Your Majesty, I appreciate your leadership during these times of danger and decision. You've spoken out against extremism and terror. You've encouraged religious tolerance and reconciliation. You have honored those returning from battle and comforted the families of the fallen.

The American people are proud to welcome Your Majesty back to the United States, a nation you've come to know very well. After all, you've dined with 10 U.S. Presidents. You helped our Nation celebrate its bicentennial in 17—in 1976. [Laughter]

*Queen Elizabeth II.* Come—[inaudible].

*President Bush.* She gave me a look that only a mother could give a child. [Laughter]

You have helped commemorate both the 350th and 400th anniversaries of the Jamestown settlement.

Your Majesty, the United States receives with honor the sovereign of the United Kingdom. We welcome back to the White

House a good person, a strong leader for a great ally.

*Queen Elizabeth II.* Mr. President, thank you for your warm words. This is my fifth visit to the United States. And I believe it is important to remind ourselves of the purpose of these occasions, which gives meaning to the ceremonial symbolism and the circumstance.

A state visit provides us with a brief opportunity to step back from our current preoccupations to reflect on the very essence of our relationship. It gives us the chance to look back at how the stories of our two countries have been inextricably woven together. It is the moment to take stock of our present friendship, rightly taking pleasure from its strengths, while never taking these for granted. And it is the time to look forward, jointly renewing our commitment to a more prosperous, safer, and freer world.

Last week, I had the pleasure of sharing with you an extraordinary anniversary in our common history. It was a privilege to join the commemoration of the Jamestown landing by that small group of British citizens all those years ago. My 2 days in Virginia gave me a new insight into those events, which helped to shape this country's development and to lay the foundations of this great Nation based on shared principles of equality, democracy, and the rule of law.

And now in Washington, we have a further opportunity to acknowledge the present strength of our relationship. I shall enjoy not only renewing old acquaintances and making new ones but also recognizing the breadth and depth of the friendship we have shared for so long. We can celebrate the close and enduring associations which thrive between the United States and the United Kingdom at every level, be it government or corporate, institutional or personal.

This visit also gives us a window on the future, both the future of the United States and the future cooperation between our countries. I particularly look forward in the



next 2 days to seeing at firsthand something of how the cutting edge of science and technology can take us to the next phases of discovery and exploration in human endeavor.

Mr. President, thank you for inviting Prince Philip and me to visit your country, to share in the commemoration of the Jamestown anniversary, and to have this opportunity to underline the extent of our

friendship, past, present, and future. It is indeed a pleasure for us to be here in Washington again and to be welcomed back to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House where the Queen was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors.

## Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom May 7, 2007

*President Bush.* Your Majesty and Your Royal Highness, distinguished guests: Laura and I offer you a warm welcome to the White House. We are really glad you're here.

Tonight is the fourth state dinner held in Your Majesty's honor here at the White House. On previous such occasions, you've been welcomed by President Eisenhower, President Ford, and another President named Bush. [*Laughter*] Over your long reign, America and Britain have deepened our friendship and strengthened our alliance.

Our alliance is rooted in the beliefs that we share. We recognize that every individual has dignity and matchless value. We believe that the most effective governments are those that hold themselves accountable to their people. And we know that the advance of freedom is the best hope for lasting peace in our world.

Based on our common values, our two nations are working together for the common good. Together, we are supporting young democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Together, we're confronting global chal-

lenges such as poverty and disease and terrorism. And together, we're working to build a world in which more people can enjoy prosperity and security and peace.

Friendships remain strong when they are continually renewed, and the American people appreciate Your Majesty's commitment to our friendship. We thank you for helping us celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement. We're confident that Anglo-American friendship will endure for centuries to come.

So, on behalf of the American people, I offer a toast to Your Majesty, to Your Royal Highness, and to our staunch allies, the valiant people of the United Kingdom.

*Queen Elizabeth II.* Thank you very much, indeed.

*President Bush.* Your turn, Your Majesty.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Queen Elizabeth II.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Rene Garcia Preval of Haiti May 8, 2007

*President Bush.* I appreciate very much the President of Haiti joining us here in the Oval Office. Mr. President, welcome. I thank you for your courage. I thank you for having one of the toughest jobs in the world, and that is to bring prosperity and security to your country.

While there is still a lot of work to be done, there's progress being made on a variety of fronts. The security situation is improving somewhat, and the United States supports the U.N. mission in Haiti. The economy is improving, inflation is down, exports are up. Yet there's still a lot of work to be done. And, Mr. President, I praise your efforts on establishing rule of law and routing out corruption. And the United States wants to help you.

The United States is proud to support the men and women of Haiti in a variety of ways. One among the most notable programs and one of which I'm particularly proud is our PEPFAR program, the program to help deal with HIV/AIDS. The President mentioned other ways that we can help in fighting drugs, drug traffickers. I was particularly pleased that he brought up the idea of helping the education system in Haiti. And I have instructed Secretary Rice, along with our Ambassador, to work with the Government, see if we can help.

And finally, the President was very concerned about the status of Haitians who are here in America. I assured him that I am working hard to get a comprehensive immigration bill passed out of the Congress this year. As a man who cares deeply about the people of Haiti, it's—I am pleased that he has expressed his concerns. And I think, Mr. President, with hard work and good will, we can get a bill that will satisfy your concerns.

We welcome you. Thanks for coming.

*President Preval.* I thank President Bush for his invitation. And this was a chance

for me to describe to him our situation and the expectations of the Haitian people.

The purpose of this mission was to explain the situation in Haiti, and President Bush noted with interest the points that were raised. I'm not going to come back to them right now, but I would like to thank the United States for the fraternal aid it has given Haiti. And I would particularly like to thank President Bush for the HOPE bill and for the efforts made for its reinforcing the judicial system, the police force, and also to help strengthen the Haitian State.

I also took this chance to express my condolences to President Bush and to the American people for the tragedy that we've been through in Kansas. Each time someone suffers, we all suffer. And I would like to ask President Bush to transmit in my name and in the name of the Haitian people our condolences to the American people.

Peace has been restored, and the conditions for investment are here. Haiti is awaiting American investors. We've opened a campaign to fight against corruption and contraband so that all can be on a level playing field and for conditions for competition to be right. Therefore, investors will not have to fear in terms of security or corruption, and they can come to Haiti, because what we need in Haiti are jobs.

And I would also like to thank the President for his in—assistance in the fight against the plague, which is the drug trade. Drugs in Haiti represent a force, and Haiti alone cannot fight against the drug trade. It always weakens the state and corrupts the state. And it doesn't—the drug trade does not function well with a strong state or a healthy state. It tries to corrupt the police force; it tries to corrupt the judiciary and the executive. And drug trafficking thrives in a weak state. Drug traffickers

invest in weakening and destabilizing the state. And I would like to thank the President who, through the DEA, is helping us in this effort against the plague of drugs.

And I will end on a note of hope, because we have countrymen who are here illegally and are living in a difficult situation. The President has promised to work on an immigration bill that will help improve the lives of our countrymen here in the United States.

Thank you.

*President Bush.* Good job. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Janet A. Sanderson. President Preval spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Dinner With Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom May 8, 2007

*Queen Elizabeth II.* Mr. President, I wondered whether I should start this toast saying, "When I was here in 1776," but I don't think I will. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, it is a real pleasure to welcome you and Mrs. Bush here this evening. Over our 6 days in the United States, we have much enjoyed the chance to dwell on the history of the relationship between our two countries, as well as celebrating its present strength and vitality. I would like to thank everyone for the warmth and kindness extended to us.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on the day that has seen the formal transfer of power to the devolved Northern Ireland Government, to thank you and your predecessors for your contribution to bringing peace to Northern Ireland.

May I ask everyone to rise and drink a toast to President and Mrs. Bush, to the future of our two countries, and the enduring friendship between Britain and the United States.

Mr. President.

[*At this point, the Queen offered a toast.*]

*President Bush.* Your Majesty, I can't top that one. [*Laughter*]

Your Royal Highness, distinguished guests, thank you so much for a warm wel-

come. Laura and I appreciate your hospitality. I particularly want to thank Ambassador Manning and Lady Manning for inviting us to your home.

The friendship between the British and American people is one of the oldest and most enduring in history. This friendship has been built on the common ideal of freedom and forged by our shared sacrifices in freedom's defense.

Your Majesty, I appreciate your visit to our World War II Memorial. I thank you for sharing your perspective last night on how the Atlantic alliance that emerged from a great conflict has helped lay the foundation for freedom's triumph in Europe and beyond.

Today, British and American troops are following the example set by a previous generation. Troops from our two countries are serving side by side to bring the hope of liberty to regions that have not known it. Together, we're supporting young democracies that are taking their first steps on the path to free and peaceful societies.

This morning the world witnessed yet another advance for freedom and peace: The people of Northern Ireland took control of their future when Catholics and Protestants came together to form a new Government

that offers the prospect of peace and reconciliation after years of violence and division. In Belfast today, we're seeing once again how democracy and freedom can help heal a wounded world.

Your Majesty, thank you for your words tonight and for the love and affection you have shown the American people over many years. In this spirit, I offer a toast to Your Majesty, to Your Royal Highness,

and to our closest of friends, the British people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the British Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh; and the United Kingdom's Ambassador to the United States Sir David Manning and his wife Catherine.

## Directive on National Continuity Policy *May 4, 2007*

National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-51

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-20

*Subject:* National Continuity Policy

### *Purpose*

(1) This directive establishes a comprehensive national policy on the continuity of Federal Government structures and operations and a single National Continuity Coordinator responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of Federal continuity policies. This policy establishes "National Essential Functions," prescribes continuity requirements for all executive departments and agencies, and provides guidance for State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector organizations in order to ensure a comprehensive and integrated national continuity program that will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to and recovery from a national emergency.

### *Definitions*

(2) In this directive:

- (a) "Category" refers to the categories of executive departments and agencies listed in Annex A to this directive;
- (b) "Catastrophic Emergency" means any incident, regardless of location, that

results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the U.S. population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions;

- (c) "Continuity of Government," or "COG," means a coordinated effort within the Federal Government's executive branch to ensure that National Essential Functions continue to be performed during a Catastrophic Emergency;
- (d) "Continuity of Operations," or "COOP," means an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission-Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies;
- (e) "Enduring Constitutional Government," or "ECG," means a cooperative effort among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Federal Government, coordinated by the President, as a matter of comity with respect to the legislative and judicial branches and with proper respect for the constitutional separation of powers among the branches, to preserve the constitutional framework

under which the Nation is governed and the capability of all three branches of government to execute constitutional responsibilities and provide for orderly succession, appropriate transition of leadership, and interoperability and support of the National Essential Functions during a catastrophic emergency;

- (f) “Executive Departments and Agencies” means the executive departments enumerated in 5 U.S.C. 101, independent establishments as defined by 5 U.S.C. 104(1), Government corporations as defined by 5 U.S.C. 103(1), and the United States Postal Service;
- (g) “Government Functions” means the collective functions of the heads of executive departments and agencies as defined by statute, regulation, presidential direction, or other legal authority, and the functions of the legislative and judicial branches;
- (h) “National Essential Functions,” or “NEFs,” means that subset of Government Functions that are necessary to lead and sustain the Nation during a catastrophic emergency and that, therefore, must be supported through COOP and COG capabilities; and
- (i) “Primary Mission Essential Functions,” or “PMEFs,” means those Government Functions that must be performed in order to support or implement the performance of NEFs before, during, and in the aftermath of an emergency.

### *Policy*

(3) It is the policy of the United States to maintain a comprehensive and effective continuity capability composed of Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government programs in order to ensure the preservation of our form of government under the Constitution and the continuing performance of National Essential Functions under all conditions.

### *Implementation Actions*

(4) Continuity requirements shall be incorporated into daily operations of all executive departments and agencies. As a result of the asymmetric threat environment, adequate warning of potential emergencies that could pose a significant risk to the homeland might not be available, and therefore all continuity planning shall be based on the assumption that no such warning will be received. Emphasis will be placed upon geographic dispersion of leadership, staff, and infrastructure in order to increase survivability and maintain uninterrupted Government Functions. Risk management principles shall be applied to ensure that appropriate operational readiness decisions are based on the probability of an attack or other incident and its consequences.

(5) The following NEFs are the foundation for all continuity programs and capabilities and represent the overarching responsibilities of the Federal Government to lead and sustain the Nation during a crisis, and therefore sustaining the following NEFs shall be the primary focus of the Federal Government leadership during and in the aftermath of an emergency that adversely affects the performance of Government Functions:

- (a) Ensuring the continued functioning of our form of government under the Constitution, including the functioning of the three separate branches of government;
- (b) Providing leadership visible to the Nation and the world and maintaining the trust and confidence of the American people;
- (c) Defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and preventing or interdicting attacks against the United States or its people, property, or interests;
- (d) Maintaining and fostering effective relationships with foreign nations;

- (e) Protecting against threats to the homeland and bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes or attacks against the United States or its people, property, or interests;
- (f) Providing rapid and effective response to and recovery from the domestic consequences of an attack or other incident;
- (g) Protecting and stabilizing the Nation's economy and ensuring public confidence in its financial systems; and
- (h) Providing for critical Federal Government services that address the national health, safety, and welfare needs of the United States.

(6) The President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government. In order to advise and assist the President in that function, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHS/CT) is hereby designated as the National Continuity Coordinator. The National Continuity Coordinator, in coordination with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), without exercising directive authority, shall coordinate the development and implementation of continuity policy for executive departments and agencies. The Continuity Policy Coordination Committee (CPCC), chaired by a Senior Director from the Homeland Security Council staff, designated by the National Continuity Coordinator, shall be the main day-to-day forum for such policy coordination.

(7) For continuity purposes, each executive department and agency is assigned to a category in accordance with the nature and characteristics of its national security roles and responsibilities in support of the Federal Government's ability to sustain the NEFs. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall serve as the President's lead agent for coordinating overall continuity operations and activities of executive departments and agencies, and in such role shall

perform the responsibilities set forth for the Secretary in sections 10 and 16 of this directive.

(8) The National Continuity Coordinator, in consultation with the heads of appropriate executive departments and agencies, will lead the development of a National Continuity Implementation Plan (Plan), which shall include prioritized goals and objectives, a concept of operations, performance metrics by which to measure continuity readiness, procedures for continuity and incident management activities, and clear direction to executive department and agency continuity coordinators, as well as guidance to promote interoperability of Federal Government continuity programs and procedures with State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate. The Plan shall be submitted to the President for approval not later than 90 days after the date of this directive.

(9) Recognizing that each branch of the Federal Government is responsible for its own continuity programs, an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President shall ensure that the executive branch's COOP and COG policies in support of ECG efforts are appropriately coordinated with those of the legislative and judicial branches in order to ensure interoperability and allocate national assets efficiently to maintain a functioning Federal Government.

(10) Federal Government COOP, COG, and ECG plans and operations shall be appropriately integrated with the emergency plans and capabilities of State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate, in order to promote interoperability and to prevent redundancies and conflicting lines of authority. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall coordinate the integration of Federal continuity plans and operations with



State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate, in order to provide for the delivery of essential services during an emergency.

(11) Continuity requirements for the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and executive departments and agencies shall include the following:

- (a) The continuation of the performance of PMEFS during any emergency must be for a period up to 30 days or until normal operations can be resumed, and the capability to be fully operational at alternate sites as soon as possible after the occurrence of an emergency, but not later than 12 hours after COOP activation;
- (b) Succession orders and pre-planned devolution of authorities that ensure the emergency delegation of authority must be planned and documented in advance in accordance with applicable law;
- (c) Vital resources, facilities, and records must be safeguarded, and official access to them must be provided;
- (d) Provision must be made for the acquisition of the resources necessary for continuity operations on an emergency basis;
- (e) Provision must be made for the availability and redundancy of critical communications capabilities at alternate sites in order to support connectivity between and among key government leadership, internal elements, other executive departments and agencies, critical partners, and the public;
- (f) Provision must be made for reconstitution capabilities that allow for recovery from a catastrophic emergency and resumption of normal operations; and
- (g) Provision must be made for the identification, training, and preparedness of personnel capable of relocating to alternate facilities to support the con-

tinuation of the performance of PMEFS.

(12) In order to provide a coordinated response to escalating threat levels or actual emergencies, the Continuity of Government Readiness Conditions (COGCON) system establishes executive branch continuity program readiness levels, focusing on possible threats to the National Capital Region. The President will determine and issue the COGCON Level. Executive departments and agencies shall comply with the requirements and assigned responsibilities under the COGCON program. During COOP activation, executive departments and agencies shall report their readiness status to the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee.

(13) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall:

- (a) Conduct an annual assessment of executive department and agency continuity funding requests and performance data that are submitted by executive departments and agencies as part of the annual budget request process, in order to monitor progress in the implementation of the Plan and the execution of continuity budgets;
- (b) In coordination with the National Continuity Coordinator, issue annual continuity planning guidance for the development of continuity budget requests; and
- (c) Ensure that heads of executive departments and agencies prioritize budget resources for continuity capabilities, consistent with this directive.

(14) The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall:

- (a) Define and issue minimum requirements for continuity communications for executive departments and agencies, in consultation with the APHS/CT, the APNSA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Chief of Staff to the President;

- (b) Establish requirements for, and monitor the development, implementation, and maintenance of, a comprehensive communications architecture to integrate continuity components, in consultation with the APHS/CT, the APNSA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Chief of Staff to the President; and
  - (c) Review quarterly and annual assessments of continuity communications capabilities, as prepared pursuant to section 16(d) of this directive or otherwise, and report the results and recommended remedial actions to the National Continuity Coordinator.
- (15) An official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President shall:
- (a) Advise the President, the Chief of Staff to the President, the APHS/CT, and the APNSA on COGCON operational execution options; and
  - (b) Consult with the Secretary of Homeland Security in order to ensure synchronization and integration of continuity activities among the four categories of executive departments and agencies.
- (16) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall:
- (a) Coordinate the implementation, execution, and assessment of continuity operations and activities;
  - (b) Develop and promulgate Federal Continuity Directives in order to establish continuity planning requirements for executive departments and agencies;
  - (c) Conduct biennial assessments of individual department and agency continuity capabilities as prescribed by the Plan and report the results to the President through the APHS/CT;
  - (d) Conduct quarterly and annual assessments of continuity communications capabilities in consultation with an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President;
  - (e) Develop, lead, and conduct a Federal continuity training and exercise program, which shall be incorporated into the National Exercise Program developed pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 of December 17, 2003 ("National Preparedness"), in consultation with an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President;
  - (f) Develop and promulgate continuity planning guidance to State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector critical infrastructure owners and operators;
  - (g) Make available continuity planning and exercise funding, in the form of grants as provided by law, to State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector critical infrastructure owners and operators; and
  - (h) As Executive Agent of the National Communications System, develop, implement, and maintain a comprehensive continuity communications architecture.
- (17) The Director of National Intelligence, in coordination with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall produce a biennial assessment of the foreign and domestic threats to the Nation's continuity of government.
- (18) The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall provide secure, integrated, Continuity of Government communications to the President, the Vice President, and, at a minimum, Category I executive departments and agencies.
- (19) Heads of executive departments and agencies shall execute their respective department or agency COOP plans in response to a localized emergency and shall:
- (a) Appoint a senior accountable official, at the Assistant Secretary level, as the Continuity Coordinator for the department or agency;

- (b) Identify and submit to the National Continuity Coordinator the list of PMEFS for the department or agency and develop continuity plans in support of the NEFs and the continuation of essential functions under all conditions;
- (c) Plan, program, and budget for continuity capabilities consistent with this directive;
- (d) Plan, conduct, and support annual tests and training, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, in order to evaluate program readiness and ensure adequacy and viability of continuity plans and communications systems; and
- (e) Support other continuity requirements, as assigned by category, in accordance with the nature and characteristics of its national security roles and responsibilities

#### *General Provisions*

(20) This directive shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with, and facilitates effective implementation of, provisions of the Constitution concerning succession to the Presidency or the exercise of its powers, and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 (3 U.S.C. 19), with consultation of the Vice President and, as appropriate, others involved. Heads of executive departments and agencies shall ensure that appropriate support is available to the Vice President and others involved as necessary to be prepared at all times to implement those provisions.

(21) This directive:

- (a) Shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and the authorities of agencies, or heads of agencies, vested

by law, and subject to the availability of appropriations;

- (b) Shall not be construed to impair or otherwise affect (i) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, and legislative proposals, or (ii) the authority of the Secretary of Defense over the Department of Defense, including the chain of command for military forces from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, to the commander of military forces, or military command and control procedures; and
- (c) Is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(22) Revocation. Presidential Decision Directive-67 of October 21, 1998 ("Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government Operations"), including all Annexes thereto, is hereby revoked.

(23) Annex A and the classified Continuity Annexes, attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this directive.

(24) Security. This directive and the information contained herein shall be protected from unauthorized disclosure, provided that, except for Annex A, the Annexes attached to this directive are classified and shall be accorded appropriate handling, consistent with applicable Executive Orders.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This directive was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 9.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency  
Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain  
Goods to Syria  
May 8, 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 this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, and expanded in scope in Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, authorizing the blocking of property of certain persons and prohibiting the exportation and reexportation of certain goods to Syria, is to continue in effect beyond May 11, 2007.

The actions of the Government of Syria in supporting terrorism, interfering in Leb-

anon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, and undermining United States and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect the national emergency declared with respect to this threat and to maintain in force the sanctions I have ordered to address this national emergency.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 8, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 9. The related notice of May 8 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Tour of Tornado Damage in Greensburg, Kansas  
May 9, 2007

I bring the prayers and concerns of the people of this country to this town of Greensburg, Kansas. A lot of us have seen the pictures about what happened here, and the pictures don't do it justice. There is a lot of destruction. Fortunately, a lot of folks have basements here in this part of the world and lived to see another day. Unfortunately, too many died, and we offer our prayers and condolences to those who died.

I am struck by the strength of the character of the people who live here in the Plains—people who refuse to be—who

refuse to have their spirit affected by this storm, as a matter of fact, who are willing to do what it takes to rebuild in a better way. America is blessed to have such people. And the people here will be—will find they're blessed to have neighbors who care, a total stranger who will come and help them.

Our role as government officials is to work with the State and local folks to get whatever help is appropriate here, whatever help is in the law to be here as quickly as possible. My mission is to—today, though, is to lift people's spirits as best

as I possibly can; is to, hopefully, touch somebody's soul by representing our country and to let people know that while there was a dark day in the past, there's brighter days ahead.

And so I want to thank the Governor and I want to thank the Senators for being here. Most importantly, I want to thank

the people of Greensburg and their neighbors for helping them out. God bless the people here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. on Bay Street. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas.

## The President's News Conference in Arlington, Virginia May 10, 2007

*The President.* Good morning. I've just completed a meeting with Secretary Gates and General Pace and the members of the Joint Chiefs. I appreciate your hospitality. I really enjoy coming to the Defense Department to sit at the same table with these distinguished Americans. These folks are good, strategic thinkers. They're smart, they're capable, and we're lucky they wear the uniform.

I spent time discussing with them the needs of our military personnel as they carry out vital missions. The Joint Chiefs shared with me the latest developments and updated me on the troop rotations as they implement our new Baghdad security plan. They report that the three additional Iraqi brigades promised by the Government are in place and are conducting operations in the Baghdad area. These—three additional American brigades, totaling about 12,000 troops, have taken up positions and are also conducting operations.

The Chiefs told me that the fourth American brigade of reinforcements has just entered Baghdad and its surrounding towns and that the commanders expect the fifth American brigade to be in place by the middle of June. So it's going to be another month before all the additional troops that General Petraeus has requested are on the ground and carrying out their missions in Iraq.

American reinforcements in Baghdad, along with the Iraqi security forces, are now living and working with the Iraqi people in neighborhood posts called joint security stations. These stations are a place from which American and Iraqi forces act against terrorists and insurgents and death squads. And they patrol streets to build trust and increase local cooperation. In other words, there's active engagement by Iraqi forces and coalition forces in neighborhoods throughout Baghdad and the area.

And what happens with increased presence: there's increased confidence. And with increased confidence becomes increased information, information that forces can use to go after extremists, to bring down sectarian violence that plague the capital city of that country. The level of sectarian violence is an important indicator of whether or not the strategy that we have implemented is working. Since our operation began, the number of sectarian murders has dropped substantially.

As we have surged our forces, Al Qaida is responding with their own surge. Al Qaida is ratcheting up its campaign of high-profile attacks, including deadly suicide bombings carried out by foreign terrorists. America responded, along with coalition forces, to help this young democracy, and a brutal enemy has responded as well.

These attacks are part of a calculated campaign to reignite sectarian violence in Baghdad and to convince the people here in America that the effort can't succeed. We're also seeing high levels of violence because our forces are entering areas where terrorists and militia once had sanctuary. As they continue to do so, our commanders have made clear that our troops will face more fighting and increased risks in the weeks and months ahead.

As we help Iraqis bring security to their own country, we're also working with Iraqi leaders to secure greater international support for their young democracy. And last week, Secretary Rice attended an international meeting on Iraq and Egypt, and she briefed me, and she briefed Secretary Gates—there he is, right there. [*Laughter*]

The meeting included representatives from Iraq's neighbors, as well as Egypt and Bahrain and G-8 countries and the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. It was a robust international meeting where Iraqi leaders expressed their determination to meet a series of benchmarks they have set for political progress. In other words, they have not only told me that they're going to meet benchmarks, they've not only told Secretary Gates that they intend to meet benchmarks, but they've also told the international community they intend to do so.

These benchmarks include adoption of a national oil law and preparations for Provincial elections and progress on a new de-Ba'athification policy and a review of the Iraqi Constitution.

The nations assembled in Egypt pledged to support Iraq in these efforts. In other words, the Iraqis said, "We need help," and these nations pledged support. It was a very positive development. They're going to help Iraq secure its borders. They've said they will help stem the flow of terrorists into their country. They agreed to support the International Compact established

by Iraq and the United Nations so that Iraq can reform and rebuild its economy.

For Iraqi leaders to succeed in all these efforts, their people must have security. That's why I made the decision I made. That's why we sent additional troops into Baghdad. But we need to give General Petraeus's plan time to work. There's a debate raging in Washington here about how long we're going to be there—we haven't even got all our troops there. I still find it interesting that General Petraeus was given a unanimous confirmation vote by the United States Senate after he made clear his plan, and before the plan has been fully implemented, some in Washington are saying, "You need to leave." My attitude is, General Petraeus's plan ought to be given a chance to work, and we need to give the troops under his command the resources they need to prevail.

I met with congressional leaders to discuss the way forward, last week. I fully understand Republicans and Democrats have disagreements. We should be able to agree that the consequences of failure in Iraq would be disastrous for our country. And they would be disastrous for our country. We should be able to agree that we have a responsibility to provide our men and women on the frontlines with the resources and flexibility they need to do the job we've asked them to do.

I believe that leaders of good will can deliver to our troops. And we've got to deliver it soon—time is running out—because the longer we wait, the more strain we're going to put on the military.

All Americans know the goodness and character of the U.S. Armed Forces. They are risking their lives each day to fight our enemies and to keep our people safe. Their families are making tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our country. It's important for the people who wear the uniform and their families to know that as the Commander in Chief, I'm proud of the sacrifices they have made, and the American people honor their service to our country.



And now I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press], why don't you kick it off.

*Military Operations in Iraq/Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

Q. Thank you, sir. With some Republicans saying they need to see measurable progress by September, are you willing to reevaluate troop levels then, based on what General Petraeus says? And also, are you willing to accept any consequences for benchmarks in the war funding bill?

*The President.* You know, I meet with a lot of people on the subject of Iraq, and I should. There's a lot of opinions on both sides of the aisle about this issue. And my message to the Members of Congress is, whatever your beliefs may be, let's make sure our troops get funded, and let's make sure politicians don't tell our commanders how to conduct operations. Let's don't hamstring our people in the field. That's my message.

Their message to me has been, you know, don't you think the Iraqi Government ought to do more? They recognize what I recognize, and these gentlemen up here particularly recognize: that without political progress, it's going to be hard to achieve a military victory in Iraq. In other words, the military can provide security so a political process can go forward.

Look, the two questions you asked: One was about General Petraeus's report to the—back—around September about what's taking place in Baghdad. My attitude toward Congress is, why don't you wait and see what he says? Fund the troops, and let him come back and report to the American people. General Petraeus picked this date. He believes that there will be enough progress one way or the other to be able to report to the American people, to give an objective assessment about what he sees regarding the Baghdad security plan.

It's at that point in time that I'm confident that the Secretary and the Joint Chiefs will take a look at what David

Petraeus says and make recommendations about troop levels based upon the conditions on the ground, which stands in stark contrast to Members of Congress who say, we're going to determine troop levels based upon politics or the latest opinion poll or how we can get our Members elected.

And the second part of your question was about benchmarks. Look, let me talk about this recent effort by Congress to fund our troops. The idea that the House of Representatives put forward is one that we will fund our troops by piecemeal. Secretary Gates was very strong about why that's a bad idea. And the American people must understand that if you fund our troops every 2 months, you're in a—put in a position where we have to delay certain procurement, or that military contracts must be delayed. There's a lot of uncertainty in funding when it comes to 2-month cycles. So we reject that idea. It won't work.

I find it odd that the Congress is—I find it ironic that the Congress is ready to fully fund unrelated domestic spending items and only one-half of the money requested for our troops. They provide 100 percent of the money for the special interest projects that—they don't have anything to do with fighting the war on terror, and 50 percent of the money to go to those who wear our uniform. They got it wrong. They ought to provide 100 percent of the money for people who wear the uniform and leave these special pork projects out of the bill. The—and so I'll veto the bill if it's this haphazard, piecemeal funding. And I made that clear.

One message I have heard from people from both parties and—is that the idea of benchmarks makes sense. And I agree. It makes sense to have benchmarks as a part of our discussion on how to go forward. And so I've empowered Josh Bolten to find common ground on benchmarks, and he will continue to have dialog with both Republicans and Democrats.

You know, this bill—I believe we can get a good supplemental, and I hope it's

as quick as possible. The first blush is the bad supplemental coming out of the House. Nevertheless, there is—the Senate will have a say, and then there will be a conference committee, and hopefully, we can move a good bill forward as quickly as possible. These gentlemen will tell you that the longer we wait, the more it hurts our military and the families.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

*Prime Minister Tony Blair/Europe's Role in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, with Prime Minister Tony Blair stepping down, are you concerned that British policy on Iraq could change significantly?

*The President.* First of all, I'll miss Tony Blair. He is a political figure who is capable of thinking over the horizon. He's a long-term thinker. I have found him to be a man who's kept his word, which sometimes is rare in the political circles I run in. When Tony Blair tells you something, as we say in Texas, you can take it to the bank. We've got a relationship such that we can have really good discussions. And so I'm going to miss him. I—he's a remarkable person, and I consider him a good friend.

I obviously look forward to meeting with his successor. I believe that the relationship between Great Britain and America is a vital relationship. It is a relationship that has stood the test of time. And when America and Great Britain work together, we can accomplish important objectives. We share common values. We share a great history. And so I look forward to working with the—with Gordon Brown, who I presume is going to be the—maybe I shouldn't say that—I shouldn't predict who is going to be in, but I—the punditry suggests it will be him.

I have had a meeting with him and found him to be an open and engaging person. I—it's amazing how people make all kinds of characterizations about people

in the political process, and I found him to be a easy-to-talk-to, good thinker.

Q. What do you think he'll do on Iraq? Do you feel like you're in—

*The President.* I think—look, yes, I believe he understands the consequences of failure. The interesting thing about the Iraq debate, by the way, is, I don't hear a lot of discussions about happens if we fail—what happens if we fail. I hear a lot of discussions about, maybe we can make good political progress based upon this issue, or let's just make sure that we constantly achieve—make political hay based upon Iraq. I hear a lot of that. But there needs to be a serious discussion about what happens if we create a vacuum into which radical movements flow.

If you're worried about Iran, then it's really important that people understand the consequences of us leaving before the job is done. I am deeply concerned about what would happen in the Middle East should America's credibility be diminished as a result of us not keeping our word, as a result of us abandoning millions of people who are anxious to live in a stable, secure, free society. I worry about the signal it would send to Al Qaida. As I told you earlier, and as David Petraeus said—let me put it in his words—"Al Qaida is public enemy number one in Iraq." Al Qaida also should be viewed as public enemy number one in America.

And why do I say that? Well, Al Qaida attacked us once and killed thousands of citizens on our soil. I believe they want to attack us again. I believe failure in Iraq would only embolden Al Qaida further. I know that vacuums in the Middle East are likely to be filled by radicals and extremists, who, at the very minimum, would share a common enemy: the United States and some of our strongest allies.

And so it's vital we succeed. The debate in Washington is, how fast can we withdraw—amongst some. The debate ought to be, what do we need to do to make sure that we not only don't fail but succeed?

And so I believe Gordon Brown understands the consequences of failure. But I'm looking forward to working with him. I'm looking forward to working with the new President of France. I'm looking forward to working with a lot of people in Europe to not only achieve success in Iraq but also achieve success in Afghanistan, another theater in the war on terror.

Let's see here—Roger [Roger Runnigen, Bloomberg News]. Yes, Rog. I call him “Rog.”

*President-Elect Nicolas Sarkozy of France/  
Vice President Cheney's Visit to the Middle  
East/Iran*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon. You just mentioned the new leader of France, and I was going to ask you about him. Have you talked to him? Are you recruiting him as part of the coalition? Any messages for him?

And you've sent Mr. Cheney to the Middle East to visit with the other neighbors. What specifically are the requests you are making of them?

*The President.* Sure. First of all, Presidents don't recruit; the people elect a leader with whom I will work. And I had a—I did talk to President-elect Sarkozy; I think it was at about 8:03 Paris time. He won at 8:00, and I called him shortly thereafter. And I'm so grateful he took my phone call. I had met with him before when he came over here and found him to be a very engaging, energetic, smart, capable person. We will have our differences, and we will have our agreements. And I'm looking forward to working with him.

Vice President Cheney is in the Middle East. His first message to the Iraqis was that they have got to speed up their clock, that—I agree with General Petraeus's assessment that there are two clocks: one ticking here in Washington and one ticking there. And they must understand that we are very serious when it comes to them passing law that enables this country to

more likely reconcile. And then he'll be traveling to talk to other friends in the area.

One of the questions that many ask is, do we understand the Iranian issue well? Do we understand the consequences of Iran having a nuclear weapon—which it looks like they want to try to achieve—to get. And the answer is, absolutely. And they'll find a stalwart friend in dealing with extremism in that vital part of the world. And that—Vice President will lay out our strategy of convincing others to join us in—on this Iranian issue. He will point out to them that we have worked hard to convince not only the EU-3 to join with the United States in sending a clear message but also now Russia and China, and that we do have a diplomatic front. And we've got to work—to continue to work together. We've got to work to keep it together, to send a focused, concerted message.

He will also remind people that success in Iraq will be important for dealing with Iran, that if we were to listen to some of the voices in Congress and withdraw before the job was done, it would embolden Iran. In other words, there are strategic consequences to what is being said here in Washington, DC, about the Iraqi issue.

And so he's got to—it's a vital trip, and I really appreciate him going. And it looked like he had a good stop yesterday. I haven't talked to him, but it looks like he's—it looks like he had a good day yesterday, and I'm looking forward—he'll check in.

Mark [Mark Silva, Chicago Tribune].

*Military Operations in Iraq/Emergency  
Supplemental Appropriations*

Q. Mr. President, in your meeting with some moderate Republicans this week, in particular Representative LaHood, who, afterwards, said: “The way forward after September, if the report is not good, is going to be difficult”——

*The President.* Yes.

Q. —those are his words. Are you perhaps facing an ultimatum on the war this fall with Congress?

*The President.* You know, I—first of all, I appreciate the Members coming down to the White House. We had a good exchange. It gave me a chance to share with them my feelings about the Iraqi issue. I spent time talking to them about what it meant to fail and what it means when we succeed. They expressed their opinions. They're obviously concerned about the Iraq war, but so are a lot of other people.

I remind people—I reminded them that last fall, late fall, I had been one of these people that get endlessly polled. You know, these surveys and the pollsters constantly calling people all the time, it looks like—and had asked my opinion; I'd have said, I disapprove of what was going on in Iraq. You could have put me down as part of the disapproval process—and, therefore, had put a plan in place that would more likely cause me to approve of what's going on in Iraq. That's why I made the decision I made.

I explained to them why I made the decision I made. And I said, look, David Petraeus has got a plan, and Members of Congress—some Members of Congress won't let him implement the plan. That doesn't make any sense, on the one hand, for us to send him out with the unanimous confirmation by the Senate, and then to deny him the troops and/or the funds necessary to get the job done. And I reminded them that we ought to give David Petraeus a chance.

I did explain to them that General Petraeus has said he's going to come back and report to the Secretary and the Joint Chiefs and the White House and the Congress about whether or not the strategy that he thinks could work is working. And at that point in time, we will respond accordingly.

As I have told people, that decisions about the posture in Iraq need to be based upon conditions on the ground. And no better person to report about the conditions on the ground than somebody who was

there, and that would be General Petraeus. And at that point in time, upon the recommendation of the Secretary and the Joint Chiefs and General Petraeus, we will respond to what he says. And so I said, why don't we wait and see what happens? Let's give this plan a chance to work. Let's stop playing politics. It's one thing to have a good, honest debate about the way forward in Iraq, it's another thing to put our troops right in the middle of that debate.

These troops deserve the money necessary to do the job. And our commanders need the flexibility necessary to do the job. And I believe this cause is necessary and it's noble. That's why I put those young men and women out there in the first place. It's necessary for the peace and security of our country. It's noble to have such amazing citizens volunteer to go into harm's way. And our Congress needs to support them. It's one thing to have a political debate or a debate about strategies, it's another thing to make sure that money gets sent to them on a timely basis. I repeat: This idea of funding our troops every 2 months is not adequate, and I frankly don't think it's right. They need to give these troops what they—what the military has asked for them.

And we can debate Iraq and should. But there should be no debate about making sure that money gets there on a timely basis so our kids can do the job we've asked them to do.

I want to thank you all for your time.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:06 p.m. at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair and Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom; and President-elect Nicolas Sarkozy of France.

## Remarks on the Observance of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and Presentation of the President's Volunteer Service Awards

May 10, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. I'm glad you're here. Fifteen years ago, my dad—or as we call him around the house, “number 41”—signed a law designating May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This afternoon, number 43—[laughter]—has the honor of continuing number 41's tradition. And we're glad you're here.

I thank you for joining me to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Across our Nation, Americans of Asian Pacific descent are leaders in fields from education to business to government. Every day, Asian Pacific Americans make our communities more vibrant, and this afternoon we honor the many contributions that are made to our great democracy.

I want to thank Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao for being here today. Madam Secretary, we're proud you're here. Thank you for serving. A former member of my Cabinet, now retired—well, not exactly retired—[laughter]—but a close friend: Norm Mineta is with us. Thanks for coming, Mr. Secretary. You're looking pretty good. Yes, I see that. [Laughter] I appreciate the fact that Deputy Secretary of Commerce David Sampson is here. He cannot claim any Asian American heritage, but nevertheless, he is serving well. [Laughter] Thank you for coming.

I appreciate the members of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders who are here today. Thanks for serving. Thanks for your good work. I want to thank the recipients of the President's Volunteer Service Award. We will talk about you all a little later on here. But we're honored you're here.

I do want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. Am-

bassadors, thank you for being here. We're honored to have—by your presence.

I do want to thank World War II veterans and Japanese American veterans who have joined us today. We're proud to have you here, and thanks for this great example you've set for those who wear the uniform today. We're really glad you're here.

The story of Asian Pacific Americans is an important part of the American story. During the 19th century, Asian Pacific Americans endured great hardships, for example, to lay the tracks for our first transcontinental railroad. During times of war, Asian Pacific Americans have defended our Nation with honor and courage. And during times of prejudice, Asian Pacific Americans have overcome discrimination to build strong and lasting communities in our country.

Today, more than 15 million Americans can trace their lineage to Asia or the Pacific Islands. We see the influence of these Asian Pacific Americans across all our society. All you have to do is look to see the tremendous impact our fellow citizens are making. It's a great passion for art and music which brings new culture—new life to our cultures. The love of learning has helped improve our schools and raise the standards for all children. A commitment to innovation and free enterprise has helped strengthen our economy and created jobs.

In 2004, I formed a Presidential advisory commission to examine ways of expanding economic opportunities for Asian Pacific Americans. And tomorrow I will receive the commission's final report, and I'm looking forward to getting it.

As Asian Pacific Americans realize the opportunities of our Nation, they're also answering the call to give back to our communities, and by doing so, they create new



opportunities for others. Men and women of Asian Pacific descent volunteer their talents and time to help their neighbors in a lot of ways. This afternoon, we honor six Americans of Asian Pacific heritage with our Nation's highest honor for community service: the President's Volunteer Service Award.

The volunteers we recognize have set a powerful example for all Americans. They have served important causes, from providing aid to victims of natural disasters to sharing the joy of science with students to raising money for libraries in far away lands. These acts of kindness have changed lives; they've laid the foundation for stronger communities; and they really speak to the strength of America. Our strength is not our military, although we'll keep it strong, and our strength is not necessarily the size of our economy, although we'll keep it robust. The true strength of the country lies in the hearts and souls of citizens who hear the call to love a neighbor and do something about it.

One of the honorees is a Virginia Tech student. I had the privilege of meeting Adeel Khan. See, Adeel is the president of the student government at Virginia Tech. He took office shortly before the terrible violence hit that campus. He's had what we call a difficult presidency. [*Laughter*] And yet he understood the need for leadership. He's an impressive guy. He worked hard with classmates to organize a

campuswide vigil. He helped bring that important community together. He dealt with the tragedy the way you'd expect a leader to deal with tragedy. This good young man helped lead his fellow students in healing. And we ought to know, as he did so, it helped heal the entire Nation.

We see the true spirit of the Asian Pacific American community in the compassion and decency of citizens like Adeel. We're grateful for the many contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our Nation. We're proud to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. I congratulate all the honorees. And now I ask Lieutenant Commander Roncska to read their citations.

*[At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Robert A. Roncska, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the awards.]*

I—thank you all for coming today. In our diversity, we find our strength; in our hearts, we find such wonderful compassion. Thank you all for setting a great example. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:26 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on International Trade and Investment Policy May 10, 2007

The United States has a longstanding commitment to open economies that empower individuals, generate economic opportunity and prosperity for all, and provide the foundation for a free society. Economic freedom, supported by the rule of law, reinforces political freedom by encouraging

and supporting the free flow of ideas. To continue the advance of liberty and prosperity, my administration will work vigorously to promote open investment policies and free trade on a level playing field.

A free and open international investment regime is vital for a stable and growing



economy, both here at home and throughout the world. The threat of global terrorism and other national security challenges have caused the United States and other countries to focus more intently on the national security dimensions of foreign investment. While my administration will continue to take every necessary step to protect national security, my administration recognizes that our prosperity and security are founded on our country's openness.

As both the world's largest investor and the world's largest recipient of investment, the United States has a key stake in promoting an open investment regime. The United States unequivocally supports international investment in this country and is equally committed to securing fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory treatment for U.S. investors abroad. Both inbound and outbound investment benefit our country by stimulating growth, creating jobs, enhancing productivity, and fostering competitiveness that allows our companies and their workers to prosper at home and in international markets. My administration is

committed to ensuring that the United States continues to be the most attractive place in the world to invest. I urge other nations to join us in supporting an open investment policy and protecting international investments.

My administration is also committed to advancing free and fair trade in multilateral, regional, and bilateral negotiations. We will work aggressively to conclude the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda negotiations and to secure congressional approval of the free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, Peru, and South Korea. The prospects for the Doha Development Agenda negotiations to produce significant new economic opportunities, particularly in developing countries, demand that we do everything possible to reach an outcome that creates new trade flows and strengthens global development.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

## Statement on the Free Trade Agreements With Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea

*May 10, 2007*

I am pleased that my administration and congressional leaders have concluded a bipartisan agreement that provides a clear path for advancing our proposed free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Expanding opportunities for the sale of American goods and services is crucial to continued growth and job creation here in America. While these agreements will move forward independently, my administration is committed to working with Members of Congress and with the

governments of our free trade agreement partners to secure the approval of each agreement. I also look forward to working with the Congress to extend trade promotion authority to negotiate agreements that open markets and generate new economic opportunities.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

## Remarks at a Republican National Committee Gala May 10, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated, unless, of course, you don't have a chair. [Laughter] I'm glad you're here. And I'm glad I'm here with you, and I thank you. Thanks for coming; thanks for supporting the Republican Party. Here's our mission: Our mission is to keep the White House in 2008 and retake the Senate and the House. And you're helping, and you're helping a lot, and I really appreciate it.

I appreciate my friend, Senator Mel Martinez, for being the general chairman of the Republican National Committee. You know, I believe that he is the first RNC chairman to speak English as a second language. [Laughter] Some people think I'm the first President who can make the same claim. [Laughter]

But I'm proud to be with Mel and Michael Duncan and Elliott Broidy and all the good folks who are helping make sure that we're ready to run a vibrant and active campaign in 2008.

I wish Laura were here. No, I know it, I know. I'm proud of her. She is a gracious, lovely person. And I am a lucky man to have had her by my side during this fantastic experience of being your President. She sends her love, and she sends her best. I want to—yes, I love her too. Yes, she's good. [Laughter]

*Audience member.* I love you too.

*The President.* Thank you. Well, it's one of these kind of interactive crowds. [Laughter]

I've learned something about how you win campaigns. I've been through a few, myself. I have found that if you stand for something, the people will believe in you. If you stand on principles and enunciate that which you believe, the people will follow. And so as we head into campaign season next year, it's very important for the Republican Party to enunciate that which

we believe, to stand for something, not be one of these parties that takes a focus group to tell us what to believe but to tell people what we believe and what those beliefs are, beliefs etched in our soul.

I believe that everybody has the right to be free. I believe freedom is universal. I believe this country needs a strong national defense. I believe that the best way to encourage economic vitality so that people can realize the American Dream is through less government and more entrepreneurship. I believe that the government ought to trust in the judgment of ordinary citizens. I believe that technologies can help transform the world in a better way. And I believe when we find somebody who hurts, we ought to encourage faith-based and community groups to surround them with love. That's what I believe.

These are difficult times for the United States. These are troubling times because we are a nation at war. I wish I could report that was not the case, but it is the case. And the most solemn obligation of government is to protect the American people from harm. Our most solemn duty is to use all our powers to protect you from further attack.

I must tell you that my attitude toward the world changed dramatically on September the 11th, 2001. It was a day that affected our Nation deeply, and it affected me as President. And I vowed on that day and the days following that attack that I wouldn't tire, I wouldn't weary, that I would use all my capacities to rally the American people and the assets of this country to protect you.

The enemy we face is fearless. They're mean. They know new—they know no boundaries of civilization as we know it, see. They kill to impose their will. It's hard for Americans to believe that we face such

evil people, but we do. And the fundamental question facing this country is that we—will we have the will to face the threats of the 21st century?

I have put forth a strategy that does protect America. In the short term, we will pursue the enemy wherever we find them. It is best to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here in America.

And so the war on terror is being fought on many fronts: in Afghanistan, in Southeast Asia, the Horn of Africa, and of course, the Middle East. In the long term, the best way to defeat an enemy that believes in a hateful ideology is to support the spread of an ideology that's hopeful, an ideology that lifts people's lives, an ideology that can defeat those who try to prey on innocent young people and convince them to murder. And that ideology is the ideology of liberty.

We're implementing this strategy, and of course, the debate now centers on Iraq. And it's a tough fight. But I believe it's a necessary fight to protect the American people. There's been some progress. If you think about how far Iraq has come in a relatively short period of time, it's historic. The people there in that country have gone from life under a brutal tyrant who was an enemy of the United States to a society where 12 million Iraqis voted for one of the most modern constitutions in the history of the Middle East, a society where people were given a chance to express their will at the polls and elect a government.

A thinking enemy, however, realized that progress was being made and used their brutal ways to try to foment sectarian violence. The enemy we face in Iraq is a multifaceted enemy. But the enemy that's causing the car bombs, the enemy that is causing the spectacular deaths of the innocent, is Al Qaida, the very same people that launched the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 citizens on our soil—soil.

I was confronted with a choice. I had a decision to make. I told people that, you

know, had they—had I been one of the people that answered a poll last fall, I would have said I disapprove of what was happening in Iraq. It was not satisfactory to me of what was taking place. The sectarian violence that was deep in that society was looking like it was going to make it impossible for this young democracy to survive. You can't have your capital city as a place where murderers stalk innocent people and expect for a young democracy to be able to get its roots and to grow.

One choice was to pull back and hope that the violence wouldn't spill out across the country and out across the Middle East. The other choice that I made, in consultation with our military folks, was rather than pull back, to send reinforcements into the capital of that country, all aiming to give this young democracy an opportunity to do the reconciliation work necessary to have a country that can defend itself, govern itself, sustain itself, serves—serve as an example to other moderate people, and be an ally in the war on terror. And that's exactly what the policy is we're now following.

I asked a new general, General David Petraeus, to implement the policy. Our goal is to help the Iraqis secure their population, especially in Baghdad. The operation is still in its early stages. The fourth of five groups of soldiers we're sending into Iraq have arrived; the fifth is on its way. In other words, the operational plan that David Petraeus explained to the United States Congress is still being implemented. We don't have the full complement of troops that I told the American people we would send into Baghdad.

And yet there's some positive signs. One positive sign is that sectarian murders are down substantially, even before all our troops have arrived to help the Iraqi citizens. Sectarian murders are down. There's—people are gaining confidence, slowly but surely, in a government, because security is improving, and, therefore, there's more tips, more information being passed

on to Iraqi forces and American forces so that we can help that society have the security necessary to do the hard work. We've had successful operations against extremists, whether they be Sunni or Shi'a. We're making progress.

And now we're in a debate here in Washington, DC. And it's a debate, as you know, about whether or not to fund our troops. I think it's very important that Congress have an honest debate. And I don't question the patriotism of anyone who is expressing their views. But as I made clear to Members of Congress, a supplemental bill—a war spending bill that mandated withdrawals by an arbitrary date—or a bill that imposes restrictive conditions on our commanders, or a bill that would spend billions of dollars unrelated to the war was unacceptable, and that's why I vetoed the bill.

I will continue to reach out to Democrats and Republicans to come up with a way to get this money to our troops as quickly as possible. We're not going to agree on every issue, but we don't want to put the men and women who wear our uniform in the midst of a Washington, DC, debate. These troops need the money, and Congress needs to get it to them.

If I didn't think it was worthy, if I didn't think it was necessary, if I didn't realize and believe that it's important to defeat Al Qaida in Iraq, I wouldn't have our young men and women there in the first place. I believe this is a necessary action to protect our country.

Much of the debate doesn't focus on the consequences of failure. There's a lot of talk about withdrawal, but it's important for our fellow citizens to understand what the consequences would be if we fail, if we left before the job was done. There would be a vacuum in the—in Iraq, and in that vacuum would flow extremists. Murderers and killers would take advantage of the lack of security. That violence could spill out across all Iraq. I believe there's a good chance the violence would spill out all

across the Middle East. I know that people would take heart at the fact that the United States of America didn't keep its commitment to the moderates and the young—this young democracy.

It would embolden Al Qaida. Al Qaida has clearly stated—the enemy that attacked America has clearly stated that they seek safe haven in Iraq, that they want to drive us from Iraq so they can have a safe haven from which to plan and plot other attacks. I know that the Iranians would see that we left before the job was done, and that would embolden them. One of the great dangers facing our children, one of the great dangers facing civilization, is an Iran with a nuclear weapon. It's important that we succeed in Iraq and send a clear message to the people.

I don't want it to be said 50 years from now: "What happened to America in 2007? How come they forgot the lessons of September the 11th? How come they couldn't see the impending dangers facing a generation of Americans?" I want you to know I see the impending dangers. I understand the consequences of this historic moment. And we will succeed in Iraq.

I just want you to know our foreign policy is more than just the spread of liberty and the protection of our country. I firmly believe that to whom much is given, much is required. It's a principle on which I try to operate. It's a principle on which I make decisions. I understand the consequences of a pandemic like HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. The United States of America must boldly lead, must not shirk from our duty, and must help people wherever we find suffering, to the best of our ability.

I'm proud to announce that since we have put together the Presidential initiative on HIV/AIDS in Africa, there have been 850,000 people receiving antiretroviral drugs, up from 50,000, 3 years ago.

People have questioned: Is it a necessary action to take? I say it's necessary. I say

it's necessary to help relieve human suffering. I also say it's necessary to make sure our soul is strong. The spirit of America remains intact. Our foreign policy is robust, it is aggressive, and it will lead to peace—the peace we all want.

At home, we're coming down to a campaign next year. A big issue, of course, is going to be the economy. I'm looking forward to talking about the economy. This economy has been through a lot. You might remember the recent economic history of the United States. We went through a recession. We had the terrorist attack. We had corporate scandals. We had people doubting our capacity to grow our economy. And yet the economy has been robust. We've created 7.8 million jobs over the past 4 years; unemployment is low; inflation is low; wages are rising; the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. And the question is, how do we keep it that way?

I told you, one of the core principles on which I operate is: I believe we ought to trust the people of the United States to make their own decisions. And perhaps the best way to exhibit that trust is to let you keep more of your own money. When you have more money to spend, this economy benefits. And there's a debate here in Washington, DC. There's a constant struggle about who best can spend the American people's money. Well, I made up my mind a long time ago when I convinced the Congress to cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. The tax relief is working.

And now the question is, are we going to let that tax relief expire? My answer is, absolutely not. We need to make the tax relief permanent.

Oh, I know you'll hear them say in Washington and you'll hear them campaigning, listen: "All we've got to do is tax the rich to balance the budget." That's the same old mantra they trot out about every campaign cycle. The problem is, it doesn't work that way in Washington. Oh yes, they'll tax you. But if you're middle class, you better watch out. See, they can't raise

enough money to meet their spending ambitions. They'll raise the taxes, but when they do, they'll figure out new ways to spend your money.

The best way to grow this economy and fix this deficit is to keep taxes low so the economy grows, which yields more tax revenues, and be wise about how we spend your money, be fiscally sound.

I put forth a budget that eliminates the Federal deficit within the next 5 years because we set priorities. And the top priority of this Government ought to be, make sure our troops have that which is necessary to protect the American people.

The Democrats pass budgets. They harken back to those old days of tax and spend. And I believe when it comes down to it, when they hear the clear differences of our points of view and the principles by which we make decisions, the American people don't want to return to the days of tax and spend.

I want to talk to you a little bit about education. Education is a vital issue for the United States. It's a vital issue to make sure that we're a competitive nation in the 21st century. If we don't educate our children now, the United States of America will have a hard time being the economic leader of the world. I'm an advocate of public schools. You might remember, I was once the Governor of the State of Texas. [Applause] I'm glad they let you into town. [Laughter]

I used to say this as Governor: Education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. In that statement, there's some interesting principles. One, I believe in local control of schools. I believe it is essential that the governance of schools take place not in Washington but locally. I also believe, however, in this principle: that if we spend money, we want to see results, and we've got to ask about the results. We spend a fair amount of money here in Washington, DC, a lot of money on the schoolchildren, particularly the poor



schoolchildren. And that's fine, and that's noble, and it is necessary.

And so I went to Congress and said: Listen, we'll spend the money, but why don't we start asking some important questions, like, can you read—[laughter]—can you write; can you add; and can you subtract? I believe in measurement. And I believe in measurement not because I want to punish anybody, but I believe in measuring so we can correct problems early, before it's too late. That piece of legislation is called the No Child Left Behind Act. The gap—the achievement gap is closing in America. Congress needs to reauthorize that good piece of legislation.

I'm a strong believer in technology. I believe technology will help improve American lives, and I strongly believe that technology will enable us to become less dependent on foreign oil. Now I believe that we can explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways, and we should. But I am deeply concerned about our dependence on oil. It creates a national security issue. Plain way of putting it is that, not everybody we buy oil from likes us. [Laughter] Having a dependence on foreign oil is an economic security issue. When the demand for crude oil goes up in the developing world, it causes the price of gasoline to go up here in America. Dependence on oil creates an environmental issue.

So I put forth an innovative way of dealing with our dependence on oil, and that is to promote alternative forms of energy to power our cars. I believe it makes sense to encourage automobiles to be driven by ethanol derived from corn, for example. I want American farmers growing energy for American people. I believe strongly that we ought to be spending your taxpayers' money to come up with alternative fuel sources, like switchgrass. Is it possible? You bet it's possible. It's called cellulosic ethanol.

One of these days, I can't wait to go out West where it's a little dry and see all the switchgrass farmers that are growing product necessary to produce ethanol so

you can drive it in your cars, and we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil. It's coming. And the role of the United States has got to be to lead and to promote new technologies.

We can do a good job, by the way, of using some of our power sources here in America by developing clean coal technologies. We ought to be promoting nuclear power that is safe, so that we can be responsible stewards of the environment and make sure you got electricity supplies as we head out into the 21st century. No, we got a comprehensive energy plan that makes a lot of sense, that is going to call upon the ingenuity of the American people and make sure this economy remains the leader in the world.

I want to talk about health care. There's a principle involved in health care I want to share with you, and that is we want consumers making decisions. We want patients and their doctors making decisions, not insurance agents and not the Federal Government, when it comes to health care.

I called for reform in the Tax Code. I believe there ought to be a standard tax deduction for health insurance like there's a standard tax deduction for dependents. And the reason why I believe that is because I believe it's important for us to encourage the development of an individual market, so individuals can buy good health care, so there can be more risk spread across more people, so there's a vibrant market for people to be able to—if you're not employed, or if you're a small-business owner, that you can go—or employed without insurance—you can find a product that will give you that security.

What I don't want to do is encourage the Federal Government to run the health care system. I think that would be a huge mistake. I think it's important to promote policies that say the consumer matters when it comes to buying health care needs. And that's exactly what this administration is doing.



By the way, there's some other practical things we can do. We can promote health savings accounts, which all empower the individual that says, we trust you. Here's a way for you to have health insurance, and we trust you to make the decisions. We can expose prices. I don't know how many of you ever shopped for medical care. I know I haven't. I don't remember asking anybody: "Let me see the lists. How do you price your product relative to the neighbor?" I've never seen a hospital say, "Well, here's my prices compared to my—to the hospital down the road." There needs to be more transparency when it comes to pricing, so consumers can make rational choices.

One thing is for certain: We've got to make sure, if you want health care to be available and affordable, to have good policies that counter this notion of driving good docs out of business. What I'm telling you is there's too many junk lawsuits suing too many doctors, and we need to have medical liability reform in the United States of America.

I hope you get a sense of the philosophy that I think needs to be inherent in good policy. And that is, we trust you, and we trust in the ingenuity of the American people. We believe the future is brighter. We're putting good policy in place to encourage that bright future.

I've got another job, by the way, and it's to make sure one branch of our Government is sound and solid and reflects a philosophy that I campaigned on. And it's this: Judges should strictly interpret the law and not legislate from the bench. And I

will continue to name—[applause]—continue to name good, solid judges that adhere to that principle.

You know, people ask me all the time, "Do you enjoy being the President?" And my answer is, absolutely. I love being your President. I like being the Commander in Chief. I enjoy being the educator in chief. I like talking about what we believe in because I firmly believe the philosophy we believe in is best for America. I believe it is the type of philosophy that inspires people. I believe it's a philosophy that inherits the greatness of our economy. I believe that we are the party of the entrepreneur. I believe we're the party of the doer, the dreamer, the people that work. I believe we're the party of low taxes. And I know we're the party of strong national defense to protect the United States of America.

And so I appreciate you coming tonight. Thanks for giving me a chance to share with you some ideas. But more importantly, thank you for contributing of your hard-earned money to make sure that this great Republican Party is ready for the task ahead.

May God bless our country. May God bless you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:02 p.m. at the D.C. Armory. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Duncan, chairman, Republican National Committee; Elliott Broidy, chairman and chief executive officer, Broidy Capital Management; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

## Commencement Address at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania May 11, 2007

Thank you. Go ahead and be seated. Thank you. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for the

warm welcome. Archabbot Douglas, Your Excellency, Jim and Mary Towey, members of the faculty, members of the clergy,

moms and dads, and most important, the class of 2007: Thanks for inviting me. I am honored to be here.

Laura and I feel like we have a very special connection to St. Vincent College through the Toweys. We have come to know Jim and his family well during his time in Washington—after all, he was the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. And now he's attained another high office. So today before his family, his friends, and colleagues, I would like to address Jim with two words he probably never thought he would hear from me: Mr. President. [Laughter]

I know he appreciates the importance I place on my speeches. He knows my style well. I want all of you to know I was very moved by a letter he recently sent me that invited me to this commencement. Here is what Mr. President said, "Mr. President, I believe that by hearing you speak, every member of the class of 2007 will leave this campus with a priceless lesson about the importance of the English language." [Laughter] At least he didn't say, "I'm proud to welcome to the podium a man, the first President for whom English was his second language." [Laughter] I did call him. I said what my speech ought to be about. That's what I asked him, what my speech ought to be about, Jim. He said, "About 10 minutes"—so here goes. [Laughter]

It's a proud moment for the class of 2007. You're the largest graduating class in your school's history. You're the first class to take a mandatory course in micro-waving—[laughter]—a requirement that was imposed after you set off a record number of fire alarms while you were trying to make popcorn. [Laughter] You cheered the Bearcats with the Carey Crazies. You walked through the lighted arches of Melvin Platz. Some of you are the first in your family to attend college. In a few moments, you will collect your degrees, the Ave Maria bell will ring, and

you will leave this campus with a lifetime of good memories. You've worked hard, and we're all here to congratulate you on a fabulous achievement.

I also congratulate the many people who helped make this day possible, starting with your parents, who paid your tuition and were patient, even after the phone bills arrived. [Laughter] I thank the people of the—who have worked hard to make sure you leave with a sound and solid college degree, and that's the St. Vincent's faculty. I appreciate very much the monks of the Archabbey, the men whose prayers are surely responsible for some of the degrees being offered today. [Laughter] And so I ask the class of 2007 to continue to make these good people proud; to take what you've learned here into the world, and always live up to the high ideals that this college stands for.

At the heart of these high ideals is the name Benedict. Benedict was the saint who set down a practical guide for community life and helped save Western civilization. Benedict was the inspiration for the man who came to this country to plant these ideals in American soil and founded this college. And Benedict was also the inspiration for the Pope, who took his name in tribute to the Benedictine ideals of charity and community that he believes the world needs now more than ever.

These ideals of charity and community have a special resonance for Americans. From the beginning, America has offered the world a new model for strong community life. In the early 19th century, a Frenchman named Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States. He was impressed by the way Americans came together in voluntary associations to help out a neighbor in need. And in his book, "Democracy in America," he wrote something that captured the spirit of this great country. He said: "When an American asks for the co-operation of his fellow citizens, it is seldom refused. If some great and sudden calamity

befalls a family, the purses of a thousand strangers are at once willingly opened.”

De Tocqueville saw the good heart of America back in the early 19th century. And we continue to see the good heart of America in the early 21st century. We see it in citizens who responded to the worst atrocity on our soil with acts of selflessness and compassion. We see it in the historic new commitments our Nation has made to alleviate poverty and suffering, by feeding the hungry and fighting malaria and working to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa.

We see it in the volunteers who serve in our faith-based and community organizations, good and decent folks who are living the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Today, more than 61 million Americans volunteer their time to serve others, more than three-quarters of adults give to charity. The volunteer spirit of America makes us unique: it represents the true strength of our Nation, and it must constantly be reinvigorated and renewed.

And that’s why it’s vital for our country that our young people step forward and serve a cause larger than yourselves. When you serve your fellow citizens, you find benefits you’ll never imagine. You discover that a caring person is sometimes all it takes for someone to turn their lives around. You see for yourself that kindness and respect make an enormous difference in a person’s life. You learn to take the initiative, instead of waiting for a government to step in. You become more aware of others, a better man or woman to your friends and families, a better citizen of your country. You start to put your own difficulties in perspective. And soon you learn a great truth: that you always get more out of service than you give.

Your generation’s willingness to serve will define the character of our Nation, and us older folks have good reason to be confident. Americans now in college are more likely to volunteer or become engaged in civic life than previous generations. Here

at St. Vincent College, you have learned that service outside the classroom is as important as what you learn inside the classroom. The challenge for you is to keep this up as you begin your new careers and your new families and your new lives. So today I ask you to make service more than a line on your resume. Find a need that is not being met, do your part to fill it, make a difference to our country.

I’m pleased to see that the class of 2007 is answering the call. In the graduating class today are five students who have volunteered to wear our Nation’s uniform. You knew the risks of serving in a time of war, and you have volunteered to accept those risks. You have chosen a noble calling. You will take your place as officers in the finest military the world has ever known. At some point, the lives of other men and women will be in your hands, and they will need leaders of character and selflessness. As your Commander in Chief, I salute you for your service, and I ask Almighty God to keep you close as you keep our Nation safe.

There are many ways to serve our Nation. Across this great land of opportunity, we have citizens with great needs. And for every need, there is a path to service.

Some of you have chosen the path of teaching. We all know a teacher who has made a difference in our lives. In my case, I married her. [*Laughter*] The First Lady showed me that teaching is more than a job or profession, it is a vocation. When you make the decision to become a teacher, you know that your reward will be greater than money. It will happen in wonderful moments when you see a student grasp a difficult concept, or come alive during the reading of a poem, or discover how a work of history speaks to our time. To do this for even one child is special. To do this for hundreds of children over a career will bring you satisfaction that few other professions can match.

The beauty of teaching is that its rewards can be found in any classroom. Some of

you know this from your visits to St. Benedict's, an all-boys school in one of the poorest areas of New Jersey. For many of these boys, St. Benedict's is their only safe haven from crime and drugs and hopelessness around them. Each Christmas holiday, several St. Vincent students spend time mentoring these young men.

One of your classmates, Anthony Fiumara, spent two breaks at St. Benedict's. Here's how he describes the experience: "I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher. But my time at Saint Ben's showed me that a teacher could become more than a dispenser of knowledge. When I talked with the students about their dreams of attending college, I realized that as a teacher, I would be the one that would help them achieve their dreams."

Our Nation needs more teachers like Anthony. I'm so pleased that nearly four dozen members of this class have chosen to go into teaching. I thank you. And as you go forth, I ask you to set high standards in your classroom. Challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. Teach your students with respect. And always remember the ideals that attracted you to this noble profession.

Some of you may not yet have decided the best way to serve. It's okay. The Government can't put love in your heart. But what we can do is when you find love and find the drive, we can help put it in action. And that's why I created the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives that Mr. President ran. Through this office, we are helping to ensure that Federal funds for social service go to organizations that get results, even if they happen to have a crucifix or a Star of David on the wall.

We also established the USA Freedom Corps to help mobilize volunteers to bring the comfort and kindness of America to people both at home and abroad. Today, hundreds of thousands of volunteers mentor children; they assist the elderly; they build schools and clinics; they respond to natural disasters. No matter what your in-

terests, no matter what your skills, there is a place for every one of you to serve in our armies—our Nation's armies of compassion.

Even if you can't devote yourself to a career of service, you can make a life of service. We have that on good authority from one of President Towey's great heroes: Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa's whole life was dedicated to doing small things with great love. I'm pleased that Jim is taking a group of you to Calcutta later this month. I hope it helps inspire a new generation to carry on her good works. In almost every documentary about Mother Teresa, you see her going to the side of someone who is suffering terribly, often about to die. She treats them with great gentleness, squeezing their hands and whispering words of comfort. Their look of wonder tells you that these are people who may be feeling loved for the first time in their lives. As they look up at Mother Teresa, their eyes say: Here's someone who cares.

One of your classmates, Kara Shirley, knows what I'm talking about. Just 2 months ago, Kara went on a service project to Brazil where she visited an AIDS clinic. The clinic was called Hope and Life. While there, she and the other students helped clean up after the patients, administer their medicine, and just sit by their bedsides holding their hands. One of these patients was a man who weighed just about 70 pounds. When he was sent to this clinic, he had already been given his death certificate. But that only told the people at the clinic that this man needed even more love.

Here's how Kara puts it: "This man was so weak he could not even speak. But when I held his hand, he turned his head, and you could feel the gratitude. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life, and by the end of my time there, I didn't want to leave." Kara's gesture was a—seemed like a small thing to hold a man's hand. But because it was done with great

love, it helped fill a dying man's final days with dignity and grace.

I've met thousands of volunteers like Kara who serve their fellow citizens in many different ways. They put themselves in some of the harshest places in our country and in the world. Yet instead of telling me how hard they have it, they always tell me how fortunate they are.

You can know this joy in your own lives. All you need is a warm heart and a willing pair of hands. When Mother Teresa accepted her Nobel Prize, she told the story about visiting a nursing home. At first she was impressed by the home because it was attractive and well equipped. But she soon noticed that none of the residents were smiling; all were looking at the door. When she asked why everyone seemed so sad, one of the caretakers explained, "They are hurt because they are forgotten." They stared at the door in the hope that it would

open and someone who loved them would walk through it.

My challenge to you today is this: Be the person who walks through that door. Be the face that brings a smile to the hurt and forgotten. Lead lives of purpose and character, make a difference in someone else's life. And if you do, you will lead richer lives, you will build a more hopeful nation, and you'll never be disappointed.

My congratulations to you all. I ask for the Almighty God's blessings on you and your life. Thanks for letting me come and share my thoughts.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the Robert S. Carey Student Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Douglas R. Nowicki, archabbot and chancellor, and H. James Towey, president, St. Vincent College; Archbishop of Washington Donald W. Wuerl; Mary Towey, wife of H. James Towey; and Pope Benedict XVI.

## Remarks on the Observance of Military Spouse Day and Presentation of the President's Volunteer Service Awards

May 11, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Jeanine, thank you very much for kicking off with an important event here in the White House. Today we honor six outstanding Americans who represent the very best of what volunteering means, and we honor the achievements of military spouses all across the Nation. You cannot be a nation with a volunteer army unless you honor the military families, and that's what we're doing today.

I like to tell people that the strength of this Nation is not our military, although we intend to keep it strong. The strength of the Nation is the fact that we've got compassionate, decent, honorable citizens who hear a call to love a neighbor like

you'd like to be loved yourself. And that's what we're here to honor.

Each of you is part of a legacy of service that harkens back to our country's earliest days. When Martha Washington, the husband of the first George W.—[laughter]—organized sick wards for wounded soldiers and made visits to battlefields to boost the morale of the troops, she volunteered for a cause bigger than herself.

Through many conflicts, America's war fighters have counted on their spouses for love and support. Our communities have depended on your energy and your leadership. Our Nation has benefited from our—the sacrifices of our military families. Today I've asked you to come so I can thank you on behalf of all the military families



for your noble and needed service to the United States of America.

Not only am I saying it, but we've got some pretty distinguished group of folks who want to say the same thing. I will speak on their behalf—you'll be happy to hear: Secretary Bob Gates, Secretary of the Defense; Senator John Warner, Senator Craig Thomas, and Senator Mike Enzi; Congressman Chet Edwards—who happens to be President George W. Bush's Congressman from Central Texas—and Congressman Bob Filner have joined us to pay tribute to our military spouses. And I'm honored you all are here.

I also appreciate our military leadership who have joined us today. I can't think, by the way, of many times here in the East Room of the White House that the Joint Chiefs have come to pay tribute; I really can't. We have met before—we meet quite often, as a matter of fact—but never in a setting where we're paying tribute to people such as yourself.

Before I begin with our military leadership, I do want to thank Pete Geren, Acting Secretary of the Army, hopefully, permanent Secretary of the Army as soon as the Senate moves his nomination. Pete, thank you for coming.

But anyway, I do want to introduce General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife Lynne; Admiral Mike Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations, and his wife Deborah; General Jim Conway, Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, and his wife Annette; General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, and his wife Sheila. We appreciate you all coming.

I'm also proud that Mary Jo Meyers, the wife of General Richard Meyers, retired, United States Air Force, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, is with us. And I appreciate Suzy Nicholson—Suzanne Nicholson—wife of Secretary Jim Nicholson, who is the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Thank you all for joining us. You honor us with your presence.

Pretty soon, we'll hear more about the President's Volunteer Service Award recipients. But I do want to thank your families for joining us. I thank members of the Armed Forces who have joined us today. I can't think of a more noble cause than for people to volunteer to protect our country in the face of grave danger. And it is a—I marvel at how fantastic our military is. And the reason why it's good is not only because we're modern and well trained, but we've got such wonderful people who wear the uniform. And we thank you for serving, and I appreciate your families who have joined us as well.

You know better than anyone that military service is a family commitment. As one wife in this audience recently noted: Military spouses do not raise their right hands and take an oath of enlistment. Yet their service begins as soon as they say two words: "I do." [*Laughter*]

Military spouses enter into a life filled with uncommon challenges. One of the award recipients, Linda Port, has been a military spouse for nearly 21 years. Over that period, she has moved into and out of 17 different houses; she has enrolled her children in nine different school districts. I see some heads that are nodding in recognition of what that means. This kind of life makes it hard to lay down roots, which is why it's so important that military families find strength and stability in each other.

Several of the spouses we honor today have made it their mission to build those needed networks of support. Linda worked as an advocate for 1,200 sailors and their spouses, so they could stay in contact during deployments. Michele Langford runs an association that works to unite Coast Guard spouses in her community. Cindy Bjerke cochairs the Patriot Family Readiness Group, which provides information and resources to approximately 500 military families. These initiatives are making a difference. They are improving lives. And we're all here to thank you for the care



and commitment you have shown for others.

Many military spouses have the added difficulty of spending long periods raising their children alone. Being a parent is hard work under any circumstances; just ask my mother. *[Laughter]* Yet military spouses tend to have to go an extra mile. They raise their own families, and they find ways to help others as well. Michael Winton has been the primary caregiver for his daughter while his wife serves in the Air Force. Yet he also found time to coach sports teams, work with Habitat for Humanity and Fisher Nightingale Houses, visit veteran centers, and volunteer for a program that helps kids develop a love of reading.

Denise Rampolla is another example of the kind of person that we're honoring today. She appears to have worked with every civic organization in Cheyenne, Wyoming. *[Laughter]* Listen to the list: the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, the Cheyenne Parks and Recreation Community, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, the Laramie County Emergency Response Team, and Cub Scout Pack 112. *[Laughter]* She's what we like to call a hard charger; she gets things done. Maybe we could use a little more of you in Washington. *[Laughter]*

Other military spouses have tackled personal adversity and used their experience to help others. Shannon Maxwell took on the role of caregiver when her husband Tim returned from Iraq with a severe head injury. Shannon took what she learned, got together with other military wives, and formed a support group to help our wounded warriors. They've raised over \$400,000 to help injured servicemembers adjust to new lives and new challenges. And we thank you for what you're doing, Shannon. And we also appreciate Tim for his service in Iraq, glad you're here.

This is just a sampling of the good and important work performed every day by military spouses all across the country. I want you all to know that your work is

noticed, your work is appreciated, and your work inspires our country.

Some of my most moving experiences as President have come during my visits with military families. Laura and I have had the privilege of meeting troops and their loved ones at bases all across the world. We've sat beside the bedsides of those who have been wounded in battle. We've met with wives and husbands who have received a folded flag. We have hugged the parents of soldiers lost in combat. In these meetings, I have found that what motivates our servicemembers most is their love for their families. Oh, they love our country, but they really love their families. You're in their prayers every morning, their thoughts every day, and their dreams every night.

Some time ago, a naval aviator about to deploy to war wrote a letter to his fiancée. This letter may remind you of some of the letters you've received. His words back then were these: "For a long time I had anxiously looked forward to the day when we would go abroad and set to sea, but you have changed all that. I do want to go because it is my part, but now leaving presents itself not as an adventure but as a job."

That letter was mailed more than 60 years ago, addressed to my mother from my father. Millions of similar letters have been written since that war. And most of you likely have one that is special to you that you keep close to your heart.

I know that nothing can compensate for the sacrifices you endure while your spouse is away. And so do a lot of people in Washington understand that. But you also got to know that our entire country stands with you, we love you, and we respect you. America has seen and survived many wars over many generations. What has remained constant is the love we have for each other, the nobility of duty, and the strength that our men and women in uniform find in their heroes who serve here at home.

And so we honor you today, whether you're in this room or around the United

States of America. We thank you for your sacrifices. We thank you for supporting the Armed Forces. And we ask for God's blessings on you and your family.

And now I ask Lieutenant Colonel Floyd to please read the citations.

*[At this point, Lt. Col. Samuel Floyd, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the awards.]*

Thank you all for coming. I wish Laura were here to have been able to greet you. She would be just as impressed as I am today by the wonderful stories and the

great compassion of our recipients who, I know if they had to give a speech, would say they just—they're just doing what they love to do, and they represent thousands who are doing the same thing.

We're honored that you've joined us. May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jeanine McDermott, wife of Capt. Michael McDermott, USA. The Military Spouse Day proclamation of May 9 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Commencement Ceremonies at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia *May 11, 2007*

Today and tomorrow students of Virginia Tech will rise to receive the diplomas they have earned through years of hard work. They can be proud of their academic accomplishments and excited about the opportunities their degrees have opened up for them.

Laura and I salute the Virginia Tech class of 2007. We also remember the students and teachers whose lives were taken last month. They will always hold a special place in the hearts of this graduating class and an entire nation.

Over the past month, our country has witnessed the compassion and resilient spirit of the community at Virginia Tech. That spirit is on display this weekend in Blacksburg, where thousands of friends and family members have gathered to celebrate commencement and pray for this remarkable school. Our Nation joins them in prayer. And on this special occasion, Laura and I send our love and heartfelt wishes to the entire Hokie family.

## The President's Radio Address *May 12, 2007*

Good morning. Next week, the Senate will take up an important priority for our Nation: comprehensive immigration reform.

Over the past few weeks, leaders from both parties have met at the White House and on Capitol Hill to find areas of agree-

ment and iron out our differences. These meetings have been productive. We've been addressing our differences in good faith, and we're building consensus. Both Republicans and Democrats understand

that successful immigration reform must be bipartisan.

Democrats and Republicans agree that our current immigration system is in need of reform. We agree that we need a system where our laws are respected. We agree that we need a system that meets the legitimate needs of workers and employers. And we agree that we need a system that treats people with dignity and helps newcomers assimilate into our society.

We must address all elements of this problem together, or none of them will be solved at all. We must not repeat the mistakes that caused previous efforts at immigration reform to fail. So I support a comprehensive immigration reform bill that accomplishes five clear objectives.

First, America must continue our efforts to improve security at our borders. Second, we must hold employers to account for the workers they hire by providing better tools for them to verify documents and work eligibility. Third, we must create a temporary-worker program that takes pressure off the border by providing foreign workers a legal and orderly way to enter our country to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. Fourth, we must resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already, without amnesty and without animosity. Finally, we must honor the great American tradition of the melting pot.

Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, and an ability to speak and write the English language. And the success of our country depends upon helping newcomers assimilate into our society and embrace our common identity as Americans.

Coming together on a good bill that includes all five elements, we will make America more secure, we will make our economy more competitive, and we will show the world that America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time.

Reforming our immigration system is an important opportunity to show that elected officials in Washington can work together to find practical solutions to the problems that matter most. I thank the Senators who have been working hard on this issue. I am optimistic we can pass a comprehensive immigration bill and get this problem solved for the American people this year.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 11 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 11, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at America's 400th Anniversary Celebration in Williamsburg, Virginia

May 13, 2007

Thank you all. Thank you, Justice O'Connor. Laura and I are really happy to join you today. This State is known as the Mother of Presidents, which reminds me, I needed to call my mother today. [*Laughter*] I wish all mothers around our country a happy Mother's Day. And if you haven't

called your mother, you better start dialing here after this ceremony.

We're honored to be in Jamestown on this historic day. We appreciate the opportunity to tour the beautiful grounds here. I would urge our fellow citizens to come here to see the fantastic history that's on

display. I think you'll be amazed at how our country got started. And I want to thank all the good folks, who are working to preserve the past, for your hard work. And I appreciate the fact that you spent a lot of time educating our fellow citizens.

Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in America; it predated the Mayflower Compact by 13 years. This is a very proud State, and some people down here like to point out that the pilgrims ended up at Plymouth Rock by mistake. [Laughter] They were looking for Virginia—[laughter]—they just missed the sign. [Laughter]

As we celebrate the 400th anniversary of Jamestown to honor the beginnings of our democracy, it is a chance to renew our commitment to help others around the world realize the great blessings of liberty. And so Laura and I are proud to join you. Justice, it's good to see you. There's no finer American than Sandra Day O'Connor, and I'm proud to share the podium with her.

We're also proud to be with Governor Tim Kaine and Anne Holton. I'm proud to call them friends, and I hope, Ms. Kaine, that the Governor recognized Mother's Day. Glad you're here. I want to thank Secretary Dirk Kempthorne of the Department of the Interior, Michael Griffin, the Administrator of NASA, Members of the United States Congress, members of the statehouse, including the Lieutenant Governor. I appreciate the attorney general being here. I thank the speaker for joining us. Most of all, thank you for coming.

I thank the members of the Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission. Those are all the good folks who worked hard to get this celebration in order. I appreciate the members of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. Laura and I saw members of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities digging in dirt. [Laughter] It just so happened we wandered up, and they found some artifacts. [Laughter] I appreciate

members of the Jamestown 2007 Steering Committee.

The story of Jamestown will always have a special place in American history. It's the story of a great migration from the Old World to the New. It is a story of hardship overcome by resolve. It's a story of the Tidewater settlement that laid the foundation of our great democracy.

That story began on a dock near London in December of 1606. More than 100 English colonists set sail for a new life across the ocean in Virginia. They had dreams of paradise that were sustained during their long months at sea by their strong spirit. And then they got here, and a far different reality awaited them.

On May 13, 1607, 400 years today, they docked their ships on a marshy riverbank. Being loyal subjects, they named the site after their King, and that's how Jamestown was born. Today we celebrate that moment as a great milestone in our history, yet the colonists who experienced those first years had little reason to celebrate.

Their search for gold soon gave way to a desperate search for food. An uneasy peace with the Native Americans broke into open hostilities. The hope for a better life turned into a longing for the comforts of home. One settler wrote: "There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in the new discovered Virginia."

Looking back, 400 years later, it is easy to forget how close Jamestown came to failure. The low point came after the terrible winter of 1610. The survivors boarded their ships. They were prepared to abandon the settlement, and only the last-minute arrival of new settlers and new provisions saved Jamestown. Back in London, one court official summed up the situation this way: "This is an unlucky beginning. I pray God the end may prove happier."

Well, the prayers were answered; Jamestown survived. It became a testament to the power of perseverance and determination. Despite many dangers, more ships full

of new settlers continued to set out for Jamestown. As the colony grew, the settlers ventured beyond the walls of their three-sided fort and formed a thriving community. Their industry and hard work transformed Jamestown from a distant English outpost into an important center for trade.

And during those early years, the colonists also planted the seeds of American democracy, at a time when democratic institutions were rare. On their first night at Jamestown, six of the leading colonists held the first presidential election in American history. And you might be surprised to know that the winner was not named George—[laughter]—a matter of fact, his name was Edward Wingfield. I call him “Eddie W.” [Laughter]

From these humble beginnings, the pillars of a free society began to take hold. Private property rights encouraged ownership and free enterprise. The rule of law helped secure the rights of individuals. The creation of America’s first representative assembly ensured the consent of the people and gave Virginians a voice in their government. It was said at the time that the purpose of these reforms was, quote, “to lay a foundation whereon a flourishing State might, in time, by the blessing of Almighty God, be raised.”

Not all people shared in these blessings. The expansion of Jamestown came at a terrible cost to the native tribes of the region, who lost their lands and their way of life. And for many Africans, the journey to Virginia represented the beginnings of a life of hard labor and bondage. Their story is a part of the story of Jamestown. It reminds us that the work of American democracy is to constantly renew and to extend the blessings of liberty.

That work has continued throughout our history. In the 18th century, our Founding Fathers declared our independence and dedicated America to the principle that all men are created equal. In the 19th century, our Nation fought a terrible civil war over the meaning of those famous words and

renewed our founding promise. In the 20th century, Americans defended our democratic ideals against totalitarian ideologies abroad, while working to ensure we lived up to our ideals here at home. As we begin the 21st century, we look back on our history with pride and rededicate ourselves to the cause of liberty.

Today, democratic institutions are taking root in places where liberty was unimaginable not long ago. At the start of the 1980s, there were only 45 democracies on Earth. There are now more than 120 democracies, and more people now live in freedom than ever before.

America is proud to promote the expansion of democracy, and we must continue to stand with all those struggling to claim their freedom. The advance of freedom is the great story of our time, and new chapters are being written every day, from Georgia and Ukraine, to Kyrgyzstan and Lebanon, to Afghanistan and Iraq. From our own history, we know the path to democracy is long, and it’s hard. There are many challenges, and there are setbacks along the way. Yet, we can have confidence in the outcome because we’ve seen freedom’s power to transform societies before.

In World War II, we fought Germany on battlefields across Europe, and, today, a democratic Germany is one of our strongest partners on the Continent. And in the Pacific, we fought a bloody war with Japan, and now our alliance with a democratic Japan is the linchpin for freedom and security in the Far East. These democracies have taken different forms that reflect different cultures and traditions. But our friendship with them reminds us that liberty is the path to lasting peace and that democracies are natural allies for the United States.

Today, we have no closer ally than the nation we once fought for our own independence. Britain and America are united by our democratic heritage and by the history that began at this settlement 400 years ago. Last month, some of the greatest legal



minds in Britain and America, including Justice O'Connor and Chief Justice John Roberts, came to Jamestown to lay a plaque commemorating our shared respect for the rule of law and our deeply held belief in individual liberty.

Over the years, these values have defined our two countries. Yet they are more than just American values and British values or Western values; they are universal values that come from a power greater than any man or any country. These values took root at Jamestown four centuries ago. They have

flourished across our land, and, one day, they will flourish in every land.

May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. at Anniversary Park. In his remarks, he referred to former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia, his wife Anne Holton, and his mother Kathy Kaine; Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling and State Attorney General Robert F. McDonnell of Virginia; and William J. Howell, speaker, Virginia House of Delegates.

## Remarks on Fuel Economy and Alternative Fuel Standards *May 14, 2007*

Thank you all for coming. Good afternoon. I just finished a meeting with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretaries of Transportation and Agriculture, and the Deputy Secretary of Energy. Thank you all for being here.

We discussed one of the most serious challenges facing our country: our Nation's addiction to oil and its harmful impact on our environment. The problem is particularly acute in the transportation sector. Oil is the primary component of gasoline and diesel, and cars and trucks that run on these fuels emit air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Our dependence on oil creates a risk for our economy, because a supply disruption anywhere in the world could drive up American gas prices to even more painful levels. Our dependence on oil creates a threat to America's national security, because it leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes and to terrorists who could attack oil infrastructure.

For all these reasons, America has a clear national interest in reducing our dependence on oil. Over the past 6 years, my

administration has provided more than \$12 billion for research into alternative sources of energy. And I'd like to thank the Congress for its cooperation in appropriating these monies. We now have reached a pivotal moment where advances in technology are creating new ways to improve energy security, strengthen national security, and protect the environment.

To help achieve all these priorities, I set an ambitious goal in my State of the Union: to cut America's gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. I call this goal 20-in-10, and I have said—sent to Congress a proposal that would meet it in two steps. First, this proposal will set a mandatory fuel standard that requires 35 billion gallons of renewable and other alternative fuels by 2017. That's nearly five times the current target. Second, the proposal would continue our efforts to increase fuel efficiency. My administration has twice increased fuel economy standards for light trucks. Together, these reforms would save billions of gallons of fuel and reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, without compromising jobs or safety.

My proposal at the State of the Union will further improve standards for light trucks and take a similar approach to automobiles. With good legislation, we could save up to 8.5 billion gallons of gasoline per year by 2017 and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks.

Last month, the Supreme Court ruled that the EPA must take action under the Clean Air Act regarding greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. So, today I'm directing the EPA and the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Agriculture to take the first steps toward regulations that would cut gasoline consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, using my 20-in-10 plan as a starting point.

Developing these regulations will require coordination across many different areas of expertise. Today I signed an Executive order directing all our Agencies represented here today to work together on this proposal. I've also asked them to listen to public input, to carefully consider safety, science, and available technologies, and evaluate the benefits and costs before they put forth the new regulation.

This is a complicated legal and technical matter, and it's going to take time to fully

resolve. Yet it is important to move forward, so I have directed members of my administration to complete the process by the end of 2008. The steps I announced today are not a substitute for effective legislation. So my—members of my Cabinet, as they begin the process toward new regulations, will work with the White House, to work with Congress, to pass the 20-in-10 bill.

When it comes to energy and the environment, the American people expect common sense and they expect action. The policies I've laid out have got a lot of common sense to them. It makes sense to do what I proposed, and we're taking action, by taking the first steps toward rules that will make our economy stronger, our environment cleaner, and our Nation more secure for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Executive order of May 14 titled Cooperation Among Agencies in Protecting the Environment With Respect to Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Motor Vehicles, Nonroad Vehicles, and Nonroad Engines is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden

May 15, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

We have just had a wide-ranging, significant dialog. We talked about a lot of areas of interest. Two areas that I think really will have a profound effect on our respective countries, as well as on the world, are the issues of climate change and trade.

Let me start with trade. The Prime Minister is very interested in the Doha round; he's interested in U.S. strategies to achieve

success in the Doha round. I assured him that we're committed to achieving a world that trades more freely, that we recognize we have obligations to do—to deal with our agricultural subsidies in order to move the Doha round forward, that Sue Schwab is committed to working with our European counterparts as well as President Lula of Brazil, Prime Minister Singh of India, two countries that represent others involved in the Doha round. And we believe that it's

possible, very possible, that we'll be successful. And so we're moving forward optimistically on this issue.

Secondly, we talked about climate change. The Prime Minister is concerned about greenhouse gases. I share your concerns about this issue. We talked about how, on the one hand, we can work together. As I understand, we're signing some agreements that have—that move forward alternative energy proposals. I assured the Prime Minister that here at home, that I'm concerned about the environmental issues as well as the national security implication for being too dependent on oil.

I shared with him my optimism about reducing U.S. gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years by promoting alternative fuels. I talked to him about our desire to work with Europe and China and India and Japan and Australia and other countries about an international framework that will meet the following objectives: One, economic vitality and growth; two, the advance of new technologies; and, third, obviously, the effects that will have on reducing greenhouse gases.

The Prime Minister made this a center point of our conversation, and I fully appreciate

and understand why. I appreciate the leadership you've taken on this important issue, not only in your country but at the EU as well. It's been noticeable to me here in the United States, and I congratulate you for being a strong leader that you are.

All in all, we've had a wonderful discussion. And I welcome you here to the Oval Office.

*Prime Minister Reinhardt.* Thank you very much. It's been great. Thank you.

Well, I should also say that I pointed out the importance of President Bush's leadership on the Doha round. There are too few in the world fighting for free trade, so we need the President in that. And I hope that we could, during a very short span, bring this to an end.

And I was so grateful for the comments and leadership on the climate issue. It will be debated many years to come. So, thank you very much for that.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir; appreciate you coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Remarks at the National Peace Officers Memorial Service May 15, 2007

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you, Chuck. I have been here ever since I've been the President, in an event like this, and it's fitting because this is a really important day for our country. It's a day we remember men and women who fell in the line of duty. Each swore an oath to uphold the law. Each assumed the responsibility of protecting neighbors and communities. Each has earned a place in our Nation's heart. We thank them for their lives of service, and

we pray to an Almighty God that He bring comfort to you during this time of sorrow.

I appreciate Chuck Canterbury, president of the Fraternal Order of Police. I thank the members of my Cabinet who have joined us today. I appreciate so very much Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi for being here today. I thank Senator Leahy, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Minority Leader John Boehner, and all the Members of Congress who have joined us. I thank Aliza Clark, Jim Pasco. Father Vyatas, thank you for your prayers. Appreciate Patrick

Nigh, who sang the national anthem; Lee Greenwood, friend of law enforcement.

I thank the police officers who are here. I am honored to be in your presence. I'm constantly amazed by your courage. I thank you for serving the United States of America.

To the moms and dads, husbands and wives, and sons and daughters who have got a hole in your heart today: I bring a collective hug from the people of the United States of America.

It takes a special kind of person to serve in law enforcement. Most people run from danger; law enforcement runs toward it. You've chosen one of the toughest jobs in the world, and I suspect during times of dangerous duty or lonely patrols, it might seem like the only person you can depend upon is each other. A day like today, I hope, not only helps our families but helps those who serve remember that a larger community here in this country stands with you, that we're grateful for your service.

We saw this gratitude last year in Montgomery, Alabama, as thousands of citizens mourned a young officer named Keith Houts. Keith was shot during a routine traffic stop. He held on 2 days before succumbing. He was 30 years old. As expected, police officers from Alabama came to mourn him. That's what happens when a fellow officer dies in the line of service; the officers show up, but so did citizens he never met. Thousands and thousands of citizens came to honor this good man. An overflow crowd attended the funeral; every church pew was filled. Mourners stood. An anonymous citizen paid lodging expenses for members of Keith's family so they could make it to the service. The community embraced Keith's young widow, Ashley, who's here. She had been a wife just for 15 months. Ashley said this of her late husband: "I know what he meant to me, but it is important to know what he meant to everyone else."

We've seen similar outpourings of support in other places. Last year, in Fairfax

County, Virginia, thousands of strangers lined city streets to bid farewell to two officers, Vicky Armel and Michael Garbarino. They were shot while doing their duty. Those who gathered along one of the funeral routes included all kinds of people, total strangers paying homage: a grocery store cashier, a fellow from Belgium was there, a local resident who told a reporter she wanted to thank the police who, as she put it, "worry so we don't have to."

We saw a similar scene in Colorado Springs after the murder of Kenneth Jordan. Cars stopped along the interstate as drivers watched the funeral procession from railings and bridges. Children were waving flags in honor of a good man. One man brought his sons to pay tribute to an officer who he said "gave up his life up for us." Another held up a sign that said: "God bless you and keep you safe. Thanks so much."

That sign sums up the feeling of millions of our fellow citizens: God bless you, and thanks so much. Laura and I feel the same way. You know, we shared the grief of the family of Steve Favela, who is a Honolulu police officer who died last year from injuries he suffered during a motorcade that was protecting us. His death is a reminder of the daily risks that each officer assumes.

I don't know if you realize this, but police officers are routinely named among America's most respected profession. And that's why strangers mourn for the loss of life and honor those who serve. That's why so many children choose you as role models.

With us today are young children who've lost their moms and dads in the line of duty. It's got to be awfully hard. The pain is fresh, and they feel that every time they come home, looking for a mom or dad they love. It's hard to understand the loss you've suffered, but hopefully, today you leave with the sense that there are all kinds of people praying for you and honoring

your dad or mom; millions Americans grieve.

When—I hope—you're older, you'll come to this ceremony again and find some comfort here. Perhaps you'll bring your own children and share your memories of your parents and the pride in what they did. You can tell them your parents were great because of what they risked. You can tell them they served a cause greater than themselves.

We're proud of all our Nation's fallen police officers. We're sorry you're here, but now that you are, we care about you a lot, and we love you. We're grateful for what they have given us.

May God bless you all. May God bless those who wear the uniforms of the United

States of America. And may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 p.m. on the West Grounds at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Aliza Clark, executive board president, Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary; James O. Pasco, Jr., executive director, Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center; Father Vytas Memenas, State chaplain, Illinois State Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police; Officer Patrick Nigh, St. Louis County Police Department; and entertainer Lee Greenwood. The Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week proclamation of May 11 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Advancement of United States Maritime Interests *May 15, 2007*

I am acting to advance U.S. interests in the world's oceans in two important ways.

First, I urge the Senate to act favorably on U.S. accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea during this session of Congress. Joining will serve the national security interests of the United States, including the maritime mobility of our Armed Forces worldwide. It will secure U.S. sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, including the valuable natural resources they contain. Accession will promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the oceans. And it will give the United States a seat at the table when the rights that are vital to our interests are debated and interpreted.

Second, I have instructed the U.S. delegation to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to submit a proposal for international measures that would enhance

protection of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the area including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Last June, I issued a proclamation establishing the monument, a 1,200-mile stretch of coral islands, seamounts, banks, and shoals that are home to some 7,000 marine species. The United States will propose that the IMO designate the entire area as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)—similar to areas such as the Florida Keys, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Galapagos Archipelago—which will alert mariners to exercise caution in the ecologically important, sensitive, and hazardous area they are entering. This proposal, like the Convention on the Law of the Sea, will help protect the maritime environment while preserving the navigational freedoms essential to the security and economy of every nation.



Statement on the Appointment of Lieutenant General Douglas Lute as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan

*May 15, 2007*

I have chosen Lieutenant General Douglas Lute to serve as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan. General Lute is a tremendously accomplished military leader who understands war and government and knows how to get things done. While serving at Central Command, General Lute played an integral role in implementing combat operation plans in Iraq and Afghanistan, and gained a critical understanding of the challenges we face in the global war on terror. He has already earned the respect and trust of the officials with whom he will be working in his new role.

In his new position, General Lute will be the full-time manager for the implementation and execution of our strategies for Iraq and Afghanistan and will manage the

interagency policy development process for these two theaters, working closely with my National Security Adviser, Steve Hadley, members of my Cabinet, and me. Nothing is more important than getting Admiral Fallon, General Petraeus, American commanders in Afghanistan, and Ambassadors Crocker and Wood what they need, and Douglas Lute can make sure that happens quickly and reliably.

NOTE: The statement referred to Adm. William J. "Fox" Fallon, USN, commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William B. Wood.

Statement on the Death of Jerry L. Falwell, Sr.

*May 15, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Jerry Falwell, a man who cherished faith, family, and freedom. As the founder of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, Jerry lived a life of faith and called upon men and women of all backgrounds to believe in God and serve their communities. One of his lasting contributions was the establishment of Lib-

erty University, where he taught young people to remain true to their convictions and rely upon God's word throughout each stage of their lives.

Today our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Macel and the rest of the Falwell family.

## Message to the Congress Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China

May 15, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105-261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China:

- A four-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for Chi-

na's water purification and treatment industries;

- A computer control system upgrade to a three-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for China's water purification and treatment industries;
- An isostatic press for manufacturing automotive spare parts; and
- A four-axis filament winding machine to be used in production of graphite or glass composite golf clubs.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 15, 2007.

## Remarks Following a Discussion on the Employment Eligibility Verification System

May 16, 2007

I appreciate the discussion we just had on immigration. With us are people who are employers, people who provide work for citizens who are in our country legally. They know full well it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally. They need help from the Government to make sure the person they hire is here legally, that they're not dealing with forged documents.

And so we've been reviewing the upgrading of the Basic Pilot program, which is the Government's attempt to help small-business owners and larger business owners make sure that the people they're finding work for are not breaking the law. In other words, we can't ask our employers to verify somebody here unless we help them. And the reason why we're talking about this subject is that holding employers to account

for violating the law is an integral part of a comprehensive immigration reform package.

I thank members of my Cabinet, Secretaries Gutierrez and Chertoff, for taking the White House lead in working with Members of the United States Senate to get a comprehensive immigration bill to the floor as quickly as possible, that can pass the Senate. And it's been hard work. This is a very emotional issue. I firmly believe that the bill needs to be comprehensive. In other words, you can't have one aspect of immigration reform pass and not other aspects; otherwise, we'll be back to where we were in the past, and that is, reform efforts have failed because it hadn't been comprehensive enough.

The best way and frankly only way to get a comprehensive bill done that will

matter and deal with this issue once and for all is for the bipartisan approach that we're now working on come to fruition, that it's got to be a bipartisan bill that is—is that bill our Secretaries are working on with members from both parties in the Senate. Hopefully, that bill can get to the floor as quickly as possible, and, hopefully, we can get a positive vote so we can get the bill over to the House of Representatives.

But there is a good chance. I'm optimistic that we can get comprehensive immigration reform: one, that enforces our borders; two, holds employers to account; three, recognizes we've got workers here who are doing jobs Americans aren't doing, and they ought to have a—there ought to be a temporary-worker permit to do so; four, to make sure that we treat people who are here already with respect and dignity, without amnesty, without animosity; and, five, to continue the assimilation pro-

gram, so necessary to make sure our country continues to move forward in an optimistic way.

And so I want to thank you all for sharing with me your stories. I appreciate the fact that you're deeply concerned about upholding the law. I thank you for sharing with me your desires to see that Congress get a comprehensive immigration bill done soon. And I assure you that the White House, along with decent, honorable Members of the Senate, are working very hard to bring that bill to conclusion.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at the Embassy Suites Washington D.C.-Convention Center. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

May 17, 2007

*President Bush.* Thank you. I'm pleased to welcome Tony Blair back to the White House. He is a good friend. He has led the British people for a long time, since 1797. [*Laughter*]

You know, I was sitting with Tony on the Truman Balcony last night, and we were discussing a lot of issues. And it dawned on me, once again, what a clear strategic thinker he is. Somebody asked me the other day, how would you define Tony Blair and your relationship with him? I said, first of all, it's cordial; it's open; and I appreciate the fact that he can see beyond the horizon. And that's the kind of leadership the world needs.

I do congratulate the Prime Minister for being a—when he gets on a subject, it's

dogged. Witness his patience and resolve regarding Northern Ireland. And congratulations for your leadership.

We talked about a lot of issues at dinner and our meetings. We talked about, of course, Iraq. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister and I have just finished a video conference with our respective commanders and Ambassadors from Baghdad. We got a full briefing on the situation on the ground. I appreciated Tony's willingness to interface with our people there. I remind our people that the best decisions are made when you listen to the commanders. And our commanders have got good, specific advice as how to achieve our objectives—which I believe we'll achieve—objectives that I know are necessary for

peace, peace in the Middle East, peace in the United States and the United Kingdom.

We talked about Afghanistan. We strongly support our NATO mission in Afghanistan, and I informed the Prime Minister that the Secretary General of NATO will be coming to Crawford this weekend. I'm looking forward to talking to him about how we can continue to work together. And I want to thank you for your strong commitment to the NATO mission and the people of Afghanistan.

We talked about the Middle East, and we're concerned about the violence we see in Gaza. We strongly urge the parties to work toward a two-state solution. I'm looking forward to continue to work on this issue. I've instructed my Secretary of State to be actively engaged. She represents the position of the Bush Government, which is two states living side by side in peace. We believe that vision is possible, but it requires strong leadership on both sides of the issue.

The Prime Minister and I discussed the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. We recognized the deep humiliation that can come as a result of living in a land where you can't move freely and where people can't realize dreams. We talked about the need to reject and fight terrorism. We understand the fright that can come when you're worried about a rocket landing on top of your home. I'm committed to peace in the Middle East, and I appreciate Tony Blair being a partner in peace.

We talked about Iran. We fully recognize that the Iranians must not have a nuclear weapon. And therefore, it's important for us to continue to work in the international arena to speak with one voice. And if we're unable to make progress with the Iranians, we want to work together to implement new sanctions through the United Nations to continue to make it clear that Iran with a nuclear weapon is not in the interests of peace in the world.

We talked about, of course, Africa. We spent a lot of time talking about Africa. I told the Prime Minister that the AIDS initiative that got started under my administration will continue, that I'll work with Congress to make sure that the PEPFAR initiative that has been so effective at getting antiretroviral drugs to people on that continent will continue. It's an important initiative of ours.

I applaud the Prime Minister's education initiative on the continent of Africa. It's a bold stroke. And we look forward to working with you on that initiative.

We talked about Darfur and how frustrated I am—and I know the Prime Minister is frustrated—at the inability for the international community to react with consequence in Darfur. And I explained to him my strategy of moving forward with sanctions and, hopefully, a new, stronger United Nations resolution if we don't see some improvement in the lives of the people there.

And we talked, of course, about climate change. We spent a lot of time on climate change. And I agree with the Prime Minister, as I have stated publicly: This is a serious issue, and the United States takes it seriously, just like we take energy security seriously. We talked about the upcoming G-8, and I assured the Prime Minister we want to be a part of a solution, that we want to work constructively together. He's got some really good ideas on how to advance the technologies that are going to be necessary to help solve this problem. And I told him I've got some good ideas as how to convince China and India to be a part of a global solution. We have a lot of common ground that we've been discussing today.

Finally, we agreed to improve defense cooperation by working towards an agreement reducing barriers to trade in defense goods and services and information between the United States and the United Kingdom, including defense industries. This

is an important issue for the Prime Minister; it's an important issue to me. I made it clear to the Prime Minister we will work on this issue tirelessly until we can get it solved.

It's been a joy having you back here. I appreciate—every time I'm with you, I appreciate very much the insight you provide. And here, I guess, for the final time as Prime Minister, you get to address the good folks in our country from the Rose Garden.

*Prime Minister Blair.* Well, thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, as ever, for the kindness and graciousness of your welcome to me here at the White House. And thank you also for the strength of your leadership over the past few years. You have been a strong leader at a time when the world needed strong leadership. You've been unyielding and unflinching and determined in the fight that we face together. And I thank you for that.

And I also would take this opportunity of saying that I believe that the relationship between the United States of America and Britain is a relationship that is in the interests of our two countries and in the interests of the peace and stability of the wider world. And sometimes it's a controversial relationship, at least over in my country, but I've never doubted its importance. I've never doubted that it's based on principle, on shared values, and on a shared purpose, which is to make our world a better, more free, more just place in which people of all nations and all faiths can live. So, I would like to thank you for the strength, also, of that relationship over these past few years.

The President has, rightly and comprehensively, gone through the various issues that we discussed. And I would like to pick out from those, first of all, the discussion we were able to have with our Ambassadors and commanders in respect of Iraq, where there's no doubt at all it's immensely challenging, immensely difficult. But also, there is a huge amount that is

being done, not just to improve the security there, which is important, but also in respect to the politics where, as they were telling us, there are the majority elements in each of the main communities, whether Sunni or Shi'a or Kurd, who actually want to live in peace with one another and want a future for that country that is not marred by terrorism and sectarianism. And we, of course, want to see that happen in the interests of that country and the interests of the stability of the wider region and the world.

Again, in respect of Afghanistan, where American troops and, of course, British troops, down in the Helmand Province, are doing an extraordinary job—a heroic job, actually—and I think we can be so proud of the Armed Forces of both countries and what they're doing in the world today. The situation is fraught with danger, which they take on with immense courage and immense determination.

And down in the south of Afghanistan at the moment, there are operations the whole time against the Taliban, in favor of, again, what the Afghan people want, which is the chance to have a better future and escape from the poverty and misery and oppression of the Taliban years.

We discussed, of course, the Middle East and the very dangerous, difficult situation there, and our belief, again, that the important thing is how we make progress towards the two-state solution, which is the only solution in the end that will offer a realistic prospect of progress in that region.

And of course, also, we talked about the upcoming G-8, where there's going to be important negotiations over the issue of climate change and over the issue of Africa. I mean, in respect of climate change, I welcome very much what the President has said today. I mean, the important thing is that we see if it is possible for people to come together on an agreement for the future that will allow us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that will allow us to have a way forward that involves not just



Europe and the United States of America but China and India and the rest of the developing world also. And that also addresses what is an issue of top, top priority now in Europe but also, I know, here, which is energy security.

So, there are two reasons why this issue is on the agenda in a way that is perhaps more acute than ever before. There is the issue of the environment; there's the issue of energy security. And I think there's a synergy between those two issues and the way they come together, which offer some prospect of hope for the future.

And in respect of Africa, as you will know, at the Gleneagles summit a couple of years ago, we made Africa, if you like, the center piece of the summit. I think it's important that we recommit to the undertakings we gave there to help people in Africa and that we do not lose sight of that as a major—in some senses, the major moral course of our time, which is to lift people out of poverty on that troubled continent. And I totally agree with what the President was saying. We have the same position exactly on Darfur and the need to take action there.

And finally, can I thank the President for what he has said on the issue to do with defense and trade between our two countries. This is an issue that seems technical but actually is a very important way of trumpeting the understanding, the work that we're doing together on the issue of defense and technology between our two countries.

And so let me end where I began, which is the importance of the relationship between the United States and Britain. I mean, whether it's in respect of fighting terrorism, the big issues to do with energy and climate change, the cause that is Africa, the agreements between our two countries in respect of defense: our two nations should always work together. It's served us well in the past. But it's not a relationship that's founded on history, it's a relationship that is about a shared future.

Thank you.

*President Bush.* So as a parting gift to the Prime Minister, we'll take some questions. [Laughter]

Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

*United Kingdom-U.S. Relations/Emergency Supplemental Appropriations*

*Q.* Thank you. Mr. Prime Minister, will Britain in the coming months and years be as staunch an ally in Iraq for the United States as it has been under your leadership?

And, Mr. President, will you sign a war spending bill that has consequences for the Iraqi Government if it fails to meet benchmarks for progress?

*Prime Minister Blair.* The answer to your question is yes, I believe that we will remain a staunch and steadfast ally in the fight against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Let me just explain one thing that came out very powerfully from the discussion we had with our commanders this morning. Essentially, what we have in Iraq at the moment is a situation where there is a renewed attempt to find political reconciliation, between Sunni and Shi'a, particularly. And I believe there are signs, real and genuine signs of progress there.

But what you are seeing in Iraq is an attempt by Al Qaida—through these appalling suicide bombs and, also, particularly down in the south, through the improvised explosive devices by Iranian-backed elements—to try to disturb any prospect of Sunni and Shi'a coming together and delivering what the people of Iraq want to see.

And the only point that I would make is this, and this is the reason why it's important that Britain holds steadfast to the course of fighting, alongside America in this battle against terrorism: The forces that we are fighting in Iraq—Al Qaida on the one hand, Iranian-backed elements on the other—are the same forces we're fighting everywhere. And over these past few weeks, you can see in different parts of the world—Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan, in Saudi

Arabia recently—where this extremism is rearing its head, is trying to dislodge the prospects of stability and progress in so many different countries. There is no alternative for us but to fight it wherever it exists. And that is true whether it's in our own countries, which have both suffered from terrorism, or in Iraq or Afghanistan.

And so this is not a—it's not about us remaining true to the course that we've set out because of the alliance with America. It is about us remaining steadfast because what we are fighting, the enemy we are fighting, is an enemy that is aiming its destruction at our way of life and anybody who wants that way of life. And in those circumstances, the harder they fight, the more determined we must be to fight back.

If what happens is, the harder they fight, the more our will diminishes, then that's a fight we're going to lose. And this is a fight we can't afford to lose.

*President Bush.* I've instructed Josh to stay in touch with leaders—Josh Bolten, Chief of Staff, stay in touch with leaders—both Democrat and Republican, about moving a supplemental as quickly as possible. First, I applaud what Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi said, that time is of the essence; we've got to get the bill done, and if need be—I think they said—they would keep Members here to get the troops funded.

Secondly, I appreciate you trying to get me to negotiate here on the platform. Josh has been told that; we understand benchmarks are important. I talked specifically about benchmarks, and he'll work with Members of Congress to come up with a supplemental that we—both sides can live with. And I'm confident we can get the job done.

And there's been a series of votes in Congress that people have been able to express their opinion. Now it's time to put forth a spending bill that doesn't have artificial timetables for withdrawal, doesn't micromanage the military, and is wise about

how we spend the people's money. And we'll work it hard, and I think we can get a deal.

*Q. [Inaudible]—question?*

*President Bush.* As I said, you're trying to get me to negotiate. Our negotiator is Josh. And we fully understand the need to have benchmarks in a bill. I accept, respect the Members' desire to have benchmarks—after all, I'm the person who laid them out initially. We will work through something we can all live with and enable us to get the job done.

And again, I—this is an issue that has been very emotional here in Washington. People have got strong opinions. I do appreciate the leadership of the Speaker and the leader in saying, okay, now let's work together and get it solved. Optimistic we can do so.

*Finance Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom/Prime Minister Blair*

*Q.* Adam Boulton, Sky News. During the course of this visit, it has been confirmed that Gordon Brown is going to be the next British Prime Minister, taking over in 40 days' time. I wonder if I could have both your reactions to that. And, in particular, to Mr. Blair, what do you say to those people who are saying, now there is a new Prime Minister in place, you should go sooner? And to Mr. Bush, whether—

*President Bush.* That's a lovely question—isn't it?—for the guy. [*Laughter*]

*Q.* —however inadvertently, you once said that you would like Tony Blair to stay for the duration of your Presidency. He's not doing that. Do you think you're partly to blame for that?

*President Bush.* I haven't polled the Labour conference, but could be. [*Laughter*] The question is, am I to blame for his leaving? I don't know.

*Q.* And what do you think of Brown?

*President Bush.* I hope to help him in office the way Tony Blair helped me. Newly elected President, Tony Blair came

over, and he reached out; he was gracious—was able to converse in a way that—where our shared interests were the most important aspect of the relationship. I would hope I would provide the same opportunities for Gordon Brown. I met him; thought he was a good fellow.

But my attitude is this: This man here is the Prime Minister; we've got a lot of work to do until he finishes. He's going to sprint to the wire. He's going to finish the job that the people want him to do, and I'm going to work with him to do it. The meetings today weren't—this wasn't, like, a farewell deal; this was "how can we continue to work together for the common good?" And that's what we'll do.

As to why things happen politically in Great Britain, I'd suggest you go over there and ask people. Nice to see you again. *[Laughter]*

*Prime Minister Blair.* You had kind of forgotten what the British media were like, hadn't you? *[Laughter]* But these things—

*President Bush.* He woke up to ask the question. *[Laughter]*

*Prime Minister Blair.* First of all, I'm—having signed Gordon's nomination forms to nominate him as leader, of course I wish him well, and I believe he'll make a great Prime Minister. And I know he believes in the relationship with America too. And as for me, I mean, I will carry on doing the things that I've set out over the next few weeks that I need to do, not least and what we're talking about with the upcoming G-8 summit and the deal which we've been trying to put together, different countries involved on climate change and Africa.

And then, of course, you've got the European agreement then at the end of June, which is going to be very important. And just let me to stress to you, incidentally, there will be a Government position. I mean, that's—it will be a Government negotiation that goes on there. But it's very, very important so that we can make sure

that Europe moves forward. And then, of course, there are various domestic issues, too, as well.

But I—I'll answer the question about the President, as well, in relation to me. I mean, you can debate that as much as you like, but I want to say one thing to you, since it will be the last chance I get to do a—is to have a press conference in the Rose Garden, standing next to President Bush. I've admired him as a President, and I regard him as a friend. I have taken the view that Britain should stand shoulder to shoulder with America after September the 11th. I have never deviated from that view. I do not regret that view. I am proud of the relationship we have had. I am proud of the relationship between our two countries.

And I think that sometimes in politics, there are all sorts of issues where you've got to negotiate and compromise, but when it comes to the fundamental questions that affect our security and the future of the world, you should do what is right. I have tried to do that. And I believe that is what he has done as well. And—

*Q.* Would you do it again?

*Prime Minister Blair.* And I would take the same position of alliance with America again; yes, I would.

*President Bush.* Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

*World Bank President Paul D. Wolfowitz*

*Q.* Thank you, sir. The fate of Paul Wolfowitz appears to be hanging in the balance. After all we've heard in recent days, is it still possible for him to provide the kind of leadership needed at the Bank?

*President Bush.* First of all, I believe all parties in this matter have acted in good faith. I regret that it's come to this. I admire Paul Wolfowitz. I admire his heart, and I particularly admired his focus on helping the poor. There is a board meeting going on as we speak. All I can tell you is, I know that Paul Wolfowitz has a interest in what's best for the Bank and—just

like he's had an interest in what's best for making sure the Bank focused on things that matter: human suffering, the human condition. I—and so I applaud his vision; I respect him a lot. And as I said, I regret that it's come to this right now.

*Prime Minister Blair.* David.

*International Relations/Prime Minister Blair*

*Q.* David Grossman from BBC Newsnight. Mr. Blair, you outlined some very big policy areas there in your discussions with the President. Is it really possible, do you think, to make significant progress on them in the time that you have left?

And, Mr. President, if I could ask you, is this really still the right man to be talking to?

*President Bush.* Yes. No question about it; it's the right man to be talking to. And, yes, we can get a lot done.

*Prime Minister Blair.* You know, we're going to have a G-8 summit in a couple of weeks' time, at which these issues to do with climate change in Africa are going to be debated and discussed. And, I mean, I hope very much, because you come together at the G-8, a bit like we did a couple of years ago at Gleneagles, and it's an opportunity for the international community, a major part of the international community, to come together and reach, in principle, agreements. And I think most people would accept that what happened at Gleneagles a couple of years ago was very important.

I think what happens in Germany in a couple of weeks' time could be equally important, and that will be the time when we come to those decisions. So, of course, I want to see that through, because I've been involved in this all the way through.

And the important thing, as well, is that I think you will find at the German summit that not just the G-8 countries are there, but also China and India and Brazil and Mexico, South Africa, maybe some of the African nations. And so it will be an oppor-

tunity for us to recommit on Africa and for the world to make important commitments on that and then to see if it's possible to agree the elements that could go into a more comprehensive climate change deal. So it's a pretty important thing, and that's what we're working on.

*President Bush.* You know, it's interesting, like trying to do a tap dance on his political grave, aren't you? I mean, this—you don't understand how effective Blair is, I guess, because when we're in a room with world leaders and he speaks, people listen. And they view his opinion as considered and his judgment as sound.

And I find it interesting the first two questions are, is this the right guy? Well, he happens to be your Prime Minister, but more importantly, he is a respected man in the international arena. People admire him. Even if they may not agree with him 100 percent, they admire him a lot. And it's not just the American President who admires him; a lot of people admire him. And so he's effective. He's effective because he is—his recommendations to solve problems are sound. He's also effective because he is the kind of person who follows through.

There's a lot of blowhards in the political process, you know, a lot of hot-air artists, people who have got something fancy to say. Tony Blair is somebody who actually follows through with his convictions and, therefore, is admired in the international community.

And so I guess this is the appropriate question to ask, right guy, or is he still standing? Yes. This guy is a very strong, respected leader, and he's absolutely the right guy for me to be dealing with.

Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News]. By the way, if I'm not mistaken, this is your birthday. It is? Would you like me and the Prime Minister to do a duet, you know? [Laughter]

*Q.* I didn't realize the intel briefing was so far-reaching. [Laughter]

*President Bush.* That's right. Kelly O'Donnell.

*Terrorist Surveillance Program*

*Q.* Thank you, sir. There's been some very dramatic testimony before the Senate this week from one of your former top Justice Department officials, who describes a scene that some Senators called stunning, about a time when the wireless—when the warrantless wiretap program was being reviewed. Sir, did you send your then Chief of Staff and White House Counsel to the bedside of John Ashcroft while he was ill to get him to approve that program? And do you believe that kind of conduct from White House officials is appropriate?

*President Bush.* Kelly, there's a lot of speculation about what happened and what didn't happen; I'm not going to talk about it. It's a very sensitive program. I will tell you that, one, the program is necessary to protect the American people, and it's still necessary because there's still an enemy that wants to do us harm.

And therefore, I have an obligation to put in place programs that honor the civil liberties of the American people, a program that was, in this case, constantly reviewed and briefed to the United States Congress. And the program, as I say, is an essential part of protecting this country.

And so there will be all kinds of talk about it. As I say, I'm not going to move the issue forward by talking about something as highly sensitive, highly classified subject. I will tell you, however, that the program is necessary.

*Q.* Was it on your order, sir?

*President Bush.* As I said, this program is a necessary program that was constantly reviewed and constantly briefed to the Congress. It's an important part of protecting the United States, and it's still an important part of our protection because there's still an enemy that would like to attack us. No matter how calm it may seem here in America, an enemy lurks. And they would like to strike. And they would like to do

harm to the American people because they have an agenda. They want to impose an ideology; they want us to retreat from the world; they want to find safe haven. And these just aren't empty words; these are the words of Al Qaida themselves.

And so we will put in place programs to protect the American people that honor the civil liberties of our people and programs that we constantly brief to Congress.

*Prime Minister Blair.* Hi, Tom.

*United Kingdom-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Hello. [*Inaudible*]*—*Prime Minister—[*inaudible*]*—*many times in the course of the last 6 years. But it's been 5 years since a leader of the British Conservative Party set foot in this city. Mr. President, does it surprise you that aides close to David Cameron say that he does not want to be seen with you? And can I ask you both what it means for the prospect of future relations between Britain and America when the leader of the opposition dare not set foot in Washington?

*President Bush.* Well, I can just tell you, my relationship with the leader of Great Britain has been unbelievably productive, and I have enjoyed working with Tony Blair more than I could have possibly imagined.

It's hard to define our relationship in sound bites or press conferences, or to—in a way that really reflects the depth of what we have done together. And so I—you know, I don't regret things about what may or may not have happened over the past 5 years. I honor a relationship that I truly believe has been laying the foundation for peace.

This may not interest you, but I'll tell you anyway. I read three histories on George Washington last year. It's interesting to me that they're still analyzing the Presidency of our first President. And my attitude is, if they're still analyzing 1, 43 doesn't need to worry about it. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to be around to see the final history written on my administration.



When you work on big items, items to—agendas based upon sound philosophy that will transform parts of the world to make it more peaceful, we're not going to be around to see it. So my—let me finish. My relationship with this good man is where I've been focused, and that's where my concentration is. And I don't regret any other aspect of it.

And so I—we filled a lot of space together. We have had a unique ability to speak in terms that help design common strategies and tactics to achieve big objectives. And it's—will I miss working with Tony Blair? You bet I will. Absolutely. Can I work with the next guy? Of course.

And I'm here to make it clear to the people of our respective countries that this relationship is one that is vital to accomplish big objectives. It has been vital in the past; it has stood the free world—it has enabled the free world to do hard things. And it's a relationship that I believe is necessary to do the hard things in the 21st century. And so I honor Tony Blair.

Q. What about David Cameron?

President Bush. Never met him.

Prime Minister Blair. Well, I don't—I mean, I—it's not for me to give advice to the leader of the Conservative Party or a different political party. And that's up to them as to what they do and up to him as to whether he comes here or not.

But I do just make this observation to you, and—that what we are trying to do is—never mind these two individual leaders, but the two countries; let's accept for a moment that at least—even if people very strongly disagree with Iraq, for example—that at least people understand that there is a battle that we are fighting around the world today.

And let's at least accept, also, that it's a battle about the type of values that govern the world in the early 21st century. You don't win those battles by being a fair-weather friend to your ally. You don't win those battles by being hesitant or withdrawing support for each other when the

going gets tough. You don't win those battles by losing the will to fight if your enemy's will to fight is very strong and very powerful.

And actually, the values that we represent, as two countries, are shown by what we—what we've been through today. I mean, the President gets tough questions from the American press corps; I get, I like to say, even tougher questions—[laughter]—or at least as tough questions in the British press corps. And—

President Bush. If you want to define them as tough. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Blair. And we can—here as we speak at this press conference, I mean, I can't make out the words that they're shouting over there, but I bet they're not totally complimentary to either of us. [Laughter]

President Bush. Wait a minute. I don't know about that. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Blair. I mean, it could be the supporters we brought in, but I've got a feeling the likelihood is, no. [Laughter] And that's what it's about. It's about democracy, and it's about people being free to express their views, and it's about politicians having to face the pressure to justify their decisions, to be punished if the people don't like those decisions. And it's a commonality of values that we have that is so important for the world today.

And so you know, yes, of course, it's like—anybody who's sitting there advising a politician in any part of Europe today, if you want to get the easiest round of applause, get up and attack America. You can get a round of applause if you attack the President. You get a—

President Bush. Standing ovation. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Blair. Yes. And that's fine if everyone wants to do that, but when all of that is cleared away, you're left with something very, very simple, fundamental, and clear, that that battle for values is still going on.

And you can debate about the mistakes and the issues, and you can debate about Iraq, whether we should have done this, or we should have done that. But actually, what is happening in Iraq today is that our enemy is fighting us, and, therefore, if what happens when our enemy fights us is that we drift away from our friends, that we kind of make the little accommodations so that we don't escape some of the difficulty and the responsibility and, occasionally, opprobrium of decisionmaking, if we do that, our enemy takes heart from that; they watch that. They watch what we're doing the whole time. They ask, "Are these guys standing up for what they believe, or if we carry on, is their will going to diminish and they're going to give up because it's just too difficult, because the public opinion is too difficult, because the opinion polls tell them it's too difficult?"

Now, that is the decision of leadership. And it's not just a decision for me and him; it's a decision for everybody who's engaged in politics. And people run down politics and say it's all just a series of positions and attitudes and sound bites and, occasionally, even lies and all the rest of it. Actually, what politics is in the end, when it's done in the right way, when people stand up for what they believe, is, it's about public service. And there's nothing to be ashamed of in that. And the fact is, the decisions are difficult; of course, they're difficult.

And we took a decision that we thought was very difficult. I thought then and I think now, it was the right decision. History will make a judgment at a particular time. But one thing I know is that what we represent coming here today, speaking in the Rose Garden to you people and getting your questions and being under your pressure, that is a finer and better way of life than either a brutal, secular dictatorship or religious extremism. It's a better way of life, and it's the way of life, actually, people, any time they are given the choice, choose to have. And what we should be about, our two nations, is giving as many people in the world as possible that choice and being proud of it.

*President Bush.* What I know is, the world needs courage. And what I know is, this good man is a courageous man.

Thanks for coming. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:23 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A reporter referred to former Deputy Attorney General James B. Comey; former White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, Jr.; Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales; and former Attorney General John Ashcroft.

## Remarks at a Joint Reserve Officer Training Corps Commissioning Ceremony May 17, 2007

Thank you. Good afternoon. Welcome. Here we are in the East Room, a room that has had a long history. When President John Adams moved in, his wife Abigail used it to dry the family's laundry. [*Laughter*] Abraham Lincoln's children once raced

their goats in this room during a reception. [*Laughter*]

Over the rooms, this year—this room has been used for dances, concerts, weddings, funerals, award presentations, press conferences, and bill signings. Today we add

another event to the storied legacy of the East Room: the first joint ROTC commissioning ceremony. And we're glad you're here.

The young men and women we honor today represent the great diversity of the American people. You come from different backgrounds. You represent all 50 States and the District of Columbia as well as Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. And when you leave here today, you will wear on your shoulders the same powerful symbol of achievement: the gold bars of an officer of the United States Armed Forces.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us; proud to be here with Secretary Bob Gates and Becky. I thank Pete Geren, Acting Secretary of the Army. I appreciate so very much General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. You all have brought out some of the brass. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Senator Ben Nelson, United States Senator, for taking his time out to be here today. Senator, it means a lot that you're here. I thank the ROTC members being commissioned here today. I welcome your friends, and, most importantly, I welcome your families. I appreciate all the others in our military here too. Thanks for coming.

We gather at a solemn moment for this country. Many of you were still in high school when terrorists brought death and destruction to our streets on September the 11th, 2001. You were high school students. And yet, some of you understood that the cause of freedom would soon depend on your generation's willingness to step forward to defend it. And when it came time to be counted, each of you volunteered, knowing full well the risks involved during a time of war. As your Commander in Chief, I salute your decision to serve, and I congratulate you on a fine achievement.

The idea of providing college students an opportunity to train for a military commission has its roots in the old land-grant

universities of the 19th century, which included a program of military science. The modern program dates to 1916, when the Government established the Reserve Officers Training Corps to improve and standardize the training of junior officers. ROTC starts by identifying men and women of leadership and ability. It then prepares them morally, mentally, and physically for their responsibilities as officers in the finest Armed Forces in the world.

As part of this preparation, you have been taught a way of life that elevates service above self. You have learned that honor is not just a word; it is a sacred inheritance to be preserved and handed down. You have learned that courage is not the absence of fear, it is the ability to do the right thing in spite of your fears. And you have learned that much is expected of our military officers.

For most of you, a ROTC scholarship helped pay for your college education. The American people provide these funds willingly. And in return they ask one thing: When their sons and daughters are put in harm's way, they will be led by officers of character and integrity.

The path you have taken to this day is not an easy one. When your roommates slept in—*[laughter]*—you got up at dawn for a 3-mile run. While others spread out on the grass on a sunny day, you marched in formation. And when your friends called it a night and headed out to the town, you stayed back to shine your shoes and iron your uniform in preparation for the next day's inspection.

All of you have made many sacrifices to receive your commission. Yet some of you have had to endure even greater hardships because your universities do not allow ROTC on campus. For those of you in this position, this can require long commutes several times a week to another campus that does offer ROTC, so you can attend a military class, participate in a drill. Most of all, it means living a split existence,

where your life as a cadet or midshipmen is invisible to most of your fellow students.

Every American citizen is entitled to his or her opinion about our military, but surely the concept of diversity is large enough to embrace one of the most diverse institutions in American life. It should not be hard for our great schools of learning to find room to honor the service of men and women who are standing up to defend the freedoms that make the work of our universities possible. To the cadets and midshipmen who are graduating from a college or university that believes ROTC is not worthy of a place on campus, here is my message: Your university may not honor your military service, but the United States of America does. And in this, the people's house, we will always make a place for those who wear the uniform of our country.

In a few minutes, you will raise your right hands and swear an oath to defend our Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic, knowing that these enemies are real. You will receive your commissions as officers, knowing that you will soon have

the lives of other men and women in your own hands. You will leave this room with heads held high, knowing that you take your place in one of the greatest forces of freedom in the history of mankind.

So I ask you today: Bring honor to the uniform; set high standards for yourself; do not ask of those under your command anything that you would not ask of yourselves. If you do all these things, your career will take care of itself, your service will be a source of pride, and you will help build a safer and more hopeful world for our fellow citizens.

So congratulations to our new lieutenants and ensigns. And may Almighty God keep you close as you keep the American people safe.

And now I ask the Secretary of Defense to administer the oath.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

## Remarks on Immigration Reform *May 17, 2007*

Secretary Gutierrez and Secretary Chertoff have just briefed me about the negotiations on the comprehensive immigration bill that just concluded in the Senate. I want to thank, first of all, my Secretaries for being involved in the process, being engaged in this important issue, and helping move the process forward. I congratulate Members of the Senate, both political parties, who decided it was time to work together to come up with a comprehensive immigration bill that addresses a major problem facing our country. After weeks of long work, these negotiations came to a successful conclusion.

I want to thank the Members of the Senate who worked hard. I appreciate the leadership shown on both sides of the aisle. As I reflect upon this important accomplishment, important first step toward a comprehensive immigration bill, it reminds me of how much the Americans appreciate the fact that we can work together—when we work together, that they see positive things.

Immigration is a tough issue for a lot of Americans. It's a—the agreement reached today is one that will help enforce our borders, but equally importantly, it will treat people with respect. This is a bill where people who live here in our country

will be treated without amnesty, but without animosity.

And so I want to thank you all very much for representing the White House. I thank the Senators for working hard. I look forward to a good vote out of the United States Senate as quickly as Leader Reid can get the bill moving. And then of course we look forward to working with the House of Representatives to take this first step and convert it into a successful second step.

I really am anxious to sign a comprehensive immigration bill as soon as I possibly can. Today we took a good step toward that direction.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to S. 1348. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on Senate Action on Immigration Reform Legislation May 17, 2007

Today Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate came together and agreed upon a proposal that offers a much needed solution to the problem of illegal immigration in this country. This proposal delivers an immigration system that is secure, productive, orderly, and fair. I applaud the Senators who worked in the spirit of bipartisanship over the past months to address this issue, which is critically important to the American people.

Our immigration system is badly in need of reform. The bipartisan solution the Senators agreed to today requires us to meet important goals in addressing border security and enhancing interior and worksite enforcement. Once those goals are met, the plan would create a temporary-worker program to address the needs of our growing economy and take pressure off the border by allowing workers to come to this country for a short period of time and fill jobs Americans are not doing. For immigrants wishing to come to our country permanently, in the future, it would also establish a new merit-based system, which takes into account job skills, education, English proficiency, and family ties.

The plan would bring undocumented workers already in this country out of the shadows without amnesty and without ani-

mosity. It would require workers to pay a meaningful penalty, learn English, pay their taxes, and pass a background check before they can be considered for legalized status. If they achieve this legalized status and decide they want to apply for a green card, they must return home to file an application in order to get in line behind all of those who have played by the rules and followed the law.

Finally, our country has been a melting pot for over 200 years, and that has given us much strength. We must continue to help immigrants assimilate into our society. This proposal would further that effort by affirming that English is the language of the United States and would help immigrants learn our language by directing the Department of Education to make English instruction freely available over the Internet.

Convictions run deep on the matter of immigration, but with this bipartisan agreement, I am confident leaders in Washington can have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate so I can sign comprehensive reform into law this year. I urge all Members to support this bipartisan immigration reform proposal.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1348.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

May 17, 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. I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the Burma emergency is to continue beyond May 20, 2007.

The crisis between the United States and Burma arising from the actions and policies of the Government of Burma, including its policies of committing large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma,

that led to the declaration of a national emergency on May 20, 1997, has not been resolved. These actions and policies are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and maintain in force the sanctions against Burma to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 17, 2007.

NOTE: The related notice of May 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Radio Address

May 19, 2007

Good morning. This week, my administration reached an agreement with Republicans and Democrats in the Senate on immigration reform. I thank the leaders in both parties who worked hard to produce legislation that will secure the border, restore respect for the law, and meet the legitimate needs of our economy.

This legislation includes all the elements required for comprehensive immigration reform. It will improve security at our borders. It will give employers new tools to verify the employment status of workers and hold businesses to account for those they hire. It will create a temporary-worker program. It will help us resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already, without animosity and without amnesty. And it will honor the great Amer-

ican tradition of the melting pot by strengthening our efforts to help new arrivals assimilate into our society.

Here's how the bill works. First, it will require the strong border security and enforcement benchmarks are met before other elements of the legislation are implemented. These benchmarks include completing our plan to double the number of Border Patrol agents, improving border infrastructure, and maintaining enough beds in our detention facilities so that all those apprehended at the border can be held and returned to their home countries. We will also improve worksite enforcement by implementing an effective system to verify worker eligibility using tamper-resistant identification cards and by imposing stiffer



penalties on companies that knowingly violate the law. Once these benchmarks are met, they will trigger other provisions of comprehensive reform.

The legislation will create a new temporary-worker program. Such a program will help our economy and take pressure off the border by providing foreign workers with a legal and orderly way to enter our country to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. To ensure that this program is truly temporary, workers will be limited to three 2-year terms, with at least a year spent outside the United States between each term. Temporary workers will be allowed to bring immediate family members only if they demonstrate that they can support them financially and that their family members are covered by health insurance.

This legislation will also help resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country, without amnesty. Those who come out of the shadows will be given probationary status. If they pass a strict background check, pay a fine, hold a job, maintain a clean criminal record, and eventually learn English, they will qualify for and maintain a Z visa. If they want to become citizens, they have to do all these things plus pay an additional fine, go to the back of the line, pass a citizenship test, and return to their country to apply for their green card.

This legislation will also strengthen our efforts to help new immigrants assimilate. The key to unlocking the full promise of America is the ability to speak English. This bill affirms that English is the language of

the United States. And it provides new opportunities for immigrants to learn English and embrace the shared ideals that bind us as a nation.

In addition, this legislation will clear the backlog of family members who've applied to come to our country lawfully and have been waiting patiently in line. This legislation will end chain migration by limiting the relatives who can automatically receive green cards to spouses and minor children. And this legislation will transform our immigration system so that future immigration decisions are focused on admitting immigrants who have the skills, education, and English proficiency that will help America compete in a global economy.

I realize that many hold strong convictions on this issue, and reaching an agreement was not easy. I appreciate the efforts of Senators who came together to craft this important legislation. This bill brings us closer to an immigration system that enforces our laws and upholds the great American tradition of welcoming those who share our values and our love of freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 18, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## **Message on the Observance of Cuban Independence Day, 2007** *May 18, 2007*

I send greetings to all those celebrating the 105th anniversary of Cuba's Independence.

The longing for justice, freedom, and human rights is a desire that can be delayed but never denied. The United States remains committed to extending the full

blessings of liberty around the world, and on this important milestone, we stand united with freedom-loving people of all nations in the conviction that Cuba's future must be one of dignity, liberty, and opportunity.

This day is also an opportunity to recognize the generations of Cuban Americans who have made contributions to our society. Your hard work and high ideals reflect the best of America and enrich our Nation.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May God bless the people of Cuba and all the sons and daughters of Cuba who call America home.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

### Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Property in Which Iraq Has an Interest

*May 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication. This notice states that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003, Executive Order 13350 of July 29, 2004, and Executive Order 13364 of November 29, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2007.

The threats of attachment or other judicial process against (i) the Development Fund for Iraq, (ii) Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products, and interests therein, and proceeds, obligations, or any financial instruments of any nature whatsoever arising from or related to the sale or marketing thereof, and interests therein, or (iii) any

accounts, assets, investments, or any other property of any kind owned by, belonging to, or held by, on behalf of, or otherwise for the Central Bank of Iraq obstruct the orderly reconstruction of Iraq. These threats also impede the restoration and maintenance of peace and security and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq. These threats continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency protecting the Development Fund for Iraq, certain other property in which Iraq has an interest, and the Central Bank of Iraq and maintain in force the measures to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
May 18, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 21. The related notice of May 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference With Secretary General Jakob Gijssbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Crawford, Texas

May 21, 2007

*President Bush.* Thank you all for coming. Mr. Secretary General, thanks very much for joining us. Laura and I are really happy to have you here at our place in Crawford. And thank you very much for bringing Jeannine with you. We had a lovely dinner last night, and that's what you'd expect when friends get together.

I appreciate your leadership. The Secretary General of NATO has been a strong advocate of fighting terror, spreading freedom, helping the oppressed, and modernizing this important alliance. I can't thank you enough for being steadfast and strong.

We spent a lot of time talking about Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a vital mission for the United States; it's a vital mission for our allies in Europe because what happens in Afghanistan matters to the security of our countries. We appreciate the fact that in Afghanistan, you'll find NATO's largest deployment, thousands of miles from Europe. And success in that country is vital. I thank you for setting that important goal for the world to rally around. The NATO mission in Afghanistan includes more than 15,000 U.S. troops, 21,000 troops from 36 other nations, including all our allies. That wouldn't be happening without your leadership. Together with more than 100,000 Afghan security forces, we're working to support Afghanistan's elected Government.

The Secretary General is also focused on ensuring that NATO commanders have the forces they need to defeat the extremists and murderers who are trying to stop the advance of that country. I pledged to the Secretary General, we'll work with our NATO allies to convince them that they must share more of the burden and must all share the risks in meeting our goal.

We also appreciate the fact that Afghanistan requires more than military action. We support a long-term, comprehensive strategy to help strengthen Afghanistan's democratic institutions and help create the economic opportunity that will help this young democracy survive and thrive.

The Secretary General is also determined to help transform NATO from a cold war institution into an alliance that can continue to be effective, and that means an alliance which will meet the security threats of the 21st century. And so we talked about the need to have more special operations forces and strategic airlift capabilities.

I appreciate his leadership in recognizing that in order for NATO to be effective, it has to transform itself into an organization that actually meets the threats that free nations face. We talked about enlargement. We're looking forward to going to the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest and to talk about enlargement. And we will—I pledged to the Secretary General that I'll work with nations that are interested in becoming a part of NATO over the next year to make sure they meet the requirements necessary for a country to be accepted into NATO.

We talked about missile defense. NATO allies and other nations recognize the threat we face from ballistic missiles launched by a rogue state. I appreciate the fact that the Secretary General agrees that U.S. missile defense plans complement NATO efforts to keep all nations safe from attack. And of course, I will continue to reach out to Russia. I sent Secretary Gates to Russia recently to have a full and transparent conversation with President Putin and his Cabinet to make sure that the Russians understand that this missile shield is not directed at them but, in fact, directed

at other nations that could conceivably affect the peace of Europe. I appreciate the fact that the NATO-Russian Council is an integral part of the Secretary General's plans to make sure that Russia fully understands that—our intentions.

And so, Mr. Secretary General, thanks for coming. It's been a good trip. We're glad you're here, and the podium is yours.

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.* Thank you very much, sir, Mr. President.

Let me start by—on behalf of Jeannine, thank you and Mrs. Laura Bush most warmly for the wonderful hospitality we have enjoyed and are enjoying on this beautiful ranch. It is really great of you to have us here. We had good conversations a moment ago, about which I'll make a few remarks, but I should start with the atmosphere and the ambiance at the Crawford Ranch. That's beautiful. Thank you ever so much for that, on behalf of the two of us.

Mr. President, you mentioned already a number of subjects, and if we look at those from a NATO perspective, it is very clear that NATO's operations and missions are of primary importance. And among those operations, of course, Afghanistan. If we discuss Afghanistan—I should start by saying that we, the international community—NATO forces, U.S. forces—are there to help rebuild and develop that nation. That nation deserves to be developed and to be rebuilt.

But we are there for other reason as well. Afghanistan is still one of the frontlines in our fight against terrorism. And my—it is my strong conviction that that frontline should not become a faultline. And that is why it's so important that all 26 NATO allies are committed to Afghanistan and that the whole international community, for the longer term, stays committed to that nation.

And I know it's tough from time to time. And I know and you know that at any price, NATO forces and coalition forces will try to avoid civilian casualties. We'll do that,

and we'll look very seriously into that, the military commanders, us, we as politicians, as leaders. But let me tell you one thing: We are not in the same moral category as our opponents, as the Taliban in Afghanistan. We don't behead people. We don't burn schools. We don't kill teachers. We don't plant roadside bombs. We don't send in suicide bombers. And if we talk about innocent Afghan civilians—yes, dramatically, the result of our military actions could be that civilians, innocent civilians, are killed, but look at the number of Afghan civilians killed by the Taliban and by our opposing forces. In brief, we are not in the same moral category there, and that's, I think, a very important mission.

I do hope, and the President said it already, that NATO as a whole alliance will stay committed to Afghanistan. It is important for that operation to succeed. And if you visit the country, if you go there, you see a lot of reconstruction and development going on. On the other hand, we'll be tough—NATO, I said, will be tough where there's a need to be tough, our most important operation.

The second remark—the President mentioned this already—we discussed missile defense, very important subjects giving vulnerabilities. We had the U.S. discussion on the so-called third site in Europe. I think it will be now up to NATO—and I'll try to lead NATO into that direction—but apart from the third site and the U.S. plans, there will be a NATO system which complements, which will be bolted in the U.S. system so that everybody and everything will be covered for the long-range threats, the medium-range threats, and the short-range threats, an important element, I think.

We discussed, of course, Kosovo. While I think it's of great importance that NATO allies—but it's now in the Security Council and the U.S. Presidency this month—that there's full support for the Ahtisaari proposals. And I would like to see, as NATO Secretary General—we have 16,000 NATO

forces in Kosovo to create an element—an environment, I should say, of stability and security—that we see a Security Council resolution so that the Ahtisaari proposals can be brought into effect. So a resolution is important; the Ahtisaari proposals are good proposals.

We discussed, of course, also next year's NATO summit prospects for NATO enlargement. The nations who—knocking on NATO's door need encouragement, but they also need to perform further reforms so that we can have a successful summit in the spring of next year.

So, in brief, a great number of subjects we discussed in this informal atmosphere. Once again, thank you very much, Mr. President, for having us here. Thank you for the good conversations we had. You can rest assured that as Secretary General of NATO, I'll make the alliance work—in the sense that all 26 NATO allies will participate in NATO's operations and missions and will show the solidarity on which this alliance is built.

Thank you so much.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir.

We'll take two questions a side. In that there's only one questioner on the other side, it will be two questions and one question. Feller [Ben Feller, Associated Press].

*Military Operations in Afghanistan/  
Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. The Senate is considering a vote of no confidence in your Attorney General, and some Republican Senators have joined Democrats in calling for his resignation. Is it your intention to keep Alberto Gonzales as your Attorney General for the rest of your administration, regardless of what the Senate does?

And, Mr. Secretary General—if I may—you mentioned the deaths of civilians in Afghanistan. Is it your concern that those deaths are eroding the ability of NATO forces to do their work?

*President Bush.* Let me comment on that real quick. The Taliban likes to surround

themselves with innocent civilians. That's their—part of their modus operandi. They don't mind using human shields because they devalue human life. That's why they're willing to kill innocent people to achieve political objectives.

And obviously, to the extent that the United States is working with our NATO allies in combat, we care deeply about protecting innocent life. And to those who—Afghans who have lost innocent civilians, we grieve with you. To the Afghan families that have been affected by the Taliban using them as shields, we have great sympathy. We do not have sympathy, however, for the tactics of the Taliban.

Now, you asked about Alberto Gonzales. He has got my confidence. He has done nothing wrong. There's been enormous amount of attention on him, that there's been no wrongdoing on his part. He has testified in front of Congress. And I frankly view what's taking place in Washington today as pure political theater. And it is the—this kind of political theater that has caused the American people to lose confidence in how Washington operates.

I stand by Al Gonzales, and I would hope that people would be more sober in how they address these important issues. And they ought to get the job done of passing legislation, as opposed to figuring out how to be actors on the political theater stage.

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.* Let me add that—I'll stress again, like the President did—of course, every innocent civilian fatality, death, is one too many. But in a conflict, it is from time to time unavoidable, dramatically, but unavoidable. NATO and ISAF forces still have the support of the large majority of the Afghan people.

I had a long telephone conversation with President Karzai a few days ago on this subject. We'll avoid it. Our military commanders are doing everything they can. NATO, ISAF forces, and coalition forces are doing everything they can. But the



President talked about Taliban tactics; we are in a different moral category. We'll be there; we'll try to, as quickly as possible, bring in, also finance, to see that these people can build up their lives again. And we'll do everything we can to avoid civilian casualties.

But I think if you talk about and ask me about the hearts and minds in Afghanistan, we still have very much the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, because they do see that their nation, their own nation, has no future under Taliban rule. And I only have to refer to the kinds and type of Afghanistan we saw—you and I saw—under Taliban rule, a regime with the most gross human rights violations the world has seen.

Thank you.

*President Bush.* Do you want to call upon the one European person here?

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.* I could call upon the one European person here. [Laughter] Mr.—[inaudible].

*President Bush.* Thank you for coming. Brave of you.

Q. Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* It's the pioneering spirit that made America great. [Laughter]

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's Visit to the Bush Ranch*

Q. I've just got one question. Mr. de Hoop Scheffer, how *gezellig* was it yesterday?

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.* It was very *gezellig*. I'll try to translate "*gezellig*" in American.

*President Bush.* [Inaudible]—that doesn't make it in my vocabulary.

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.* Very friendly, cozy atmosphere. We had a very, very nice move around the ranch with Mrs. Bush and the President, my wife and I. We had a splendid dinner in the house here at the ranch. This morning, I can tell you that the President and I had a mountain bike ride together. We had our conversations. So you can speak about a very

nice weekend, and we had good talks on top of this. So what can one wish more? It was very *gezellig*.

*President Bush.* Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

*President's Decisionmaking/War on Terror*

Q. Mr. President, Jimmy Carter unleashed some fairly harsh criticism of you over the weekend. Were you surprised by this, and do you take much stock in what he said?

*President Bush.* Steve, you know, I get criticized a lot from different quarters, and that's just part of what happens when you're President. And I will continue to make decisions that I think are necessary to protect the American people from harm. I will continue to make decisions based upon certain principles, one of which is my strong belief in the universality of freedom.

We're at war with an enemy that is relentless and determined, and it's essential that the decisions I make protect the American people as best as we can. And it turns out, my Presidency is such that we talk about how—with strong allies—how to defend ourselves. I firmly believe that in order to protect America—we must go on the offense against radicals, extremists, murderers in order to protect not only ourselves but our allies.

And I also realize that we're involved in an ideological struggle, that these murderers, these radicals, these extremists have got a point of view. If you want to find out what their point of view is about, look what happened in Afghanistan under the brutal relationship of the Taliban and Al Qaida. On the one hand, if you're a woman and spoke out or a woman and tried to advance, you were suppressed, in brutal fashion sometimes. And in the meantime, an enemy that hates America plotted and planned.

And so look, I understand some people are—may not agree with the decisions I made. But what the American people need



to know, I'm making them based upon what's best for this country.

And, anyway, thank you all for coming. It's—what was the word?

*Q. Gezellig.*

*President Bush. Gezellig?*

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Gezellig.*

*Q. [Inaudible]*

*President Bush. Yes. You talk about some good gezellig. [Laughter].*

*Thank you all.*

*Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Thank you.*

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:22 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot, wife of Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

## Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut May 23, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Thank you; go ahead and sit down. Admiral Allen, thank you for that kind introduction. Admiral Burhoe, congratulations on your promotion. Academy staff and faculty, Congressman Chris Shays, State and local officials, distinguished guests, proud families, and, most importantly, members of the class of 2007: Thanks for having me.

It's a privilege to stand with the future leaders of the United States Coast Guard. Before you receive your degrees today, I want to make sure that you have learned your indoc. What is the Coast Guard?

*Cadets.* Mr. President, the Coast Guard is the hard nucleus about which the Navy forms in times of war, sir!

*The President.* I'm not going to—[*ap-  
plause*]. I probably shouldn't relay that to the Secretary of the Navy. [*Laughter*]

I see a few "RCF Warriors" out there. Some of you earned demerits for failing to correct your storage; others got caught crawling under the fence on your way to Connecticut College. [*Laughter*] However you got bagged, help has arrived. [*Laughter*] In keeping with longstanding tradition,

I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. I'll leave it to Admiral Burhoe to define exactly what "minor" means. [*Laughter*]

More than 6,000 young Americans applied to join the Coast Guard Academy class of 2007, and today just 228 will walk across this stage to receive your diploma and commission. You're a select few, and each of you worked really hard to get to this moment: survived R-Day, Swab Summer, and Friday morning drill practice with a kind and gentle soul, Chief Dillmann. [*Laughter*] You learned to brace up, do orderlies, square meals, and eat "hamsters" with your eyes in the boat. You arrived on this campus as swabs, and today you will leave as proud officers of the United States Coast Guard. Your teachers are proud, your parents are thrilled, and your Commander in Chief is grateful for your devotion to duty. Congratulations to you all.

You didn't make it to this day on your own. Many of you had the help of a special faculty member who mentored you along the way. Others made it through as a result

of the intervention of one man: Hopley Yeaton. He's the patron saint of the Square Root Club. For moms and dads, the Square Root Club is an association of students whose GPA is so low that when you take its square root, it grows larger. *[Laughter]* Fortunately, they didn't have that club where I went to college—*[laughter]*. Perhaps you'll make me an honorary member. *[Laughter]*

Whether you're graduating today at the top of your class or by the skin of your teeth, your presence on this field is a tremendous accomplishment. And it would not have been possible without the support of the families who believed in you and encouraged you. So I ask all the parents and loved ones here today to stand and be recognized by the class of 2007.

The degree you've earned will command respect wherever you go, and you will carry the lessons you learned here for the rest of your lives. This Academy has tested your minds, your bodies, and your character, and having passed these trials, you now embark on a voyage as officers in the oldest continuous marine time—maritime service.

The history of the Coast Guard dates back more than two centuries to the Revenue Cutter Service, established under the Presidency of George Washington, or as I call him, the first George W. *[Laughter]* Since its inception, the Coast Guard has conducted search and rescue missions, enforced our maritime laws, protected our marine environment, come to the aid of stranded boaters, and helped staunch the flow of illegal drugs and illegal migrants to our shores. And in this new century, the Coast Guard continues to carry out these vital missions.

Americans rely on the Coast Guard in times of disaster. When Hurricane Katrina hit our Nation's gulf coast, the men and women of the Coast Guard swung into action: hanging from helicopters, pulling people off rooftops and out of trees, and rescuing more than 33,000 people. When storms and floods and tragedy strike, Amer-

icans know that they can count on the United States Coast Guard.

Americans relied on the Coast Guard on September the 11th, 2001. After terrorists struck the tin—Twin Towers, the Coast Guard station on Staten Island put out a call for all available boats and organized a massive flotilla of military and civilian craft that evacuated hundreds of thousands of people from lower Manhattan. It was the largest waterborne evacuation in our Nation's history. And in the days that followed, the men and women of the Coast Guard stayed on the job, assisting operations at Ground Zero, sending chaplains to comfort the bereaved, and coordinating a round-the-clock defense of New York Harbor and other vital ports. In a time of crisis, the Coast Guard did its job and did it well.

On September the 11th, the homefront you protect became a battlefield in a new and unprecedented war. That day, our Nation changed forever and so did the mission of the United States Coast Guard. This service assumed new and essential responsibilities: to defend our Nation against terrorist infiltration and to help stop new attacks before they kill our people.

As part of Operation Noble Eagle, the men and women of the Coast Guard are protecting more than 360 ports and more than 95,000 miles of coastline. Overseas, the Coast Guard is conducting maritime intercept operations in the Persian Gulf, patrolling the waters off Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The men and women of the Coast Guard are serving with courage, and the American people are grateful to live behind your Shield of Freedom.

Soon you'll join your fellow coasties in carrying out these and other missions, and this Academy has prepared you well for the new challenges you will face in this war on terror. During your time here, you've taken courses in terrorist tactics and counterterrorism strategies; you've studied radiation detection, remote sensing, and the

handling of hazardous materials; you participated in military exercises that have prepared you for the threats of this new century.

You'll need all this training to help keep your fellow citizens safe. In this war, we face a brutal enemy that has already killed thousands in our midst and is determined to bring even greater destruction to our shores. We're blessed that there has not been another terrorist attack on our homeland in the past 5½ years. This is not for lack of effort on the part of the enemy. Since 9/11, Al Qaida and its allies have succeeded in carrying out horrific attacks across the world; Al Qaida leaders have repeatedly made clear they intend to strike our country again.

In January of last year, Usama bin Laden warned the American people, quote, "Operations are under preparation, and you will see them on your own ground once they are finished," end quote. Seven months later, British authorities broke up the most ambitious known Al Qaida threat to the homeland since the 9/11 attacks: a plot to blow up passenger airplanes flying to America. Our intelligence community believes that this plot was just 2 or 3 weeks away from execution. If it had been carried out, it could have rivaled 9/11 in death and destruction.

This was not the first Al Qaida plot that has been foiled since 9/11. In December 2001, we captured an Al Qaida operative named Ali Salih al-Mari. Our intelligence community believes that Ali Salih was training in poisons at an Al Qaida camp in Afghanistan and had been sent to the United States before September the 11th to serve as a sleeper agent ready for follow-on attacks. He was ordered to our country by 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who is now in U.S. custody. Our intelligence community believes that KSM brought Ali Salih to meet Usama bin Laden, where he pledged his loyalty to the Al Qaida leader and offered himself up as a martyr. Among the potential targets our

intelligence community believes this Al Qaida operative discussed with KSM were water reservoirs, the New York Stock Exchange, and United States military academies such as this one.

We also broke up two other post-9/11 aviation plots. The first, in 2002, was a plot by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to repeat the destruction of 9/11 by sending operatives to hijack an airplane and fly into the tallest building on the west coast. During a hearing at Guantanamo Bay just 2 months ago, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad stated that the intended target was the Library Tower in Los Angeles. And in 2003, we uncovered and stopped a plot led by another suspected senior Al Qaida operative named Abu Bakr al-Azdi. Our intelligence community believes this plot was to be another east coast aviation attack, including multiple airplanes that had been hijacked and then crashing into targets into the United States.

There is a reason that these and other plots have thus far not succeeded. Since September the 11th, we have taken bold action at home and abroad to keep our people safe.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we have undertaken the most sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government since the start of the cold war. We created the new Department of Homeland Security, merging 22 different Government organizations, including the Coast Guard, into a single Department with a clear mission: to protect America from future attacks.

To stop new attacks on our country, we've strengthened our Nation's intelligence community. We created the position of the Director of National Intelligence to ensure our intelligence agencies operate as a single, unified enterprise. We created the National Counterterrorism Center, where the FBI, the CIA, and other agencies work side by side to track terrorist threats across the world. We directed the National Security Agency to monitor international terrorist communications. We established a program run by the CIA to

detain and question key terrorist leaders and operatives. These measures are vital; these measures are working; and these measures have helped prevent an attack on our homeland.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we passed the PATRIOT Act, breaking down the walls that had prevented Federal law enforcement and intelligence communities from sharing information about potential terrorist activities. We've transformed the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorist attacks. We've expanded the number of FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces from 35 before 9/11 to more than 100 today. And we saw their effectiveness recently when one of these teams helped disrupt a plot by a group of Al Qaida-inspired extremists to kill American soldiers at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we launched the BioWatch program, placing state-of-the-art equipment in major U.S. cities to detect biological agents. To help prevent terrorists from bringing nuclear and radiological weapons into our country, we're placing radiation detectors in all major U.S. ports. We placed advanced screening equipment and U.S. Homeland Security personnel at foreign ports, so we can prescreen cargo headed for America. We're determined to stop the world's most dangerous men from striking America with the world's most dangerous weapons. And the Coast Guard is on the frontline of this battle.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we've strengthened international cooperation in the fight against terror. A coalition of more than 90 nations—nearly one-half of the world—is working together to dry up terrorist financing and bring terrorist leaders to justice. We launched the Proliferation Security Initiative, a vast coalition of nations that are working to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea, and in the air. With our allies, we have uncovered and shut down the A.Q. Khan network, which had supplied nuclear-

related equipment and plans to terrorist states, including Iran and North Korea. With Great Britain, we convinced the leader of Libya to abandon his country's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. The key components of Libya's nuclear program are now locked up in a storage facility right here in the United States. And today the world is safer because Libya is out of the nuclear weapons business.

All these steps are making our country safer, but we're not yet safe. To strike our country, the terrorists only have to be right once; to protect our country, we have to be right 100 percent of the time. And that means the best way to protect our people is to take the fight to the enemy. So after 9/11, I vowed to America that we would go on the offense against these terrorists, fighting them across the world so we do not have to face them here at home. And since 9/11, that is precisely what that United States of America has done.

In Afghanistan, we removed a regime that gave sanctuary and support to Al Qaida as they planned the 9/11 attacks. Today, because we acted, the terrorist camps in Afghanistan have been shut down, 25 million people have been liberated, and the Afghan people have an elected Government that is fighting terrorists, instead of harboring them.

The Taliban and Al Qaida are seeking to roll back Afghanistan's democratic progress, but forces from 40 nations, including every member of NATO, are helping the Afghan people defend their democratic gains. Earlier this month, Afghan, American, and NATO forces tracked down and killed a top Taliban commander in Afghanistan. His death has sent a clear message to all who would challenge Afghanistan's young democracy: We drove Al Qaida and the Taliban out of power, and they're not going to be allowed to return to power.

In Iraq, we removed a cruel dictator who harbored terrorists, paid the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, invaded his

neighbors, defied the United Nations Security Council, pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. Iraq, the United States, and the world are better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And today, the Iraqi people are building a young democracy on the rubble of Saddam Hussein's tyranny. In December 2005, nearly 12 million Iraqis demonstrated their desire to be free, going to the polls and choosing a new Government under the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world.

In 2006, a thinking enemy responded to this progress and struck back with brutality. They staged sensational attacks that led to a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal. If the sectarian violence continued to spiral out of control, the Iraqi Government would have been in danger of collapse. The ensuing chaos would embolden Iran, which is fueling the violence, and Al Qaida, a key driver of Iraq's sectarian conflict. The chaos could eventually spread across the Middle East, and generations of Americans would be in even greater danger.

So I had a choice to make: withdraw our troops, or send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the sectarian violence. I decided to send more troops with a new mission: to help the Iraqi Government secure their population and get control of their capital city.

As we carry out the new strategy, the Iraqi Government has a lot of work to do. They must meet its responsibility to the Iraqi people and achieve benchmarks it has set, including adoption of a national oil law, preparations for Provincial elections, progress on a new de-Ba'athification policy, and a review of the Iraqi Constitution. The Iraqi people must see that their Government is taking action to bring their country together and give all of Iraqis a stake in a peaceful future.

And now in 2007 we are at a pivotal moment in this battle. There are many destructive forces in Iraq trying to stop this

strategy from succeeding; the most destructive is Al Qaida. Al Qaida knows that a democratic Iraq is a threat to their ambitions to impose their hateful ideology across the Middle East. Al Qaida knows that our presence in Iraq is a direct threat to their existence in Iraq. Our security depends on helping the Iraqis succeed and defeating Iraq—Al Qaida in Iraq.

Some in our country question whether the battle in Iraq is part of the war on terror. Among the terrorists, there's no doubt. Hear the words of Usama bin Laden. He calls the struggle in Iraq a "war of destiny." He proclaimed: "The war is for you or for us to win. If we win it, it means your defeat and disgrace forever."

Bin Laden is matching his words with action. He attempted to send a new commander to Iraq, an Iraqi-born terrorist named Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi. According to our intelligence community, this terrorist had been a senior adviser to bin Laden; he served as his top commander in Afghanistan; he was responsible for all Al Qaida's military operations against our coalition in that country. Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi never made it to Iraq. He was captured last year. He was recently transferred to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

There is a reason that bin Laden sent one of his most experienced paramilitary leaders to Iraq. He believes that if Al Qaida can drive us out, they can establish Iraq as a new terrorist sanctuary. Our intelligence community believes that, quote, "Al Qaida leaders see victory in Iraq—the heart of the caliphate and currently the most active front in their war—as a religious and strategic imperative." If Al Qaida succeeds in Iraq, they would pursue their stated goals of turning that nation into a base from which to overthrow moderate governments in the region, impose their hateful ideology on millions, and launch new attacks on America and other nations. Victory in Iraq is important for Usama bin Laden, and victory in Iraq is vital for the United States of America.



I've often warned our fellow citizens that if we fail in Iraq, the enemy will follow us home. Many ask, "How do you know?" Today I'd like to share some information with you that attests to Al Qaida's intentions. According to our intelligence community, in January 2005, Usama bin Laden tasked the terrorist Zarqawi, who was then Al Qaida's top leader in Iraq, with forming a cell to conduct terrorist attacks outside of Iraq. Bin Laden emphasized that America should be Zarqawi's number-one priority in terms of foreign attacks. Zarqawi welcomed this direction. He claimed that he had already come up with some good proposals.

To help Zarqawi in these efforts, our intelligence community reports that bin Laden then tasked one of his top terrorist operatives, Hamza Rabia, to send Zarqawi a briefing on Al Qaida's external operations, including information about operations against the American homeland. Our intelligence community reports that a senior Al Qaida leader, Abu Faraj al-Libi, went further and suggested that bin Laden actually send Rabia himself to Iraq to help plan external operations. Abu Faraj later speculated that this effort—if this effort proved successful, Al Qaida might one day prepare the majority of its external operations from Iraq.

In May of 2005, Abu Faraj was captured and taken into CIA custody. Several months later, in December 2005, Rabia was killed in Pakistan. Several months after that, in June of 2006, the terrorist Zarqawi was killed by American forces in Iraq. Successes like these are blows to Al Qaida. They're a testament to the steps we have taken to strengthen our intelligence, work closely with partners overseas, and keep the pressure on the enemy by staying on the offense.

Despite our pressure, despite the setbacks that Al Qaida has suffered, it remains extremely dangerous. As we've surged our forces in Iraq, Al Qaida has responded with a surge of its own. The terrorists' goal in

Iraq is to reignite sectarian violence and break support for the war here at home. And they believe they're succeeding. A few weeks ago, Al Qaida's number two, second in command, Zawahiri, issued a video in which he gloated that Al Qaida's "movement of violence has forced the Americans to accept a pullout, about which they only differ in regard to its timing." We can expect Al Qaida to continue its campaign of high-profile attacks, including deadly suicide bombings and assassinations. And as they do, our troops will face more fighting and increased risks in the weeks and months ahead.

The fight in Iraq is tough, but my point today to you is, the fight is essential to our security. Al Qaida's leaders inside and outside of Iraq have not given up on their objective of attacking America again.

You know, many critics compare the battle in Iraq to the situation we faced in Vietnam. There are many differences between the two conflicts, but one stands out above all: The enemy in Vietnam had neither the intent nor the capability to strike our homeland; the enemy in Iraq does. Nine/Eleven taught us that to protect the American people, we must fight the terrorists where they live so that we don't have to fight them where we live.

The question for our elected leaders is, do we comprehend the danger of an Al Qaida victory in Iraq, and will we do what it takes to stop them? However difficult the fight in Iraq has become, we must win it. Al Qaida is public enemy number one for Iraq's young democracy. Al Qaida is public enemy number one for America as well. And that is why we must support our troops; we must support the Iraqi Government; and we must defeat Al Qaida in Iraq.

We're thankful to the military, the intelligence, and law enforcement personnel who work tirelessly to stop new attacks on our country. With every plot they foil, every terrorist they capture, we learn more about the enemy's plans and persistence. In the minds of Al Qaida leaders, 9/11 was just



a downpayment on violence yet to come. It's tempting to believe that the calm here at home after September the 11th means that the danger to our country has passed. I see the intelligence every day. The danger has not passed. Here in America, we're living in the eye of a storm. All around us, dangerous winds are swirling, and these winds could reach our shores at any moment.

The men and women of the Coast Guard know how to navigate the storm. We're counting on you to help America weather the challenges that lie ahead. As you begin your Coast Guard careers, you can approach the future with confidence because our Nation has faced dangerous enemies before and emerged victorious every time. Terrorists can try to kill the innocent, but they cannot kill the desire for liberty that burns in the hearts of millions across the Earth. The power of freedom defeated the ideologies of fascism and communism in the last century, and freedom will defeat the hateful ideologies of the terrorists in this century.

Victory in this struggle will require valor and determination and persistence, and these qualities can be found in abundance in the class of 2007. Your class has chosen a motto: Let Courage Part the Seas. America will be counting on your courage in the years to come. You will take your oath as Coast Guard officers in a time of war,

knowing all the risks your service entails. I thank each of you for your bold decision to wear the uniform. My call to you is this: Trust in the power of freedom to overcome tyranny and terror, show leadership in freedom's defense and character in all you do, be ready for anything.

The coasties who came before you never thought that they would be organizing a flotilla in New York Harbor or patrolling distant coasts in the Persian Gulf. Like them, you will serve in ways you cannot imagine today. But if you bring the skills and creativity you learned at this Academy to every task, our Nation's security will be in good hands.

You leave this Academy strong and resolved to be worthy of the traditions of commissioned officers in the United States Coast Guard. I respect your passion for service and the courage of your choice. Your country is grateful and proud of each of you. Congratulations. God bless. Semper Paratus.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in the Alumni Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. J. Scott Burhoe, USCG, superintendent, and Chief Petty Officer Karl Dillmann, USCG, Delta Company Chief, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

## Statement on the Energy Information Administration's Report May 23, 2007

I was pleased to receive the Energy Information Administration's report today, which includes its "flash estimate" of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions for 2006. The report shows that emissions declined 78 million metric tons over 2005, or 1.3 percent, while our economy grew 3.3 percent. That means CO<sub>2</sub> intensity decreased by 4.5 per-

cent—the largest annual improvement since 1990—putting us well ahead of what is needed annually to meet my greenhouse gas intensity reduction goal of 18 percent by 2012.

In 2001, I outlined fundamental principles to guide a scientifically sound and effective effort to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions. In 2002, I committed this country to reduce our economy's greenhouse gas intensity—how much we emit per unit of the GDP—by 18 percent by 2012. Since then, we have moved forward with an effective climate change policy that is science based, encourages research and investment in the technologies needed to solve the problem, and takes advantage of the power of markets.

We are effectively confronting the important challenge of global climate change through regulations, public-private partnerships, incentives, and strong economic investment. New policies at the Federal, State, and local levels—such as my initiative

to reduce by 20 percent our projected use of gasoline within 10 years—promise even more progress. I have called on Congress to pass this legislation quickly, and I have also directed the EPA and the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Agriculture to take the first steps toward regulations, using my 20-in-10 plan as a starting point. At the same time, we will continue to lead internationally through sensible partnerships promoting development and deployment of clean energy technologies, such as the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which includes China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

## The President's News Conference *May 24, 2007*

*The President.* Please be seated. Thank you all. Good morning.

Today Congress will vote on legislation that provides our troops with the funds they need. It makes clear that our Iraqi partners must demonstrate progress on security and reconciliation. My administration and Members of Congress from both parties have had many meetings to work out our differences on this legislation. As a result, we've removed the arbitrary timetables for withdrawal and the restrictions on our military commanders that some in Congress had supported.

We were also successful in removing billions of—in unrelated domestic spending that many of the Democrats were insisting on. I wanted to remove even more. But, still, by voting for this bill, members of both parties can show our troops and the Iraqis and the enemy that our country will support our service men and women in harm's way.

As it provides vital funds for our troops, this bill also reflects a consensus that the Iraqi Government needs to show real

progress in return for America's continued support and sacrifice. The Iraqi Study Group—the Iraq Study Group recommended that we hold the Iraqi Government to the series of benchmarks for improved security, political reconciliation, and governance that the Iraqis had set for themselves. I agree; so does the Congress. And the bill reflects that recommendation.

These benchmarks provide both the Iraqi Government and the American people with a clear roadmap on the way forward. Meeting these benchmarks will be difficult; it's going to be hard work for this young government. After all, the Iraqis are recovering from decades of brutal dictatorship. Their democratic government is just over a year old. And as they're making tough decisions about their future, they're under relentless attack from extremists and radicals who are trying to bring down the young democracy.

Our new strategy is designed to help Iraq's leaders provide security for their people and get control of their capital so they can move forward with reconciliation and

reconstruction. Our new strategy is designed to take advantage of new opportunities to partner with local tribes to go after Al Qaida in places like Anbar, which has been the home base of Al Qaida in Iraq.

This summer is going to be a critical time for the new strategy. The last of five reinforcement brigades we are sending to Iraq is scheduled to arrive in Baghdad by mid-June. As these reinforcements carry out their missions, the enemies of a free Iraq, including Al Qaida and illegal militias, will continue to bomb and murder in an attempt to stop us. We're going to expect heavy fighting in the weeks and months. We can expect more American and Iraqi casualties. We must provide our troops with the funds and resources they need to prevail.

Another important issue before Congress is immigration reform. I want to thank the bipartisan group of Senators who produced a bill that will help us secure our borders and reform our immigration system. For decades, the Government failed to stop illegal immigration. My administration has stepped up efforts to improve border security, doubling the number of Border Patrol agents. We've effectively ended the policy of catch-and-release, which allowed some illegal immigrants to be released back into society after they were captured. Last year alone, we apprehended more than a million people trying to enter this country illegally. This is progress, but it's not enough.

Many Americans are rightly skeptical about immigration reform. I strongly believe the bipartisan Senate bill addresses the reasons for past failures, while recognizing the legitimate needs of our economy and upholding the ideals of our immigrant tradition.

This bill does not grant amnesty. Amnesty is forgiveness without a penalty. Instead, this bill requires workers here illegally to acknowledge that they broke the law, pay a fine, pass background checks, remain employed, and maintain a clean record. This bill provides the best chance

to reform our immigration system and help us make certain we know who's in our country and where they are.

Our immigration problems cannot be solved piecemeal. They must be all addressed together, and they must be addressed in logical order. So this legislation requires that border security and worker-verification targets are met before other provisions of the bill are triggered. For example, the temporary-worker program can begin only after these security measures are fully implemented. Immigration reform is a complex issue; it's a difficult piece of legislation. And those who are looking to find fault with this bill will always be able to find something. But if you're serious about securing our borders and bringing millions of illegal immigrants in our country out of the shadows, this bipartisan bill is the best opportunity to move forward. I'm confident, with hard work and good will, Congress can pass and I can sign a bill that fixes an immigration system we all agree is broken.

The issues of war and immigration are difficult, but that's no excuse in avoiding our responsibility to act. The American people sent us to Washington to take on tough problems, and they expect us to deliver results.

And now I'll be glad to answer some of your questions.

Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

#### *Iran/Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Efforts*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. The IAEA says that Iran has significantly accelerated its uranium enrichment program. And today President Ahmadi-nejad said that he would go ahead; he vowed to go ahead. There also is the detention of three Iranian Americans. Where is this all headed? And do you think it's time for tough U.N. sanctions with real teeth, and are you confident that Russia and China would go ahead?

*The President.* As you know, we have been discussing this issue a lot at these

press avails. Iran is constantly on the agenda at a press avail like this—or a press conference like this, and the reason why is, is because they continue to be defiant as to the demands of the free world. The world has spoken and said, no nuclear weapons programs. And yet they're constantly ignoring the demands.

My view is that we need to strengthen our sanction regime. I just spoke to Condoleezza Rice, and we will work with our European partners to develop further sanctions. And, of course, I will discuss this issue with Vladimir Putin as well as President Hu Jintao.

The first thing that these leaders have got to understand is that an Iran with a nuclear weapon would be incredibly destabilizing for the world. It's in their interests that we work collaboratively to continue to isolate that regime.

I'm sympathetic for the people of Iran. I'm sorry they live under a Government that continues to insist upon a program that the world has condemned, because it is denying the good people of Iran economic opportunities that they would have. This is a country with a great tradition and a great history. There are hard-working people in that country that want to benefit from a society that is more open, and yet the Government insists upon measures that will lead to further isolation. And therefore, to answer your—one part of your question, we will work with our partners to continue the pressure.

Secondly, obviously, to the extent that these people are picking up innocent Americans, it's unacceptable. And we've made it very clear to the Iranian Government that the detention of good, decent American souls who are there to be beneficial citizens is not acceptable behavior.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

#### *U.S. Soldiers Missing in Iraq/Military Operations in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, dozens of American troops have been killed this month, and

sectarian violence appears to be rising again in Iraq. And you yourself just said that you're expecting more casualties in the weeks and months ahead. How much longer do you believe you can sustain your current policy in Iraq without significant progress on the ground? And how confident are you about finding those missing soldiers?

*The President.* I'm confident that the military is doing everything it can to find the missing soldiers. I talked to General Petraeus about this subject and Secretary Gates. And General Petraeus informs him that we're using all the intelligence and all the troops we can find—to find them. It's a top priority of our people there in Iraq.

Obviously, the loss of life is—it is devastating to families. I fully understand that. But I want to remind you as to why I sent more troops in. It was to help stabilize the capital. You're asking me, "How much longer?" We have yet to even get all our troops in place. General David Petraeus laid out a plan for the Congress. He talked about a strategy all aiming—all aimed at helping this Iraqi Government secure its capital so that they can do the—some of the political work necessary, the hard work necessary to reconcile.

And as I explained in my opening remarks, all the troops won't be there until mid-June. And one reason you're seeing more fighting is because our troops are going into new areas, along with the Iraqis. And so General Petraeus has said, "Why don't you give us until September, and let me report back," to not only me but to the United States Congress, "about progress?"

I would like to see us in a different configuration at some point in time in Iraq. However, it's going to require taking control of the capital. And the best way to do that was to follow the recommendations of General Petraeus. As I have constantly made clear, the recommendations of Baker-Hamilton appeal to me, and that is to be embedded and to train and to guard the

territorial integrity of the country and to have Special Forces to chase down Al Qaida. But I didn't think we could get there unless we increased the troop levels to secure the capital. I was fearful that violence would spiral out of control in Iraq and that this experience of trying to help this democracy would—couldn't succeed.

And so therefore, the decisions I made are all aimed at getting us to a different position; and the timing of which will be decided by the commanders on the ground, not politicians here in Washington.

Chen [Edwin Chen, Los Angeles Times]. Ed, excuse me. That's Henry [Ed Henry, Cable News Network]. Chen. Yes, you're coming down there; no, sorry. Work the print people a little bit, see. I've got the strategy: print. Ed, sorry.

#### *Trade With China*

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. A lot of lawmakers in Congress are saying that China has not done enough to allow its currency to appreciate, and they're talking about things like duties. What is your view about that, and are you prepared to do more to encourage the appreciation of the yuan?

*The President.* Thanks, Ed. I spoke to Madam Wu Yi today, as a matter of fact, had her into the Oval Office, wanted to thank her for bringing her delegation in and also to ask her to pass on a message to Hu Jintao that I appreciate his willingness to work in a strategic—with strategic dialogs in order to put in place the type of measures that reflect a complex relationship, in other words, the ability to discuss issues such as beef or intellectual property rights.

And one of the issues that I emphasized to Madam Wu Yi, as well as the delegation, was, was that we're watching very carefully as to whether or not they will appreciate their currency. And that's all in the context of making it clear to China that we value our relationship, but the \$233 billion trade deficit must be addressed. And one way

to address it is through currency evaluations.

Another way to address it is for them to help convert their economy from one of savers to consumers. And that's why Secretary Paulson worked very assiduously with this strategic dialog group to encourage openness for capital markets; that China must open its capital markets to allow for different financial institutions from around the world to go into the country. It not only will be beneficial to the United States, but we happen to think it will be beneficial to the Chinese economy, for the consumers to have different options when it comes to savings and purchases.

And so this is a important dialog, and it's one that I thank the Chinese Government for engaging in. And there's been some progress. Yesterday they opened new air routes. That's beneficial for U.S. airlines. It also happens to be beneficial for China, as far I am concerned. It's beneficial for that country to open up its access to more travelers, whether they be business or tourists.

Anyway, this is a complex relationship. And there's a lot of areas where we're working together, and there's areas where there's friction. And we've just got to work through the friction. One area where I've been disappointed is beef. They need to be eating U.S. beef. It's good for them. They'll like it. And so we're working hard to get that beef market opened up.

Ed.

#### *War on Terror*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A new Senate report this morning contends that your administration was warned before the war that by invading Iraq, you would actually give Iran and Al Qaida a golden opportunity to expand their influence, the kind of influence you were talking about with Al Qaida yesterday and with Iran this morning. Why did you ignore those warnings, sir?



*The President.* Ed, going into Iraq, we were warned about a lot of things, some of which happened, some of which didn't happen. And obviously, as I made a decision of—as consequential as that, I weighed the risks and rewards of any decision. I firmly believe the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. I know the Iraqis are better off without Saddam Hussein in power. I think America is safer without Saddam Hussein in power.

As to Al Qaida in Iraq, Al Qaida is going to fight us wherever we are. See, that's their strategy. Their strategy is to drive us out of the Middle East. They have made it abundantly clear what they want. They want to establish a caliphate. They want to spread their ideology. And they want safe haven from which to launch attacks. They're willing to kill the innocent to achieve their objectives, and they will fight us. And the fundamental question is, will we fight them? I have made the decision to do so. I believe that the best way to protect us in this war on terror is to fight them.

And so we're fighting them in Iraq; we're fighting them in Afghanistan; we've helped the Philippines fight—Philippine Government fight them. We're fighting them. And this notion about how this isn't a war on terror, in my view, is naive. It doesn't reflect the true nature of the world in which we live.

You know, the lessons of September the 11th are these: We've got to stay on the offense; we've got to bring these people to justice before they hurt again; and, at the same time, defeat their ideology with a ideology based upon liberty. And that's what you're seeing, and they're resisting it.

I think it ought to be illustrative to the American people that Al Qaida is trying to stop new democracies from evolving. And what does—that should tell you? That ought to tell you that we're dealing with people that have an ideology that is opposite of liberty and will take whatever

measures are necessary to prevent this young democracy from succeeding.

The danger in this particular theater in the war on terror is that if we were to fail, they'd come and get us. And, you know, I look at these reports right here in the Oval Office. For people who say that we're not under threat, they just simply do not know the world. We are under threat. And it's in our interest to pursue this enemy.

Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

*Government of Iraq/U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You say you want nothing short of victory, that leaving Iraq would be catastrophic. You once again mentioned Al Qaida. Does that mean that you are willing to leave American troops there, no matter what the Iraqi Government does? I know this is a question we've asked before, but you can begin it with a yes or no.

*The President.* We are there at the invitation of the Iraqi Government. This is a sovereign nation. Twelve million people went to the polls to approve a Constitution. It's their Government's choice. If they were to say, "Leave," we would leave.

Q. [Inaudible]—results would be catastrophic, as you've said over and over again?

*The President.* I would hope that they would recognize that the results would be catastrophic. But this is a sovereign nation, Martha. We are there at their request. And hopefully, the Iraqi Government would be wise enough to recognize that without coalition troops, particularly U.S. troops, that they would endanger their very existence. And it's why we work very closely with them, to make sure that the realities are such that they wouldn't make that request. But if they were to make the request, we wouldn't be there.

David [David Gregory, NBC News].



*War on Terror/Threat of Further Terrorist Attacks*

Q. Mr. President, after the mistakes that have been made in this war, when you do as you did yesterday, where you raised 2-year-old intelligence, talking about the threat posed by Al Qaida, it's met with increasing skepticism. The majority in the public, a growing number of Republicans appear not to trust you any longer to be able to carry out this policy successfully. Can you explain why you believe you're still a credible messenger on the war?

*The President.* I'm credible because I read the intelligence, David, and make it abundantly clear in plain terms that if we let up, we'll be attacked. And I firmly believe that.

Look, this has been a long, difficult experience for the American people. I can assure you, Al Qaida, who would like to attack us again, have got plenty of patience and persistence. And the question is, will we?

Yes, I talked about intelligence yesterday. I wanted to make sure the intelligence I laid out was credible, so we took our time. Somebody said, well, he's trying to politicize the thing. If I was trying to politicize it, I'd have dropped it out before the 2006 elections. I believe I have an obligation to tell the truth to the American people as to the nature of the enemy. And it's unpleasant for some. I fully recognize that after 9/11, in the calm here at home, relatively speaking, caused some to say, well, maybe we're not at war. I know that's a comfortable position to be in, but that's not the truth.

Failure in Iraq will cause generations to suffer, in my judgment. Al Qaida will be emboldened. They will say, yes, once again, we've driven the great, soft America out of a part of the region. It will cause them to be able to recruit more. It will give them safe haven. They are a direct threat to the United States.

And I'm going to keep talking about it. That's my job as the President, is to tell people the threats we face and what we're doing about it. And what we've done about it is, we've strengthened our homeland defenses. We've got new techniques that we use that enable us to better determine their in—their motives and their plans and plots. We're working with nations around the world to deal with these radicals and extremists. But they're dangerous, and I can't put it any more plainly: They're dangerous. And we will, and I can't put it any more plainly to the American people and to them: We will stay on the offense.

It's better to fight them there than here. And this concept about, well, maybe let us kind of just leave them alone, and maybe they'll be all right is naive. These people attacked us before we were in Iraq. They viciously attacked us before we were in Iraq, and they've been attacking ever since. They are a threat to your children, David, and whoever is in that Oval Office better understand it and take measures necessary to protect the American people.

Q. So what about—[inaudible].

*The President.* Axelrod [Jim Axelrod, CBS News].

*U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the Petraeus report, which, as you say, will be in September and report on progress. Doesn't setting up the September date give the enemy exactly what you've said you don't want them to have, which is a date to focus on, and doesn't it guarantee a bloody August?

And while I have you, sir, the phrase you just used, "a different configuration in Iraq" that you'd like to see, is that a plan B?

*The President.* Well, see, actually, I would call that a plan recommended by Baker-Hamilton, so that would be a plan B-H. I've stated—you didn't like it? [Laughter] Okay.

I've stated, this is an idea that—I like the concept. The question is, could we get there given the violence last fall? And the answer, in my judgment, was, no, we would never be able to configure our troops that way, in that configuration—place our troops in that configuration given the violence inside the capital city.

David Petraeus felt like that it was important to tell the White House and tell the Congress that he would come back with an assessment in September. It's his decision to give the assessment, and I respect him, and I support him.

Q. Doesn't it give the terrorists a—

*The President.* It does, precisely. It's going to make—it could make August a tough month, because you see, what they're going to try to do is kill as many innocent people as they can to try to influence the debate here at home. Don't you find that interesting? I do—that they recognize that the death of innocent people could shake our will, could undermine David Petraeus's attempt to create a more stable Government. They will do anything they can to prevent success. And the reason why is, Al Qaida fully understands that if we retreat, they then are able to have another safe haven, in their mind.

Yesterday, in my speech, I quoted quotes from Usama bin Laden. And the reason I did was—is that I want the American people to hear what he has to say—not what I say, what he says. And in my judgment, we ought to be taking the words of the enemy seriously.

And so yes, it could be a bloody—it could be a very difficult August. And I fully understand—

Q. [Inaudible]—fighting the Democrats on that in the Senate about a date—

*The President.* Yes, David Petraeus, the commander—look, do you want politicians making those decisions, or do you want commanders on the ground making the decisions? My point is, is that I would trust David Petraeus to make an assessment and a recommendation a lot better than people

in the United States Congress. And that's precisely the difference.

Michael [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post].

*Justice Department/Attorney General  
Alberto R. Gonzales*

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the Justice Department. In the last couple months, we have heard disturbing evidence about senior officials of the Justice Department misleading Congress. We heard disturbing evidence yesterday that a senior official at Justice Department improperly took, by her own admission, political considerations into effect in evaluating career employees of the Justice Department.

We've also had evidence from the former Deputy Attorney General of the White House strong-arming a sick man into trying to approve an illegal spying program. I'm curious, Mr. President, if you are concerned about the cumulative picture that's being drawn about your Justice Department? And what assurances can you give the American people that the Department is delivering impartial justice to the American people?

*The President.* Yes, thank you, Michael. There is a—an internal investigation taking place at the Justice Department. And this will be an exhaustive investigation. And if there's wrongdoing, it will be taken care of.

I thought it was interesting how you started your question, "Over the months." I think you said, "Over the last months." This investigation is taking a long time; in fact, kind of being drug out. I suspect for political question—for political reasons. In other words, as I mentioned the other day, it's just grand political theater.

If—Attorney General Gonzales has testified. He's produced documents. And I would hope the Senate and the Congress would move expeditiously to finish their hearings and get on to the business of passing legislation that is meaningful for the

country. But if there had been wrongdoing, that will be addressed, the way we'd hope it would be.

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—confidence. Are you—*

*The President.* Yes, I've got confidence in Al Gonzales doing the job.

Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

*War on Terror/Progress in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, are you surprised by reports today from the Iraqis that sectarian killings are actually on the rise to pre-troop surge levels? And, if I may, yesterday after your speech, Senator Joe Biden said Al Qaida in Iraq is a "Bush-fulfilling prophecy." They weren't there before; now they're there. He said U.S. troops should get out of the middle of a civil war and fight Al Qaida.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. Can you respond to that?

*The President.* We are fighting Al Qaida in Iraq. A lot of the spectaculars you're seeing are caused by Al Qaida. Al Qaida will fight us wherever we are. That's what they do. That's what they've said they want to do. They have objectives. These are ideologues driven by a vision of the world that we must defeat. And you defeat them on the one hand by hunting them down and bringing them to justice, and you defeat them on the other hand by offering a different alternative form of government.

The Middle East looked nice and cozy for a while. Everything looked fine on the surface, but beneath the surface, there was a lot of resentment; there was a lot of frustration, such that 19 kids got on airplanes and killed 3,000 Americans. It's in the long-term interest of this country to address the root causes of these extremists and radicals exploiting people that cause them to kill themselves and kill Americans and others.

I happen to believe one way to do that is to address the forms of government under which people live. Democracy is really difficult work, but democracy has proven to help change parts of the world from cauldrons of frustration to areas of

hope. And we will continue to pursue this foreign policy; it's in our national interest we do so.

What other aspect of the question?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

*The President.* Yes, I'm—there's—certainly, there's been an uptick in violence. It's a snapshot; it's a moment. And David Petraeus will come back with his assessment, after his plan has been fully implemented, and give us a report as to what he recommends—what he sees, and what he recommends, which is, I think, a lot more credible than what Members of Congress recommend. We want our commanders making the recommendations, and—along with Ryan Crocker, our Ambassador there—I don't want to leave Ryan out.

And so it's a—you know, to Axelrod's point, it's a—no question it's the kind of report that the enemy would like to affect because they want us to leave. They want us out of there. And the reason they want us to leave is because they have objectives that they want to accomplish. Al Qaida—David Petraeus called Al Qaida public enemy number one in Iraq. I agree with him. And Al Qaida is public enemy number one in America. It seems like to me that if they're public enemy number one here, we want to help defeat them in Iraq.

This is a tough fight, you know? And it's—obviously, it's had an effect on the American people. Americans—a lot of Americans want to know win—when are you going to win? And victory is—victory will come when that country is stable enough to be able to be an ally in the war on terror and to govern itself and defend itself.

One of the things that appealed to me about the Baker-Hamilton is that it will provide a—kind of a long-term basis for that likely to happen, assuming the Iraqi Government invites us to stay there. The—and I believe this is an area where we can find common ground with Democrats

and Republicans, by the way. I fully recognize there are a group of Democrats who say: "Get out of the deal now. It's just not worth it."

One of the areas where I really believe we need more of a national discussion, however, is, what would be the consequences of failure in Iraq? See, people have got to understand that if that government were to fall, the people would tend to divide into kind of sectarian enclaves, much more so than today, that would invite Iranian influence and would invite Al Qaida influence, much more so than in Iraq today. That would then create enormous turmoil—or could end up creating enormous turmoil in the Middle East, which would have a direct effect on the security of the United States.

Failure in Iraq affects the security of this country. And it's hard for some Americans to see that. I fully understand it; I see it clearly. I believe this is the great challenge of the beginning of the 21st century—not just Iraq, but dealing with this radical, ideological movement in a way that secures us in the short term and more likely secures us in the long term.

Jim [Jim Rutenberg, New York Times]. You didn't nod off there, did you? [*Laughter*] A little hot out here in the Rose Garden for you? [*Laughter*]

*Usama bin Laden/Threat of Further Terrorist Attacks*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Yes, well, go ahead and take the tie off. I'm halfway done anyway. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, yesterday you discussed Usama bin Laden's plans to turn Iraq into a terrorist sanctuary. What do you think your own reaction would have been 5 years ago had you been told that towards the end of your term, he would still be at large with that kind of capability, from Iraq, no less, and why—can you tell the American people—is he still on the run? Why is he so hard to catch?

*The President.* I would say that 5 years ago—like I said, we're going to pursue him. And we are pursuing him. And he's hiding. He is in a remote region of the world. If I knew precisely where he is, we would take the appropriate action to bring him to justice. He is attempting to establish a base of operations in Iraq. He hasn't established a base in operations. My points yesterday were, here was his intentions, but thankfully, of the three people I named, all of them no longer are a part of his operation.

My point is, is that—I was making the point, Jim, as I'm sure you recognized, that if we leave, they follow us. And my point was, was that Usama bin Laden was establishing an external cell there, or trying to. And he's been unable to do it, precisely my point. That's why we've got to stay engaged. Had he been able to establish an internal cell that had safe haven, we would be a lot more in danger today than we are. His organization is a risk. We will continue to pursue as hard as we possibly can. We will do everything we can to bring him and others to justice.

We have had good success in the chief operating officer position of Al Qaida. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi al Rabium—there's a lot of names that I—some of whom I mentioned yesterday, that are no longer a threat to the United States. We will continue to work to bring him to justice; that's exactly what the American people expect us to do, and, in the meantime, use the tools we put in place to protect this homeland.

We are under threat. Now, some may say, well, he's just saying that to get people to pay attention to him, or try to scare them into—for some reason. I would hope our world hadn't become so cynical that they don't take the threats of Al Qaida seriously, because they're real. And it's a danger to the American people. It's a danger to your children, Jim. And it's really important that we do all we can do to bring them to justice.

Q. Mr. President, why is he still at large?

*The President.* Why is he at large? Because we haven't got him yet, Jim, that's why. And he's hiding, and we're looking, and we will continue to look until we bring him to justice. We've brought a lot of his buddies to justice, but not him. That's why he's still at large. He's not out there traipsing around. He's not leading many parades, however. He's not out feeding the hungry. He's isolated, trying to kill people to achieve his objective.

Those are his words—his objectives are his words, not mine. He has made it clear; he and Zawahiri, their number two, have made it clear what they want. And in a war against extremists and radicals like these, we ought to be listening carefully to what they say. We ought to take their words seriously. There have been moments in history where others haven't taken the words of people seriously, and they suffered. So I'm taking them seriously.

Yes, Jim [Jim Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times].

*Former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, moments ago you said that Al Qaida attacked us before we were in Iraq. Since then Iraq has become much less stable; Al Qaida has used it as a recruiting tool, apparently with some success. So what would you say to those who would argue that what we've done in Iraq has simply enhanced Al Qaida and made the situation worse?

*The President.* Oh, so, in other words, the option would have been, just let Saddam Hussein stay there? That's—your question is, should we not have left Saddam Hussein in power? And the answer is, absolutely not. Saddam Hussein was an enemy of the United States. He'd attacked his neighbors. He was paying Palestinian suicide bombers. He would have been—if he were to defy—and by the way, cheating on the U.N. oil for sanctions program—Oil-for-Food Programme. No, I don't buy it. I don't buy that this world would be

a better place with Saddam Hussein in power, and particularly if—and I'm sure the Iraqis would agree with that.

See, that's the kind of attitude—he says, okay, let's let them live under a tyrant, and I just don't agree. I obviously thought he had weapons; he didn't have weapons. The world thought he had weapons. It was a surprise to me that he didn't have the weapons of mass destruction that everybody thought he had, but he had the capacity at some point in time to make weapons. It would have been a really dangerous world if we had the Iranians trying to develop a nuclear weapon, and Saddam Hussein competing for a nuclear weapon. You can imagine what the mentality of the Middle East would have been like.

And so the heart of your question is, shouldn't you have left Saddam Hussein in power? And the answer is “No.” And now that we've—

Q. [Inaudible]

*The President.* —well, that's really the crux of it. And—let me finish, please, here. I'm on a roll here. And so now that we have, does it make sense to help this young democracy survive? And the answer is “Yes,” for a variety of reasons.

One, we want to make sure that this enemy that did attack us doesn't establish a safe haven from which to attack again. Two, the ultimate success in a war against ideologues is to offer a different ideology, one based upon liberty, by the way, embraced by 12 million people when given the chance. Thirdly, our credibility is at stake in the Middle East. There's a lot of Middle Eastern nations wondering whether the United States of America is willing to push back against radicals and extremists, no matter what their religion base—religious bases may be.

And so the stakes are high in Iraq. I believe they're absolutely necessary for the security of this country. The consequences of failure are immense.

Yes.



Q. So there was no choice between the course we took and leaving Saddam Hussein in power? No—nothing else that might have worked?

*The President.* Well, we tried other things. As you might remember back then, we tried the diplomatic route: 1441 was a unanimous vote in the Security Council that said disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. So the choice was his to make. And he made a choice that has subsequently left—subsequently caused him to lose his life under a system that he wouldn't have given his own citizens. Now, we tried diplomacy. As a matter of fact, not only did I try diplomacy; other Presidents tried diplomacy.

Let's see here. John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

#### *Legislative Priorities/Immigration Reform*

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. You've said many times that you plan to sprint to the finish of your Presidency. At this point in the home stretch, what can you say you're still expecting to accomplish? And how concerned are you that the immigration bill in particular is going to get caught up in electoral politics?

*The President.* Yes, thanks. Well, we need to pass additional energy legislation. We need to renew No Child Left Behind. Get these trade bills out of Congress—the trade bills on Panama and Peru and Colombia, hopefully, work toward a free trade—further the work we've done on the Korean free trade agreement. Hopefully, I'll be able to bring back successful negotiations on Doha for a congressional vote which will require a TPA extension and/or—a TPA extension, there's no “and/or” to it. Making sure that this progress on balancing the budget continues. The deficit is—I know you're following the numbers, John—the deficit is reduced more than anticipated as a result of increased tax revenues coming in and the fiscal measures that we took. And now we're going to have to work with Congress to make sure they don't over-

spend and make sure they don't raise the taxes on the people as well.

Running up the taxes will hurt this economy, which would hurt the revenues to the Treasury. I'm deeply concerned about the Democratic budget that is classic tax and spend. I'm looking forward to seeing how they intend to keep their promise of balancing this budget in 5 years.

A big—and of course, fighting this war on terror is a huge issue. I obviously would like to find common ground on how to proceed in Iraq, with Democrats and Republicans. I recognize there are a handful there or some who just say, “Get out, it's just not worth it, let's just leave.” I strongly disagree with that attitude; most Americans do as well. And the vote showed that what's possible when we work together, the vote—the pending vote today showed what's possible when we work together, when Republicans and Democrats work together. There's a good group of Republicans that want to work with Democrats. They just don't want to accept something that they don't agree with.

Immigration, this is a tough issue. This is a very emotional, hard issue for members of both parties. I've always been a believer that comprehensive immigration reform is the best way to secure our border. I campaigned on that for President twice. I believed it when I was the Governor of Texas. I understand this issue very well. I also understand the frustrations of many citizens in that they believe the government hasn't done its job of stopping illegal migrants from coming into the country.

And that's why over the past couple of years there's been a significant effort to secure the border. There's going to be a doubling of the Border Patrol agents; there's going to be fencing and berms and different types of equipment to help the Border Patrol do its job in a better way. As a matter of fact, I was concerned about it enough to ask the National Guard to go down there for a while.

And—but, John, I don't see—and so those concerns, by the way, are addressed in this bill. The bill essentially says that before any other reforms take place, certain benchmarks will be met when it comes to securing the border. Last year, during the debate, people said, well, let's have security first. That's exactly what the bill does.

However, I don't see how you can have the border security the American people expect unless you have a temporary-worker program, with a verifiable work card. People will come here to do work to feed their families, and they'll figure out ways to do so. As a result of people wanting to come here to do work to feed their families, there is an underground industry that has sprung up that I think is essentially antihumanitarian. It is an industry based upon *coyotes*; those are smugglers. Good, hard-working, decent people pay pretty-good-size money to be smuggled into the United States of America.

There is a document forgery industry in America. There are people who are willing to stuff people inside temporary shelter in order for them to evade the law. I don't think this is American. I think the whole industry that exploits the human being is not in our Nation's interests. And the best way to deal with this problem is to say, if you're going to come and do jobs Americans aren't doing, here is a opportunity to do so, on a temporary basis. I would much rather have people crossing the border with a legitimate card, coming to work on a temporary basis, than being stuffed in the back of an 18-wheeler. And I would hope most Americans feel that as well.

Secondly, in order for there to be good employer verification—it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally, but many times small businesses or large are presented with documents, and they don't know whether they're real or not. And so therefore, we must have a tamper-proof identification card, which is a part of this bill.

A tough issue, of course, is what do you do with the people already here? Anything short of kicking them out, as far as some people are concerned, is called amnesty. You can't kick them out. Anybody who advocates trying to dig out 12 million people who have been in our society for a while is sending a signal to the American people that's just not real. It's an impractical solution. Nor do I think they ought to be given automatic citizenship; that is amnesty—okay, you're here illegally, therefore, you're automatically a citizen.

And so therefore, we proposed and worked with the Senate to devise a plan that said, if you're here already before a certain date, that there are certain hurdles you must cross in order to receive what's called a Z visa, in order to be able to work here. You've got to go through a background check; you've got to pay a fine at some point in time; there's a probationary period. And there's a series of steps that people have to go through, and then people get at the back of the line—the citizenship line—not the beginning of the citizenship line.

If you're for the bill, I thank you; if you're against it, you can find every reason in the world to be against a comprehensive bill. It's easy to find something to be against in this bill. All it takes is to take one little aspect of it and ignore the comprehensive nature and how good it is.

I knew this was going to be an explosive issue. It's easy to hold up somebody who is here and working hard as a political target. I would like to get this bill done for a lot of reasons. I'd like to get it done because it's the right thing to do. I'd like to get it done because I happen to believe the approach that is now being discussed in the Senate is an approach that will actually solve the problem. I'd like to get it out of politics. I don't think it's good to be, you know, holding people up. We've been through immigration debates in this country, and they can bring out the worst,

sometimes, in people. We're a land of immigrants.

I was touched yesterday when the kid from the Coast Guard Academy—ensign, now ensign—talked about his migrant grandfather from Mexico. And here's this guy—this man standing up in front of the President of the United States and his class, talking about serving America. He wasn't—you know, his grandfather wasn't born here. I don't know what job he did; I suspect it was probably manual labor. I don't know; I didn't ask him.

But I do know he spoke with pride. I do know he represents the best about what immigration can mean for America. You know, welcoming people here who want to work and realize the American Dream renews our spirit and soul. It's been the case throughout generations. And we have an opportunity to put a good law in place now; right now. And it's going to be hard work. And sure, politics will get involved. But the question is, will Members of Congress rise above politics? I will. It's the right thing to have a comprehensive bill.

And so I'm going to continue to reach out to Members of Congress from both parties and call upon them to take the lead and show the political courage necessary to get the bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

I want to thank you for your interest.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:01 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; President Hu Jintao and Vice Premier Wu Yi of China; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, cochairs, Iraq Study Group; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. Reporters referred to former Department of Justice official Monica M. Goodling; former Deputy Attorney General James B. Comey; former Attorney General John Ashcroft; and Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG.

## Statement on the Nomination of James W. Holsinger, Jr., To Be Surgeon General

*May 24, 2007*

Today I have announced my intention to nominate James W. Holsinger, Jr., to serve as the 18th Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Holsinger is an accomplished physician who has led one of our Nation's largest health care systems, the State of Kentucky's health care system, and the University of Kentucky's Medical Center. He also has taught at several American medical schools, and he served more than three decades in the United States Army Reserve, retiring in 1993 as a Major General.

As America's chief health educator, he will be charged with providing the best sci-

entific information available on how Americans can make smart choices that improve their health and reduce their risk of illness and injury. Dr. Holsinger will particularly focus his efforts on educating parents and children about childhood obesity, a serious epidemic that decreases quality of life and burdens our health care system. I am confident that Dr. Holsinger will help our Nation confront this challenge and many others to ensure that Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives.

## 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.



On Memorial Day, we also pay tribute to Americans from every generation who have given their lives for our freedom. From Valley Forge to Vietnam, from Kuwait to Kandahar, from Berlin to Baghdad, brave men and women have given up their own futures so that others might have a future of freedom. Because of their sacrifice, millions here and around the world enjoy the blessings of liberty. And wherever these patriots rest, we offer them the respect and gratitude of our Nation.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 25 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 25, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *May 28, 2007*

Thank you all. Secretary England, members of the Cabinet, General Pace, Members of Congress, members of the United States military, veterans, families of the fallen, my fellow citizens: Welcome.

Today we honor the warriors who fought our Nation's enemies, defended the cause of liberty, and gave their lives in the cause of freedom. We offer our love and our heartfelt compassion to the families who mourn them. We pray that our country may always prove worthy of the sacrifices they made.

For seven generations, we have carried our fallen to these fields. Here rest some 360,000 Americans who died fighting to preserve the Union and end slavery. Here rest some 500,000 Americans who perished in two World Wars to conquer tyrannies and build free nations from their ruins. Here rest some 90,000 Americans who gave their lives to confront Communist aggression in places such as Korea and Vietnam.

Many names here are known: the 18-year-old Union soldier named Arthur MacArthur who grabbed a falling flag and carried it up Missionary Ridge; the Tuskegee Airmen who defended America abroad and challenged prejudice at home; the slain war hero and President who asked that we "as-

sure the survival and success of liberty" and found his rest beneath an eternal flame. Still others here are remembered only by loving families. Some are known only to God.

Now this hallowed ground receives a new generation of heroes: men and women who gave their lives in places such as Kabul and Kandahar, Baghdad and Ramadi. Like those who came before them, they did not want war, but they answered the call when it came. They believed in something larger than themselves. They fought for our country, and our country unites to mourn them as one.

We remember Army Specialist Ross Andrew McGinnis. Ross was born on Flag Day in 1987. When he was in kindergarten, he said he wanted to grow up to be "an Army man." He enlisted at 17, the first day he was eligible. He deployed to Iraq. Last December, a grenade was thrown into his Humvee as Ross was patrolling the streets of Baghdad. The soldiers inside could not escape in time, so Ross leapt into the vehicle and covered the grenade with his own body. By sacrificing himself to save four other men, he earned a Silver Star and the eternal gratitude of the American people.

We remember Marine Sergeant Marc Golczynski of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Marc volunteered for a second tour of duty in Iraq. He knew the dangers his service would entail. Before he deployed, he wrote the following in an e-mail to his family and friends: "Please don't feel bad for us. We are warriors, and as warriors have done before us, we fight and sometimes die so our families do not have to." Marc left behind an 8-year-old son, Christian, who is with us today. He managed to be brave while he held his father's folded flag.

With us are other children and families mourning moms and dads and sons and daughters. Nothing said today will ease your pain. But each of you need to know that your country thanks you, and we embrace you, and we will never forget the terrible loss you have suffered. I hope you find comfort in knowing that your loved ones rest in a place even more peaceful than the fields that surround us here.

The greatest memorial to our fallen troops cannot be found in the words we say or the places we gather. The more lasting tribute is all around us, a country where citizens have the right to worship as they want, to march for what they believe, and to say what they think. These freedoms came at great costs, and they will survive only as long as there are those willing to step forward to defend them against determined enemies.

As before in our history, Americans find ourselves under attack and underestimated. Our enemies long for our retreat. They question our moral purpose. They doubt our strength of will. Yet even after 5 years of war, our finest citizens continue to answer our enemies with courage and confidence. Hundreds of thousands of patriots still raise their hands to serve their country; tens of thousands who have seen war on the battlefield volunteer to reenlist. What an amazing country, to produce such fine citizens.

Laura and I have met many of them. We've sat at the bedsides of the wounded.

This morning I met with servicemembers who received medals for distinguished service and found myself humbled by their grace and their grit. I had the honor of meeting with families of the fallen in the Oval Office and was amazed by their strength and resolve and decent grace under pressure.

We've heard of 174 marines recently—almost a quarter of a battalion—who asked to have their enlistments extended. For these extensions, they would earn no promotion and no promise of a favored posting. They want to serve their Nation. And as one of them put it, "I'm here so our sons don't have to come and fight here someday."

Those who serve are not fatalists or cynics. They know that one day, this war will end, as all wars do. Our duty is to ensure that its outcome justifies the sacrifices made by those who fought and died in it. From their deaths must come a world where the cruel dreams of tyrants and terrorists are frustrated and foiled, where our Nation is more secure from attack, and where the gift of liberty is secured for millions who have never known it.

This is our country's calling; it's our country's destiny. Americans set off on that voyage more than two centuries ago, confident that this future was within our reach, even though the shore was distant and even though the journey may be long. And through generations, our course has been secured by those who wear a uniform, secured by people who man their posts and do their duty. They have helped us grow stronger with each new sunrise.

On this day of memory, we mourn brave citizens who laid their lives down for our freedom. They lived and died as Americans. May we always honor them, may we always embrace them, and may we always be faithful to who they were and what they fought for.

Thank you for having me. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery.

## Remarks on the Situation in Darfur, Sudan *May 29, 2007*

Good morning. For too long, the people of Darfur have suffered at the hands of a government that is complicit in the bombing, murder, and rape of innocent civilians. My administration has called these actions by their rightful name: genocide. The world has a responsibility to help put an end to it.

Last month, I announced that the United States was prepared to take new steps if the Government of Sudan did not allow the full deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping force; if the Government did not begin living up to its many commitments, that the United States would act. I made clear that the time for promises was over, and that President Bashir had to do something to end the suffering.

I held off implementing these steps because the United Nations believed that President Bashir could meet his obligations to stop the killing and would meet his obligations to stop the killing. Unfortunately, he hasn't met those obligations. President Bashir's actions over the past few weeks follow a long pattern of promising cooperation while finding new methods for obstruction.

One day after I spoke, the military bombed a meeting of rebel commanders designed to discuss a possible peace deal with the Government. In the following weeks, he used his army and Government-sponsored militias to attack rebels and civilians in south Darfur. He's taken no steps to disarm these militias in the year since the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed. Senior officials continue to oppose the deployment of the U.N. peacekeeping force.

The result is that the dire security situation on the ground in Darfur has not changed. And so today, at my instruction, the United States has taken the steps I announced in April.

First, the Department of Treasury is tightening U.S. economic sanctions on Sudan. With this new effort, the United States will more aggressively enforce existing sanctions against Sudan's Government.

As part of this effort, the Treasury Department will add 30 companies owned or controlled by the Government of Sudan to its list of Specially Designated Nationals. We're also adding an additional company to the list, a company that has been transporting weapons to the Sudanese Government and militia forces in Darfur. All these companies are now barred from the U.S. financial system. It is a crime for American companies and individuals to knowingly do business with them.

Second, we're targeting sanctions against individuals responsible for violence. These sanctions will isolate these persons by cutting them off from the U.S. financial system, barring them from doing business with any American citizen or company, and calling the world's attention to their crimes.

Third, I'm directing the Secretary of State to consult with the United Kingdom and other allies on a new United Nations Security Council resolution. This resolution will apply new sanctions against the Government of Sudan, against individuals found to be violating human rights or obstructing

the peace process. It will impose an expanded embargo on arms sales to the Government of Sudan. It will prohibit the Sudanese Government from conducting any offensive military flights over Darfur. It will strengthen our ability to monitor and report any violations.

At the same time, we will continue to push for U.N. support, including funding for the African Union peacekeepers, who remain the only force in Darfur that is protecting the people. We will continue to work for the deployment of a larger, hybrid force of AU and U.N. peacekeeping troops. We will continue to support the diplomacy of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We will continue to insist on the full implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement. We will continue to promote a broadly supported and inclusive political settlement that is the only long-term solution to the crisis in Darfur.

America's commitment is clear. Since this conflict began, we have provided more than \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance for Darfur. We are the world's largest single donor to the peo-

ple of Darfur. We're working for the day when the families of this troubled region are allowed to return safely to their homes and rebuild their lives in peace.

The people of Darfur are crying out for help, and they deserve it. I urge the United Nations Security Council, the African Union, and all members of the international community to reject any efforts to obstruct implementation of the agreements that would bring peace to Darfur and Sudan.

I call on President Bashir to stop his obstruction and to allow the peacekeepers in and to end the campaign of violence that continues to target innocent men, women, and children. And I promise this to the people of Darfur: The United States will not avert our eyes from a crisis that challenges the conscience of the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan.

## Remarks Following a Briefing on the Georgia and Florida Wildfires in Brunswick, Georgia *May 29, 2007*

I've just had an extensive briefing on the fires here in Georgia and Florida. You can see on the map back there, the fire covers a lot of area. A lot of timberland is being burnt down. A lot of people's livelihoods are being affected. A lot of good country is being destroyed. And a lot of good people are fighting the fires.

First, I appreciate very much the folks that have put a strategy in place to deal with these fires. They're doing their very best to contain the fires. But the best solution, of course, would be if the weather patterns change. And until that, they're

going to be fighting these fires. And we've got a lot of brave men and women on the frontlines doing it.

Secondly, I got a briefing from the local officials about what the Federal Government ought to continue to do. Right now the coordination is good, in terms of fighting the fires. The question is, can we help them even more? And so we'll take back the recommendations to Washington. Secretary Chertoff will look very carefully at the recommendations and then work closely with Senator Chambliss and Senator

Martinez about what we can do to help the good people down here.

It's a very difficult period for the people, particularly in southeast Georgia and north Florida. A lot of lives are being affected. I've come down to let the people know that we are concerned about their livelihood, that I'm fully aware of the nature of these fires, that we strongly support the

efforts being done here to fight these fires. And we wish the people all the best.

In the meantime, we'll be analyzing ways that we can help even further. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. at Airport Fire Station Number Five at the Brunswick Golden Isles Airport.

Remarks at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco,  
Georgia  
May 29, 2007

Thank you all very much. Please be seated, unless, of course, you don't have a chair. [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me. I'm honored to be here at the headquarters of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

I don't know whether you realize this or not, but the Government originally planned to open this center inside the Capital Beltway. No one looks very sad that we didn't open it in front of the Capital Beltway. [*Laughter*] It's a spectacular place to have this center. It is a glorious place to live. I'm honored to be in your presence. Thanks for letting me come by and share some thoughts with you.

I want to thank Director Patrick for her strong leadership and her kind introduction. I appreciate very much the tour I have just taken. A lot of our fellow citizens probably don't know what goes on here, but this is a center full of smart, capable instructors who are helping to train men and women who've volunteered to serve our country on the frontlines of protecting the homeland. I am grateful to be in your midst. I thank those of you who work here; I thank those of you who are being trained here; and I thank your families as well.

We have a mission, a vital mission, and that's to protect our country. And you all are on the frontlines of that protection. And

it gives me great confidence when I meet you to tell the American people, there's a lot of decent souls doing everything they can to provide security for the American people. So thanks.

I appreciate the folks at FLETC that I met that are working the border and helping train people to secure this border of ours. And I've come today not only to thank you but to talk about immigration. Immigration is a vital issue facing this country. And the fundamental question is, will elected officials have the courage necessary to put a comprehensive immigration plan in place that makes it more likely we can enforce our border and, at the same time, uphold the great traditions—the immigrant traditions of the United States of America? And that's what I want to discuss with you.

Before I do, I do want to introduce some people. I want to introduce Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez. I appreciate you coming, Mr. Secretary. Carlos wasn't born here, see. He was born in another country: Cuba. And now he sits in the Cabinet of the President of the United States. There's something great about a country that welcomes people, people who uphold our laws and realize the great blessings of America.



With us as well is Senator Mel Martinez. He wasn't born in America. He's a Senator from Florida. He was born in Cuba. I don't know if you know his story, but his mother and father put him on an airplane to come to the United States of America to be raised by total strangers because they didn't want their son to grow up under a tyrant named Fidel Castro. He used to sit in the Cabinet of the President of the United States; now he sits in the United States Senate. What a wonderful country it is, where people can come to live in a country based upon liberty and realize the great blessings of our country.

And I want to mention those two men because, to me, they represent what the immigration debate is all about. Will we be a welcoming place, a place of law that renews our spirit by giving people a chance to succeed? So, Senator, thank you for coming as well.

I've saved the other two traveling with me because they were born here—[laughter]—starting with the United States Senator from Georgia, a south Georgian named Saxby Chambliss, one of the finest Senators in the United States Senate.

Finally, I asked Secretary Mike Chertoff to leave the bench to become the Director of the Department of Homeland Security. It's a big job. It's a job that requires organizing various Agencies under one task, and that's to provide protection to the American people. And Secretary Chertoff is doing a fine job. I'm glad he's joined us today. Thanks for coming, Mr. Secretary.

I thank all the State and local officials who are here, who have joined us. I appreciate you taking time to come over and say hello. I thank the citizens from this part of the world who have joined us as well. Thanks for supporting this good institution. I know you know this, but FLETC provides an important role for this country of ours, and I thank you for supporting it.

Before I talk about immigration, I do want to offer condolences for Agent Robert

Smith. He died last week from injuries in a helicopter crash. He was a Customs and Border Protection agent. He reminds us, on a regular basis, that those who are on the frontline of protecting the country take danger for—as a part of their job. And therefore, we offer our deepest condolences for Robert Smith's family and his friends, and we ask for God's blessings on them.

Our Nation depends on our Federal agents to enforce our immigration laws at the border and across the country. In other words, you've got a big job to do. We're counting on you to enforce those laws. And when you graduate from FLETC, you're going to be an important part of that role. That's why you're here; it's to upgrade your skills so you have the capacity to do the job the country expects you to do. You're going to safeguard our ports of entry; you'll investigate workplace immigration violations; and you'll arrest those breaking the law. We are a nation of laws, and we expect people to keep the laws. And if they break the laws, there will be a consequence.

This administration of mine is committed to ensuring that our Federal agents have the resources you need to carry out your responsibilities. For some of the older hands here—and I'm not going to pick you out of the crowd—[laughter]—I'm sure you will tell some of the younger folks that things have changed significantly over the past years. One way to measure how things have changed is, look at the budget. We've doubled the funding for border security since I took office. We now spend \$10 billion a year to protect this border. One commitment to the American people that we're serious about helping you do your job is to spend more money on the job. It's a way to measure whether or not our—we're meeting our words with commitment. And we are.

We've used additional money. People say, "What are you spending it on?" Well, we're expanding the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to 13,000, and by the end of—we have expanded it—and

by the end of 2008, we're going to have 18,000 agents. We will have more than doubled the Border Patrol in a relatively quick period of time. We believe the more manpower is on the border, the more likely it is we'll be able to enforce the border, like the American people expect us to do.

We're investing in new technology; we're strengthening infrastructure. In other words, we've taken our duty seriously to protect the border of the United States of America. As a matter of fact, we take it so seriously that I asked the Governors to put some National Guard troops down there until our Border Patrol agents got trained.

And we're beginning to see some results. In this immigration debate, oftentimes people say, "Well, they're not doing anything to protect the border." Well, that's not—those folks just simply don't know what's going on. You do. Men and women who wear the uniform understands what's going on. There's a focused, concerted effort to enforce our border.

As a matter of fact, you can tell when the border is better defended because the number of arrests go down. In other words, when people know there's a consequence to trying to sneak across, there's less likely to be people sneaking across. Arrests have gone down by 27 percent over the past year on the southern border. That's a sign of progress. It should say to the American people that we're doing what the people expect us to do.

The new infrastructure is making a difference. The Predators make a difference. The number of Border Patrol agents make a difference. I don't know if any of you spent time out in Artesia, New Mexico, if you're working for the Border Patrol, but I was impressed with boot camp. And they're training these Border Patrol agents to do the hard work that the American people expect them to do.

One of the problems we had prior to the administration addressing the problem was, we had what was called—what hap-

pened was called catch-and-release. So you had your Border Patrol working hard, finding somebody trying to sneak into our country illegally. They'd catch him, and then they say: "Well, you know, look, you need to come back for your hearing. We're going to let you out, but come back for your hearing." Well, the problem was, the people didn't want to come back for their hearing. They generally wanted to go work, and so they would just disappear.

And it discouraged our Border Patrol agents. I've talked to too many agents and heard too many stories about people saying: "Wait a minute; I'm tired of doing my job on the frontline of protecting the border only to have the people that I have stopped coming in meld into our society."

And so we worked with Congress, and we've got a lot of detention facilities now along the border. See, we didn't have space before; now we do have space. And as a result, catch-and-release has virtually been eliminated. It sends a strong—getting rid of the catch-and-release program sends a strong signal to people: If you come to the country, we will find you, and we're going to send you home, so don't try to come in the first place.

In other words, we're working hard to enforce the border. And we're stepping up enforcement inside the country. I see a lot of ICE hats. These are the folks that are charged with making sure that people who knowingly hire somebody who's here illegally pays a price. In other words, part of making sure our country is a rule of law, we've got to have people enforce the law. It's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally; that's the law. And we're training people here to make sure that they know how to enforce that law. And the message is—the message to employers—if you're hiring somebody here that you know is illegal, we're going to—there's a consequence to be paid. That's what a nation that bases its system on rule of law does, and that's what we'll continue to do.

And ICE is active. Your folks are working hard. ICE investigations have led to more than 3,000 arrests for immigration violations since the beginning of this fiscal year, nearly 600 arrests for criminal violations, including fraud and identity theft, and nearly \$30 million in penalties against businesses that have violated the law.

We're working hard to enforce the border. In the immigration debate, you hear people say, "Well, they're not doing anything to enforce the border." They're wrong, and you know they're wrong. And I'm here to thank you for doing—for working as hard as you can.

And now we've got to build on the progress. It's important for our American citizens to understand that the immigration system is in desperate need for comprehensive reform. And Congress has a historic window to act. The system isn't working. Think about a system that encourages smugglers to stuff people in 18-wheelers, people that want to work, people that want to provide for their families. Think about a system in which there's tremendous document forgery.

You've got a person out here in south Georgia who needs somebody to help them on their farm. The person shows up with documents. They don't know whether they're real or not. There's a lot of forgery going on. We've got people—in my judgment, this isn't what America should be about. And yet the system is broken to the point where people are being used as human cargo, being exploited, simply because most want to come and provide for their families. Most are willing to do jobs Americans aren't doing. The system needs to be fixed.

I appreciate the Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate, starting with Saxby Chambliss and Mel Martinez, who put politics aside and put courage first to work on a comprehensive bill. It takes a lot of courage in the face of some of the criticism in the political world to do what's right, not what's comfortable. And

what's right is to fix this system now before it's too late. And I thank you two for your courage.

And Carlos and Mike Chertoff spent a lot of time sitting with the Senators from both political parties. I don't know if you're tired of it, but a lot of Americans are simply tired of this endless political bickering, that we can't work together because it might make somebody else look good. I tried to change the system. It's not working. So I sent the two Secretaries in there with the Senators from both parties and said, okay, why don't we sit down and see if we can't figure something that's good for the country. Each side is going to have to give a little bit. Not everybody is going to get everything they want, but what matters more is fixing the problem now.

And we're making some progress. Most Americans—or many Americans say their primary concern is border security and ensuring that those who violate our laws face consequences. That's what you're hearing out there when you're listening to the debate.

Others say their chief concern is keeping this economy strong. There's a—a lot of employers need a legal way to fill jobs that Americans simply aren't doing. There's a lot of jobs here in Georgia that require people from—that are willing to do the work that Americans aren't doing. It's just the way it is.

You talk to your farmer friends or your nursery friends—I remember the peach grower, Saxby, that you sent over to the White House. He's there saying to me: "You've got to understand something, Mr. President. My business won't go forward unless I have some of these good people that are willing to work long hours in my peach orchard helping me harvest the crop." So a lot of people in this debate are concerned about getting a bill in place that will help keep the economy growing.

Others say their main concern is to bring hard-working, decent people out of the shadows of our society. All these concerns

are part of the same issue, and it's important for American citizens to understand that the legislation now before Congress addresses them all as one. Our view is, is that you can't solve the problem unless you address all aspects of the problem. We've tried to address immigration reform in the past by talking about only one aspect of immigration reform. To make it work, to address the concerns of the American people, there must be a comprehensive approach.

A lot of Americans are skeptical about immigration reform primarily because they don't think the Government can fix the problems. And my answer to the skeptics is, give us a chance to fix the problems in a comprehensive way that enforces our border and treats people with decency and respect. Give us a chance to fix this problem. Don't try to kill this bill before it gets moving. Give us a chance to make it easier for the folks who wear the uniform along our borders to do their job.

I believe the bill before Congress learns from the mistakes of the past. It is the best hope for lasting reform. If people are interested in fixing a system that's broken, this bill is the best hope to do so. It answers the longstanding concerns of the American people. It deserves widespread support, and I strongly back it.

If you're serious about securing our borders, it makes sense to support legislation that makes enforcement our highest priority, and that's what this bill does. For decades, we have not been in complete control of the borders, and many people have lost faith in our capacity to get control of the borders. I ask them to look at what's taken place over the past years, recent years. I wish they could talk to some of your Border Patrol friends and talk about the advances that have been made and the good work they're doing down there.

The first step to comprehensive reform must be to enforce immigration laws at the borders and at worksites across America, and this is what this bill does. For the

skeptics who say that we're not concerned about border security or workplace enforcement, they need to read the bill. The bill prioritizes enforcing our laws at the border and saying to employers, we'll hold you to account for employing somebody who's here illegally—knowingly employing somebody who's here illegally.

This bill sets enforcement benchmarks that have got to be met before other aspects of the comprehensive bill are triggered. In other words, there has to be certain accomplishments in place before other aspects of the bill come into being. And here are some of those markers: increasing the number of Border Patrol agents. In other words, we said we're going to double them; they've got to get doubled, until other aspects of the bill come into being. We're going to build miles of state-of-the-art fencing. We're going to improve surveillance with advanced technologies. We will do a better job of holding employers accountable for the workers they hire.

Most employers want to comply with the law. The peach grower wanted to comply with the law. Believe me, he's a law-abiding, decent man. His attitude is, why don't you help me verify the legal status of a potential employee, as opposed to holding me to account—which we will do, of course, if he knowingly hires somebody—give me a hand with the verification system.

And that's why we're going to promote tamper-resistant identification cards. In other words, if you're here working, you're going to have a card that you can't tamper with, that some document forger can't foist off as a document for somebody to come and pick peaches here in Georgia.

In other words, we've got a serious attempt in this bill, and a real attempt to do what a lot of Americans want us to do, and that's enforce the border. If you're serious about keeping our economy strong, it makes sense to support legislation that gives foreign workers a legal path to jobs in America. There are people doing jobs here Americans aren't doing.

The peach man said to me, he said, "I can't find somebody from my hometown who wants to pick peaches, but I can find somebody who wants to put food on their table for a family from Mexico," for example. It seems to me; it makes sense to give those people a chance to come and work here on a temporary basis. This bill says "temporary." It means temporary. You'll be here for a number of years, and you'll go back home. That's what a temporary-worker plan does. In the meantime, it helps meet the needs of our economy.

This bill's going to—this aspect of the bill will allow Federal agents to focus on apprehending violent criminals and terrorists who are a threat to our country rather than people who want to work here. In other words, if you can come to our country on a temporary basis legally, you're not going to sneak across the border. Who wants to pay a *coyote* hundreds of dollars or thousands of dollars when you can walk across and say, "I'm going to have a temporary work—job here in this country, and here's my tamper-resistant card."

If you're interested in securing the border, wouldn't you rather have Border Patrol agents chasing down terrorists and gun runners and dope runners, as opposed to people who are coming to do jobs Americans aren't doing? A temporary-worker plan, that is truly temporary, is going to make it easier for us to enforce the border. Border enforcement and having a rational worker plan go hand in hand. And that's what the American people have got to understand.

A temporary-worker program will not begin until our border security measures are in place and until we have a reliable system for verifying employment eligibility. That's the way the bill works. Oh, I'm sure you've heard some of the talk out there about people defining the bill. It's clear they hadn't read the bill. They're speculating about what the bill says, and they're trying to rile up people's emotions. This is a good piece of legislation. It addresses

the border security needs, and it addresses the employment needs of our country.

If you're serious about bringing hard-working illegal immigrants out of the shadows of our society, it makes sense to support legislation that will resolve their status without animosity and without amnesty. Others—I don't—they estimate 11 to 12 million people have been here for some—quite awhile, who are in an underground in America. It's not right, as far as I'm concerned. That's not what this country stands for. I know there are some people out there hollering and saying, "Kick them out." That is simply unrealistic. It won't work.

There are some people saying, "Giving them automatic citizenship." I oppose that. It won't work. I don't think it makes any sense to do that. Amnesty is forgiveness for being here without any penalties; that's what amnesty is. I oppose it. The authors—many of the authors of this bill oppose it. This bill is not an amnesty bill. If you want to scare the American people, what you say is, the bill is an amnesty bill. It's not an amnesty bill. That's empty political rhetoric, trying to frighten our fellow citizens. People in Congress need the courage to go back to their districts and explain exactly what this bill is all about in order to put comprehensive immigration reform in place.

Let me explain how it works. Under the bill, those who want to stay in our country who have been here can apply for a Z visa. At some point in time, those who are coming to work will get temporary-work visas. Those who have been here already can apply for a Z visa. To receive the visa, illegal workers must admit they violated the law and pay a meaningful penalty, pass a strict background check, hold a job, maintain a clean record, and eventually earn English—learn English. That's how it works.

It says, if you want to be here, here's what you have to do. There is a consequence for having broken the law. As



a result of a recent Senate amendment, they have to pay back taxes if they haven't paid taxes too. You're working hard; you pay taxes. People who have been here in this country ought to pay taxes. That's what it says.

The hurdles to citizenship are going to be even higher. In other words, if somebody says: "Fine. I'll take my Z visa. I'm out of the shadows now. I've got an opportunity to not hide in America. I'll continue doing the work I'm doing. I'm going to keep my record clean. I'll pay the penalties necessary so I can stay here." That's what it says. But if you want to be a citizen, there's more hurdles. It says, the Z visa worker would first have to pay an additional fine. In other words, you have broken the law, and there's a consequence for breaking the law. That's what the bill says.

Secondly, you've got to return home to file an application for your green card. If you want to be a citizen, you pay a fine; you touch base—home to apply for a green card; and then you take your place behind those who have played by the rules and have been waiting in line patiently to become a citizen.

This is a good bill. It recognizes that we've got to treat people with respect, and it also recognizes we're a nation of law. And as we go forward, the legislation creates a new system for admitting new immigrants to our country, people who want to come here legally. The system is going to reward applicants based upon skills and education, in addition to family ties, so we can ensure America continues to have the world's most talented workforce.

This legislation is also going to help newcomers assimilate into our society. One of the great aspects of American society is, people have been able to assimilate.

You know, I was at the Coast Guard Academy the other day, giving a speech there. And the president of the class, a Latino, talked with great pride in his voice about the fact that his grandfather was a migrant to the United States of America,

and here he is addressing the Coast Guard Academy. I think it speaks volumes about the great promise of America. One of the reasons why, is because his family assimilated into our society and into our culture. The key to unlocking the full promise of America is the ability to speak English. That's the language of our country. If you can speak English in this country and work hard and have dreams, you can make it. That's the great story of America. I believe it's true today like it was true yesterday as well.

We expect opportunities to help—we will expand opportunities to help new immigrants learn the language, learn about the ideals that make us a wonderful country. If you're serious about reform, it makes sense to support comprehensive legislation that addresses all aspects of the problem. You cannot solve the problem unless we address all aspects of the problem at the same time.

This reform is complex. There's a lot of emotions around this issue. Convictions run deep. Those determined to find fault with this bill will always be able to look at a narrow slice of it and find something they don't like. If you want to kill the bill, if you don't want to do what's right for America, you can pick one little aspect out of it; you can use it to frighten people. Or you can show leadership and solve this problem once and for all, so the people who wear the uniform in this crowd can do the job we expect them to do.

Now is the time for comprehensive immigration reform. Now is the time for members of both political parties to stand up and show courage and take a leadership role and do what's right for America.

Thanks for letting me come by, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. at the Tom Steed Building. In his remarks, he referred to Connie L. Patrick, director, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; and

President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Nomination of Robert B. Zoellick To Be President of the World Bank  
*May 30, 2007*

*The President.* Good morning. I thank Secretary of Treasury Paulson for joining us today. I'm pleased to announce that I will nominate Bob Zoellick to be the 11th President of the World Bank.

Bob Zoellick has had a long and distinguished career in diplomacy and development economics. It has prepared him well for this new assignment. He is a committed internationalist. He has earned the trust and support of leaders from every region of the world. He is deeply devoted to the mission of the World Bank. He wants to help struggling nations defeat poverty, to grow their economies, and offer their people the hope of a better life. Bob Zoellick is deeply committed to this cause.

Since the end of the Second World War, the advance of trade and technology has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Some call this globalization; I call it the triumph of human liberty, stretching across national borders. Every day, the expansion of trade creates tremendous new opportunities for people. Unfortunately, too many people are shut out from these opportunities, especially the nearly 1 billion men, women, and children who live on less than \$1 a day. Bob Zoellick understands that there are about 1 billion men, women, and children who live on less than \$1 a day, and he's committed to doing something about it.

The United States has a moral and national interest in helping poor and struggling countries transform themselves into free and hopeful societies. The job of the World Bank is to help reduce poverty and

raise living standards in the poorest nations. The Bank does this by helping these nations strengthen good government, develop sound financial markets, uphold property rights, and combat corruption.

The United States is the Bank's largest donor. And the reason we are, is because we believe that it is essential to help developing nations build growing economies that will provide jobs and opportunities for all their citizens.

Bob Zoellick brings a wealth of experience and energy to this task. Over the past three decades, he's held important posts in government, business, and higher education. And in these posts, he has worked on issues ranging from German unification, Latin American debt relief, to the transition of post-Soviet economies.

For the past 6 years—or most of the past 6 years—he has served as a member of my Cabinet. As the United States Trade Representative, he helped bring China and Taiwan into the World Trade Organization, launched the Doha round of trade talks at the WTO, and significantly increased the number of U.S. free trade agreements.

Bob has had a strong voice for Africa. He's helped implement the African Growth and Opportunity Act that has increased America's trade with that continent.

He has served on the board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, an initiative designed to change the way we deliver foreign aid. In 2005, I asked Bob to serve as the Deputy Secretary of State. In that role, he managed a global staff of 57,000 people; he played a leading role in our

engagement with China; and he traveled frequently to Darfur and southern Sudan to help find a path for peace. Most recently, he has been vice chairman international at Goldman Sachs. In short, it would probably be easier to list all the jobs Bob hasn't had.

This man is eminently qualified, and when he takes his place at the World Bank, he will replace another able public servant, Paul Wolfowitz. Paul is a man of character and integrity. Under his leadership, the World Bank increased its support for the world's poorest countries to a record \$9.5 billion in 2006. Half of this money goes to sub-Saharan Africa. It's home to some of the poorest folks. As Paul has helped steer more resources to these countries, he has instituted reforms designed to make sure that these resources are used wisely and achieve good results.

Paul took control over the World Bank at a critical moment. He's taken many steps to ensure that the Bank can meet the needs of developing nations in this new century. These steps include strengthening the Bank's role in combating malaria. These steps include establishing a rapid response in fragile-states policy to respond more

quickly to nations recovering from crisis or war. These steps include the Clean Energy Investment Framework, a Bank initiative designed to help bring cleaner and more efficient technologies to developing countries.

In these and many other ways, Paul Wolfowitz has made the World Bank a more effective partner for development. I thank him for his dedication to the poor and his devotion to the good work of the World Bank.

Bob Zoellick is the right man to succeed Paul in this vital work. He's a leader who motivates employees. He builds a constituent support and focuses on achieving goals. I'm pleased that he has, once again, agreed to serve our country.

Congratulations.

[At this point, President-designate Zoellick made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Thanks, Bob. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President-designate Zoellick.

## Remarks on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief May 30, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the Rose Garden. Today I'm joined by some very determined people who are battling one of the worst epidemics of modern times, the spread of HIV/AIDS.

I want to thank you all for being here. I'm honored to be in your presence. And I want to thank others who are joining us in this important cause as well, starting with Ambassador Mark Dybul, who is the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. He runs our PEPFAR initiative. Mark, thank you for being here, as well as Rajat Gupta, who

is the chairman of the board of the Global Fight—Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Rajat, we're proud you're here.

He's told me something very interesting. Actually, he and I attended the same graduate school, and he said: "It's important for people who have been successful in the business world to contribute something back to society." And, Rajat, thank you for that spirit, and thank you for that compassion and concern.

Secretary Mike Leavitt is with us, the Department of Health and Human Services; Ambassador John Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State. I'm about to make an important initiative. I appreciate my—the members of my administration for joining us to hear this initiative.

The U.S. and our citizens have tackled HIV/AIDS aggressively. Many HIV-positive Americans are able to lead productive lives. The story has been quite different elsewhere, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

When I took office, an HIV diagnosis in Africa's poorest communities was usually a death sentence. Parents watched their babies die needlessly because local clinics lacked effective treatments. The story of a mother of Kenya affected me deeply, when she couldn't afford drugs, except for one person in her family. So she forgave her own treatment to save her son. Despairing families who had lost everything to AIDS started to believe that they had been cursed by the Almighty God. This modern-day plague robbed Africa and other countries of the hope of progress and threatened to push many communities toward chaos.

The United States has responded vigorously to this crisis. In 2003, I asked Congress to approve an emergency plan for AIDS relief. Our Nation pledged \$15 billion over 5 years for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care in many of the poorest nations on Earth. In the years since, thanks to the support of the United States Congress and the American people, our country has met this pledge. This level of assistance is unprecedented and the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history.

This investment has yielded the best possible return: saved lives. To date, the emergency plan has supported treatment for 1.1 million people infected with HIV. This is a promising start, yet without further action, the legislation that funded this emergency plan is set to expire in 2008. Today I ask Congress to demonstrate America's

continuing commitment to fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS by reauthorizing this legislation now. I ask Congress to double our initial commitment and approve an additional \$30 billion for HIV/AIDS prevention, for care, and for treatment over the next 5 years.

This money will be spent wisely through the establishment of partnership compacts with host nations. These compacts would ensure that U.S. funds support programs that have the greatest possible impact and are sustainable for the future. America will work with governments, the private sector, and faith and community-based organizations around the world to meet measurable goals: to support treatment for nearly 2.5 million people, to prevent more than 12 million new infections, and to support care for 12 million people, including more than 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

To help assess the progress we have made to date, Laura, the First Lady, is going to go to Africa next month. She's going to meet with community leaders and visit with participants in HIV/AIDS programs during her trip to Zambia, Senegal, Mali, and Mozambique. And she's going to come back with her findings. I really thank her for her concern about HIV/AIDS. She and I share a passion. We believe strongly that to whom much is given, much is required. Much has been given the United States of America. Therefore, I believe strongly, as does she, that much is required of us in helping solve this problem.

The statistics and dollar amounts I've cited in the fight against HIV/AIDS are significant, but the scale of this effort is not measured in numbers. This is really a story of the human spirit and the goodness of human hearts. Once again, the generosity of the American people is one of the great untold stories of our time. Our citizens are offering comfort to millions who suffer, and restoring hope to those who feel forsaken.

You know, one good example of this good work is supported by—that the U.S. supports is called the Coptic Hope Center, in Nairobi, Kenya. Three years ago, the center had a staff of four people and resources to treat no more than five HIV/AIDS patients a day. Today, the staff consists of 40 people and 10 volunteers who provided care and treatment services to over 6,000 people. I want to thank the Director of the Hope Center, Bishop Paul, who's with us today. I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank you for your leadership and for your care for your fellow human beings.

Dr. Bill Pape is with us as well. Dr. Pape is an expert on infectious diseases and founded in Haiti a leading HIV treatment program, which is a major PEPFAR partner. Dr. Pape has shown that even in the most difficult circumstances, dedicated and caring people can make great progress in fighting HIV/AIDS. We're sure proud you're here, doc. Thanks for coming.

Also with us is Kunene Tantoh. Kunene is HIV positive. She coordinates a mentoring program, supported by U.S. funds, for other mothers with HIV in Cape Town, South Africa. Kunene is proof that people with HIV can live productive lives and make a significant difference in the lives of others. Kunene, I want to thank you for joining us. Thank you for bringing

Baron. Baron is 4 years old, and he's letting us know. [Laughter] We appreciate you all coming. Thank you for the example you have set.

Similar success stories are playing out all across the African continent, where victims of HIV/AIDS are finding new reservoirs of strength and support. Villages in Africa now talk of the Lazarus effect, dying communities being brought back to life, thanks to the compassion of the American people. This is the impact that has made our emergency plan and the modern-day, good Samaritans who are implementing it so effective. It's important that we continue the work we have begun.

I'm honored that you were here today. I'm honored to be representing a nation that cares deeply about the suffering of others. I look forward to working with Congress on this great and noble effort.

May God bless you all. May God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:14 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jean W. Pape, director, Haitian Study Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections; and Manyongo "Kunene" Mosima Tantoh, member, Mothers to Mothers-To-Be. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at a New Jersey Republican Committee Reception in Edison, New Jersey May 30, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Yes, it's good to be back in Jersey. Thank you for the warm welcome. I appreciate you all coming. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind remarks.

*Audience members.* We love you, Mr. President! We love you!

*The President.* Yes, well, last time I was in Jersey, there was a lot of heckling as well. [Laughter] Good heckling. [Laughter] I love you too. Thank you. Thanks for coming. Thank you for your enthusiasm. Thank you for supporting the Republican Party.

Mr. Chairman, I am glad to come and help you raise money so that you can



achieve big things, first of all, taking those New Jersey houses in the November '07 election and laying the groundwork for an important election in '08. It is important that a Republican succeed me as President of the United States, and I thank you for supporting those efforts.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. One grassroots activist I've known for a long time is the senior chairman of the county chairmen here in the State of New Jersey: George Gilmore. He happens to be the chairman of the Ocean County Republican Party. And I want to thank all the other county chairmen who are here. And I want to thank all the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work so that our candidates know that they're supported when they're out there seeking the vote.

I really appreciate you coming. I'm proud to be here with my friend, Lew Eisenberg, former Republican National committeeman from New Jersey, and his wife Judy. I thank Larry Bathgate, former finance chairman for the Republican National Committee. I want to say thank you to State Minority Leader Leonard Lance and Alex DeCroke of the State senate for serving—or actually, DeCroke is in the statehouse, and Lance is in the senate. And I appreciate them serving. And our job is to help you all become the majority leaders. And I think we've got a good chance to do it. The experts tell me that with hard work, there's a good chance that the statehouse and the State senate become Republican. And I'm glad to be a part of helping, and I want to thank you all for helping as well.

I want to thank you all for recognizing the fact that you've got the B-team in the Bush family. The A-team is across the river in New York City. Yes, that's Laura. She sends her love. I will tell you this: I'm a lucky man—when I asked her to marry me, and she said, "Yes." A lot of her friends aren't so sure she's so lucky.

[*Laughter*] But I am pleased to report she's doing well. She's a great First Lady, a great wife, and a great mom.

I believe you win elections by telling the people what you believe, not necessarily what they want to hear. And here are the things that we believe: We believe that the number-one priority of this country is to protect the people of the United States from further attack. And that's why we believe in a strong national defense. We believe in supporting those who are in the homeland defending this country, and we believe those who are defending it overseas.

We believe that we ought to trust people to make the decisions on how they run their lives, not trust the government. And the classic case of whether we trust people or not is when it comes to cutting taxes. If you believe in cutting taxes, it means you trust you to spend your money better than the government can.

We believe you've got to trust in the values of our citizens. We believe the role of government is to unleash the great compassion of America to help solve many of the problems that can only be solved through love and decency and care; that's what we believe. We believe that there is a role for government, but we believe the primary role for government is to empower our citizens to realize their God-given potential. And if we campaign on that message, and if we stick to those principles, and if we govern for what's right, not based upon the latest Gallup Poll, we will continue to lead this country.

I want to talk about our security and our economy. We are a nation at war. I wish I didn't have to say that, but that's the reality of the world in which we live. Now, I understand there's some good, decent people who disagree with that assessment. We're a country where people are free to express their views. Some people don't believe we're in war; I'm just not one of them. I believe that the role of

the United States Government is to do everything we can to protect you from further attack.

You were affected by the September the 11th attacks a lot, and so was I. I vowed on that day that I would use all U.S. assets to do what was necessary to protect the American people. We're fighting an enemy that is cruel, an enemy that murders the innocent to achieve objectives. These folks just aren't isolated, angry people, these are ideologues. These are people that have got a set of beliefs. I would suggest that people, if they're trying to figure out what these people believe and their vision of the world, is just remember what life was like under the Taliban in Afghanistan—particularly if you were a woman or a young girl—you had no rights, no freedoms. If you expressed your belief, it was contrary to their view, you would be, at minimum, whipped in the public square. These people are brutal. They have no conscience.

They do want to spread their vision as far and wide as possible. They have a vision of establishing a caliphate. They hate the United States of America and what we stand for. They hate many of our friends, including Israel. The only way to deal with these people is to stay on the offense, fight them overseas so we don't have to fight them here at home.

And that's exactly what we've done. I vowed that this Nation wouldn't tire. I vowed that I would do everything I could to lead this Nation, to protect you. And since that fateful day that killed nearly 3,000 people, innocent people, this country has been on the offense. If we find them overseas, we'll bring them to justice. We're using everything in our power to get good intelligence. We've reformed homeland security. We're supporting those on the front-line of securing this country.

Oh, I know there's a big debate about how to deal with these folks. I will just tell you my view. You can't ration with them. You can't compromise with them. You can't hope for the best with them.

You must treat them as they are—cold-blooded killers—and bring them to justice before they hurt again.

One of the lessons of September the 11th is, we must confront threats before they come home to hurt us; that when we see a threat, we must deal with it—not always with the military, necessarily, but we've got to take threats seriously. We just can't hope that oceans will protect us from these people. They have strategies to impose their will. They want to cause enough harm to cause us to retreat in order for them to be able to impose their vision. These folks found safe haven and got help in Afghanistan. We gave them a chance to—the Government to turn them over. They refused, and so we removed the Taliban from power and thereby removed the ability for Al Qaida to plot and plan and attack again.

In Iraq, we faced a threat. He was an enemy of America, a person who had used weapons of mass destruction, and a person who was paying Palestinian—the family—Palestinian families of suicide bombers, a person who had harbored terrorists. I went to the United Nations, right across the river here. I said to the world, "We face a common threat." The United Nations Security Council agreed. We told Saddam Hussein with one voice, international voice, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." It was his choice to make. He defied the demands of the free world. I made the decision that we would liberate the people of Iraq. Getting rid of Saddam Hussein made the world a better place.

And now the question is, will our country help these two struggling democracies succeed? See, the short-run strategy is to bring people to justice, is to keep the pressure on. The long-term strategy is to defeat their ideology with a more hopeful ideology, and that's the ideology based upon liberty. Free societies are societies that best answer the hopes and dreams of people. In the short term, we'll keep the pressure on the enemy. In the long term, we must confront

the circumstances by which 19 people decided to get on airplanes and kill nearly 3,000 people on a brutal attack on the United States of America. And the stakes are high.

You know, I know that many of you people are deeply concerned about Iraq, and so am I. You see the carnage on your TV screens, and you wonder whether or not success is possible. I want to remind you that there has been pretty startling progress made in Iraq. After all, 12 million people went to the polls and supported a modern-day constitution and voted for a free government, which stands in stark contrast to life under a brutal tyrant who killed thousands of his own people.

And a knowing enemy realized there was being progress—progress was being made, and they want to stop it. Isn't it interesting, to determine the mindset of people who would want to stop the advance of a free society? Those are people we need to take seriously in this world.

Many of the spectacular bombings you see are inspired and done by Al Qaida. As General Petraeus said, public enemy number one in Iraq is Al Qaida. Public enemy number one in the United States of America is Al Qaida. We must defeat Al Qaida there so we don't have to face them here.

As you know, last fall, I made a decision about how we should conduct our affairs in Iraq. I had to choose between allowing the sectarian violence that was beginning to get out of hand to continue to foster, or whether or not to put in more U.S. troops to try to quell that sectarian violence, to give this young democracy and its leaders a chance to make the decisions necessary for its society to move forward.

Now, I want to tell you—I want to share why I made the decision I made. I believe that if we allowed the sectarian violence to rage in that young democracy, it could create chaos, not only in the capital but throughout the country. I was deeply concerned that chaos would create a security

vacuum into which radical and extremist elements would flow, many of which would have been fueled by outside forces. I was concerned that the chaos could spill out into other countries and destabilize governments. I was concerned that the message it would send to a country like Iran was that the United States of America couldn't be counted on. I was concerned that moderate people all throughout the Middle East would say, the United States doesn't keep its word. I was concerned that the enemy that wants to strike us again would be emboldened and would find more recruits. I was concerned that the chaos would be exactly what the enemy wants. And so I made a decision to put more troops in, as opposed to retreat.

And I believe this: No matter what the opinions of people in Washington may be, when we've got our troops in harm's way, they need all the support; they need all the support they can get from the U.S. Government.

This is hard work, but it is necessary work for the security of this country. What happens in Iraq matters to the security here at home. And I understand how hard it is. But I'll tell you what, this is an amazing country, when we produce men and women who fully understand the stakes of serving in the United States military in a time of danger. I am constantly amazed that people raise their right hand to wear the uniform of America, to do what is necessary to protect us. And I am proud to be their Commander in Chief.

You know, I tell people that one of the startling aspects of my Presidency has been that one of my really best friends as President was the Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi. I find it interesting—he was such a good friend. Remember, we went down to Elvis's place—[laughter]—in Memphis, and we had a wonderful trip. And by the way, his replacement, Prime Minister Abe, is a good friend too.

Isn't it amazing that my dad and many of your relatives fought the Japanese as a sworn enemy?

*Audience member.* This gentleman right here—[inaudible].

*The President.* Right there is one. Isn't that interesting that George H.W. Bush, young Navy fighter pilot, put his life on the line, along with a lot of other good folks, to fight the Japanese in a really bloody conflict? And some 60 years later, his son sits at the table with the Prime Minister of the former enemy, talking about helping this young democracy in Iraq survive, talking about making sure the leader of North Korea doesn't get a nuclear weapon, talking about keeping the peace.

Liberty has got the capacity to transform troubled regions into peaceful regions. It has got the capacity to help enemies become allies. In order to defeat the ideologues that murder the innocent to achieve their objectives, there must be an alternative ideology available. And we've got one for the world, and it's called freedom.

I firmly believe we'll succeed in doing the hard work if we do not lose our nerve. I believe—I firmly believe that the decisions I have made not only will help secure this country from further attack but will lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. I don't want it to be said, when the chaos were to spill out and the nuclear arms race may occur in the Middle East, that people will look back and say, "What happened to them in the year 2007? How come they couldn't see the impending danger?" I'm prepared to continue to lead this Nation and will lead this Nation for the next 20 months to make sure that we do the hard work necessary to secure this country from attack.

Our foreign policy, though, is much more than just military action and kinetic action in dealing with an enemy. Our foreign policy is one based upon the premise and the principle, to whom much is given, much is required. Today in the Rose Garden, I

talked about the great compassion of our American citizens when I announced that we were going to double our program to deal with HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. You ask, "Why would you do that, Mr. President?" And the reason why it matters to help ease the suffering around the world is, what happens overseas matters to the security of the United States of America. Where you find disease and hunger and poverty, you find despair. And the danger is that despair could turn into extremism, radicalism, to the point where people would be willing to come and kill to achieve political objectives.

I am so proud of the United States of America. I don't know if you know this or not, but 3 years ago, 50,000 people were receiving antiretroviral drugs on the continent of Africa. Thousands were dying, and a generation was in the process of being wiped out. And today, because of your generosity, 1.1 million people receive antiretroviral drugs, and we intend to double that number. The soul of America is enriched when we help those who need help. Whether it be feeding the hungry or fighting malaria or dealing with HIV/AIDS, the United States of America is in the lead.

And we're also the leader in the industrialized world when it comes to economic growth. This economy of the United States of America is strong. The unemployment rate is low; it's low in a State like New Jersey. We're adding new jobs. Inflation is down. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. People are investing. People are making a living in this country.

You know, it wouldn't necessarily have been that way—you might remember the short-term economic history of the United States. A recession set in, in 2001. We had those terrorist attacks, which, of course, you remember here in New Jersey, vividly remember, which affected our economy. We had corporate scandals. We had a lot of hurdles in the way of economic vitality. But I think I made a decision that affected the

economic future of the country when I worked with the United States Congress to cut the taxes on everybody who paid taxes in the United States.

The best way to keep this economy strong is to let you keep more of your own money in your pocket. If you're interested in small-business growth, you let our small businesses keep money—more of the money they earn. If you want investment, you incent investment by cutting the taxes on investment. If you want a family to do well, you keep the child credit high. If you want to make sure you get—if you want marriage, you get rid of the marriage penalty. In other words, if you want the American people to do better, you cut the taxes, is what you do.

And that's exactly what we did. And now guess what's happening? The rhetoric in Washington is beginning to shift, as you know, and the Congress changed hands. And they submitted a budget up there.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* They submitted a new budget, and it's a throwback to the old days. They said, "We need more of your money, and therefore, oh, we're just going to tax a few of you." But that's not the way it works in Washington, DC. You can't sate their appetite for spending your money. The bunch in power in Congress now wants to raise your taxes as much as they possibly can because they think they can spend your money better than you can.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* And that is why it's important for us to make sure those tax cuts we passed are permanent.

Oh, I know, look, you'll hear the same tired rhetoric. Listen, "We got to balance the budget by raising your taxes." But we've shown it is possible to balance the budget by keeping taxes low, keeping our economy strong, and being wise about how we spend your money.

You might remember, a while ago, I said, "We're going to cut the deficit in half over a period of time." Well, we did so quicker

than anticipated, 3 years quicker. And now we've submitted a new budget that shows how you can balance the budget by keeping taxes low, within 5 years. And here's the logic, and here's the reason behind such a philosophy: Low taxes encourage economic growth. Economic growth, it turns out, causes there to be more tax revenues coming into the Treasury. More tax revenues in the Treasury means you have more money to offset spending.

And so when you're wise about spending and you keep taxes low—growing the economy so we've got the revenues to spend—you end up balancing the budget. We've got plenty of money in Washington, DC. We need more money in your pockets so this economy continues to grow.

And I believe that if our candidates run on strong national defense and strong security, and I believe if our candidates say, we trust you to make your health care decisions, or we trust you to make rational decisions for your family, and we trust you with your own money, we'll keep the White House in 2008, that we can retake the statehouses across the country, and we can retake the Congress. Our philosophy is hopeful. Our philosophy is optimistic. And we have shown over this last 6 years, our philosophy works for the good of the American people.

So that's what I've come to share with you. I hope out of this talk, you get a sense for my optimism about America's future. I believe there is no problem we can't solve when we put our mind to it. I believe that we are a country of determined, fine people, who are willing to do the hard work necessary to grow this economy and, at the same time, protect our country. I believe there are better days ahead for the American people.

I am proud to lead you. I am proud you're here. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:09 p.m. at the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to Tom



Wilson, chairman, New Jersey Republican State Committee; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National

Force—Iraq; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

## Remarks to the United States Global Leadership Campaign May 31, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Laura, thanks for that short introduction. [*Laughter*] I'm proud to be introduced by my wife. I love her dearly. She's a great First Lady.

And I appreciate the chance to address the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign. This is a fine organization, and it's an important organization. It's rallying businesses and nongovernmental organizations and faith-based and community and civic organizations across our country to advance a noble cause, ensuring that the United States leads the world in spreading hope and opportunity. It's a big deal, and I appreciate your participation.

It's a big deal because your efforts are needed. Millions suffer from hunger and poverty and disease in this world of ours. Many nations lack the capacity to meet the overwhelming needs of their people. Alleviating this suffer requires bold action from America. It requires America's leadership, and it requires the action of developed nations as well.

That's the message I'm going to take with me to Europe next week, when Laura and I go to the G-8. At that meeting I will discuss our common responsibility to help struggling nations grow strong and improve the lives of their citizens. And today I'm going to describe some of the initiatives that I will be discussing with world leaders next week to help developing nations build a better future for their people.

Before I do so, I want to thank George Ingram, the president of the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign. I thank the members of my Cabinet who share the same

passion I do for helping those less fortunate around the world. That would include Carlos Gutierrez, Department of Commerce; Secretary Mike Leavitt, Department of Health and Human Services; Secretary Sam Bodman at the Department of Energy; Administrator Steve Johnson of the EPA. Thank you all for coming. Proud to be serving with you.

I am glad that the Acting Director of the U.S. Foreign Assistance and Acting Administrator of USAID is here, Henrietta Fore. Thanks for coming. I appreciate John Danilovich, who is the head of the Millennium Challenge Corporation; Rob Mosbacher, the head of OPIC. I appreciate other members of my administration who joined us today.

I thank the members of the diplomatic corps who are here today. I thank the members of the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign.

We are a compassionate nation. When Americans see suffering and know that our country can help stop it, they expect our Government to respond. I believe in the timeless truth, and so do a lot of other Americans: To whom much is given, much is required. We're blessed to live in this country. We're blessed to live in the world's most prosperous nation. And I believe we have a special responsibility to help those who are not as blessed. It is the call to share our prosperity with others and to reach out to brothers and sisters in need.

We help the least fortunate across the world because our conscience demands it. We also recognize that helping struggling nations succeed is in our interest. When

America helps lift societies out of poverty, we create new markets for goods and services and new jobs for American workers. Prosperity abroad can be translated to jobs here at home. It's in our interest that we help improve the economies of nations around the world.

When America helps reduce chaos and suffering, we make this country safer, because prosperous nations are less likely to feed resentment and breed violence and export terror. Helping poor nations find the path to success benefits this economy and our security, and it makes us a better country. It helps lift our soul and renews our spirit.

So America is pursuing a clear strategy to bring progress and prosperity to struggling nations all across the world. We're working to increase access to trade and relieve the burden of debt. We're increasing our assistance to the world's poorest countries and using this aid to encourage reform and strengthen education and fight the scourge of disease. We'll work with developing nations to find ways to address their energy needs and the challenge of global climate change.

Bringing progress and prosperity to struggling nations requires opening new opportunities for trade. Trade is the best way to help poor countries develop their economies and improve the lives of their people. When I took office, America had free trade agreements with three countries. Today, we have free trade agreements in force with 14 countries, most of which are in the developing world. Three weeks ago, my administration and Congress agreed on a new trade policy that will be applied to free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. And I look forward to working with Congress to get all these trade bills passed. These bills are good for our economy.

But it's important for Members of Congress and the people of this country to understand, free trade is the best way to lift people out of poverty. And so the United

States also seeks to open markets to the Doha round of trade negotiations. Doha represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help millions in the developing world rise from poverty and despair. If you're interested in helping the poor people, you ought to be for trade and opening up markets for their goods and services. And the Doha round gives us an opportunity to do just that.

We put forward bold proposals to help conclude a successful Doha round. And at the G-8 summit next week, I'm going to urge other nations to do the same. A successful Doha round will benefit all our countries, and it's going to transform the world.

I know that trade can transform lives; I've seen it firsthand. Laura and I were recently in Guatemala. We went to a small village and saw what can happen when markets are open for local entrepreneurs. In this case, we met some farmers who for years had struggled to survive, worked hard just to put food on the table for their families by growing corn and beans. That's all they were able to do. It's a hard way to make a living, growing corns and beans. When we negotiated the trade agreement called the CAFTA-DR, which opened up new markets for Guatemalan farmers, the entrepreneurial spirit came forth. There are entrepreneurs all over the world. If just given a chance, they can succeed.

Today, the farmers in that village are growing high-value crops because they have new markets in which to sell their product. The business we met—the entrepreneur we met now employs 1,000 people. Trade will improve lives a lot faster than government aid can. It's in our interest that we open up markets for our products and for the products of others. People just want to be given a chance. And the United States will take the lead in making sure those markets are open for people to be able to realize a better life.

Building progress and prosperity to struggling nations requires lifting the burden of

debt from the poorest countries. That makes sense. It doesn't take a Ph.D. in economics to figure out, if you're paying a lot of money on interest, you're not having enough money to support your own people. In the past, many poor nations borrowed money, and they couldn't repay the debt. And their interest payments were huge. And therefore, they didn't have the opportunity to invest in education and health care. So the administration, my administration worked with G-8 nations to ease the debt burden. We're not the first administration to have figured this out. My predecessor did the same thing because it's the right policy for the United States of America.

Two years ago at Gleneagles, the G-8 nations agreed to support a multilateral debt relief agreement that freed poor countries of up to \$60 billion in debt. This year, we built on that progress when the Inter-American Development Bank approved another debt relief initiative for some of the poorest nations in our neighborhood, in our own hemisphere. This initiative will cancel \$3.4 billion owed by five countries: Bolivia, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua. And that represents more than 12 percent of their combined GDP, an average of nearly \$110 for every man, woman, and child in these countries. And this money is now free to help these nations invest in improving their lives of citizens. It makes sense to forgive debt. If you're interested in helping the poor, it makes sense for the developed world to forgive the debt. And that's what the United States will continue to do.

Bringing progress and prosperity to struggling nations requires increased American assistance to countries most in need. Since I took office, we have more than doubled U.S. development spending across the world, from about \$10 billion in 2000 to \$23 billion in 2006. It's the largest increase in development assistance since the Marshall plan.

The first 4 years of my administration, we doubled our assistance to Africa. At the G-8 summit in 2005, I promised our assistance to Africa would double once again by 2010. I made a promise to the people. People expect us to deliver on that promise, and I expect the Congress to help. We must not shortchange these efforts. Congress needs to approve my full funding request for development assistance this year. We need to get the job done.

We're focusing increased American assistance for developing nations on three key goals. In other words, we have some goals; we're not just going to spend money. We have a reason to spend the money, and we expect there to be results when we spend that money, and so do the taxpayers of this country. It's one thing to be compassionate; it's another thing to be accountable for the money.

First, we're going to use our aid to help developing countries build democratic and accountable institutions and strengthen their civil societies. To succeed in the global economy, nations need fair and transparent legal systems, need free markets that unleash the creativity of their citizens, need banking systems that serve people at all income levels, and a business climate that welcomes foreign investment and supports local entrepreneurs.

The United States is helping developing nations build these and other free institutions through what we call the Millennium Challenge Account. Under this program, America makes a compact with developing nations. We give aid, and in return they agree to implement democratic reforms, to fight corruption, to invest in their people—particularly in health and education—and to promote economic freedom. Seems like a fair deal, doesn't it—taxpayers' money from the United States in return for the habits and procedures necessary for a solid society to develop. We don't want to give aid to a country where the leaders steal

the money. We expect there to be accountability for U.S. money, and that's the principle behind the Millennium Challenge Account. Eleven nations have compacts in place worth nearly \$3 billion. And now 14 additional nations are eligible to negotiate compacts with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, headed by Ambassador Danilovich.

Let me give you an example of how this program can make a difference. In Madagascar, the leaders of this island nation set a goal in their compact to improve agricultural production. In other words, we work with a nation; they have set the goal; we support their goal. They want their farmers to be able to compete in the global marketplace. We agreed to help by investing in agricultural business centers that work with local farmers. In one village, this initiative helped a group of farmers who were surviving by collecting firewood and producing charcoal. That's how these folks were trying to get ahead. They'd find firewood and make charcoal out of it and hope they could find a market. It's a tough way to make a living in a modern world.

The business center that the compact established helped the farmers work together to identify a new product, a natural oil used in skin care products. I probably could use some of that myself here. *[Laughter]* The center helped these farmers develop—helped them to develop a business plan. They acquired financing to set up a distilling plant. They built relationships with buyers in their nation's capital.

Before America and Madagascar signed our compact, a typical farmer in this village could earn about \$5 a week selling charcoal. After 2 months of bringing the new product to the market, the livelihood of these farmers increased. One farmer was able to raise his income enough to save about \$500, money he plans to use for a child's education.

We're going to help encourage African entrepreneurs in other ways as well. Today I'm announcing a new project called Africa

Financial Sector Initiative. Through this initiative, we'll provide technical assistance to help African nations strengthen their financial markets. The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corp., OPIC, headed by Rob Mosbacher, will work with the financial community to create several new private equity funds that will mobilize up to a billion dollars of additional private investment in Africa.

If you're interested in job creation, there's got to be capital available. It's in our interest that we help provide capital to African entrepreneurs. We want them to find access to capital, and we want them to have access to markets because we want to improve their lives. And when people's lives in countries on the continent of Africa improve, it helps the United States of America. It's what our taxpayers have got to understand. It's in our interests.

All this will go for naught if people don't have a good education. So the second way we're using our aid is to improve education so that the young in the developing world have the tools they need to realize their God-given potential. Many parents across the world either have no access to education for their children or simply cannot afford it. It's a fact of life—something the world needs to deal with, particularly those of us who have got some money.

In many nations, girls have even less educational opportunity. It robs them of a chance to satisfy their ambitions or to make use of their talents and skills, and it's really sad, when you think about it. It really is. The question is, does the United States care? Should we do something about it? And the answer is, absolutely. If boys and girls in Africa and other developing nations don't learn how to read, write, and add and subtract, this world is just going to move on without them. And all the aid efforts we'll be trying will go to naught, in my judgment.

And so in 2002, I launched the African Education Initiative to help address the great need. Through this initiative, we have

provided about \$300 million to expand educational opportunities throughout the continent, and we're going to provide another \$300 million by 2010. We will have doubled our commitment.

One young woman who has benefited from this program is a woman named Evelyn Nkadori from the Maasai people of the grasslands of Kenya. In her rural community, girls are rarely offered an education, just never given a chance. They're expected to care for younger children until they're married themselves at an early age. That was the custom. She had a different vision for her future, and our initiative helped her realize it. Our program helped her complete high school, and now she's attending Chicago State University on a scholarship. She is one of the first women from her village ever to receive a college education. She hopes to attend medical school and then go home and help others.

Evelyn, I appreciate you being here today. I'm honored in your presence. Thank you for your courage. We can't make you want to succeed, but we can help you succeed. Thanks for coming.

And we need to do more, for not only children on the continent of Africa but poor children throughout the world. And so I'm calling on Congress to fund \$525 million over the next 5 years to make our educational initiatives even more robust. And the goal is to provide basic education for 4 million additional children on the continent of Africa and across the globe.

We've got another interesting idea, and that is to establish new communities of opportunity centers in poor nations to provide skills and language training for 100,000 at-risk youth. Giving these young people in these countries the skills they need to succeed, we're going to give them keys to a brighter future.

The third way we're using our aid is to fight the scourge of disease in Africa and other parts of the developing world. Epidemics like HIV/AIDS and malaria destroy lives, and they decimate families.

They also impose a crippling economic burden on societies where so many are struggling to lift their families out of poverty. We've taken action to fight these diseases. We've done so because it's in our Nation's interest to do so.

In 2003, my administration launched a new initiative to combat HIV/AIDS: the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR. We pledged \$15 billion over 5 years for AIDS prevention and treatment and care programs in many of the poorest nations on Earth. This level of support was unprecedented. I'm proud to report, on behalf of our citizens, that it remains the largest commitment by any nation ever to combat a single disease.

And the program is working. Three years ago, about 50,000 people on the continent of Africa were receiving antiretroviral drugs for help. Today, over 1.1 million people are receiving lifesaving drugs. And this is a good start, it's a necessary start, and it's a promising start. But we need to do more. So yesterday in the Rose Garden, Kunene and Baron and the good doc—and I don't know where the Bishop is—[laughter]—anyway, they were standing with me up there when I called on Congress to greatly expand our efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS, by doubling our initial commitment, by dedicating an additional \$30 billion to this struggle over the next 5 years, beginning in the year 2009.

And here's the goal: support treatment for nearly 2.5 million people, to prevent more than 12 million new infections, and to provide compassionate care for 12 million people, including 5 million more orphans and vulnerable children. We set the goal for the past initiative, and we met it. And we're going to set the goal for this one, and we're going to meet it. But Congress needs to get that money as quickly as possible so it makes it easier to meet the goal. I proposed this unprecedented investment for a reason. It's in the world's interest and our Nation's interest to save



lives. And that's exactly what this program is doing.

We saved a life of a fellow named Robert Ongole. He's with us today. John Robert Ongole—not yet, not yet, John Robert. [Laughter] I'm going to make it a little more dramatic than that. [Laughter] You probably didn't know who I was talking about when I skipped the "John." [Laughter]

John Robert has a family of two children; he has HIV/AIDS. This disease ravaged his body. His weight dropped to 99 pounds. He developed tuberculosis and other health problems. He and his family felt certain that he would die. Then John Robert began receiving antiretroviral treatment through PEPFAR in Uganda. His treatment restored his strength. He returned to the classroom, and he continued being a dad.

John Robert is earning his bachelor's degree in education. He's volunteering to help other people. The American people need to hear what he had to say: "When you talk of PEPFAR, that's my life because it worked. Because without it, I couldn't have lived. Now I want to save the lives of other people." Thanks for coming, John Robert.

Does it matter to America if John Robert lives? You bet it does. That's why this initiative is an important initiative. That's why it's important Congress continue to spend taxpayers' money to save lives like John Robert's and Kunene's and Baron's.

As we increase our commitment to fight HIV/AIDS, we're also continuing an unprecedented commitment to fight against malaria. Malaria takes the lives of about 1 million people a year in the developing world, and the vast majority are under 5 years old. In some countries, this disease takes even more lives than HIV/AIDS. Every 30 seconds, a mother in Africa loses her child to malaria. It's a tragic disease because it's preventable and treatable. We can do something about it.

In 2005, I announced the President's Malaria Initiative. Through this initiative,

we're spending \$1.2 billion over 5 years to fight the disease in 15 targeted African countries. This initiative provides insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor spraying, and lifesaving antimalaria medications. This strategy works. It really isn't all that complicated. It takes money and organization and effort.

In Angola, this initiative helped increase the number of children protected by nets from less than 5 percent to nearly 70 percent. You buy the nets, you educate the people, and you get the nets to them. And when they start using them, lives are saved. This initiative has expanded malaria protection for more than 6 million Africans in its first year. And by the end of the second year, in 2007, we expect to reach a total of 30 million people.

At the G-8 summit, I'm going to urge our partners to join us in this unprecedented effort to fight these dreaded diseases. America is proud to take the lead. We expect others to join us as well. If you want to help improve lives on the continent of Africa and around the world, join with the United States and provide substantial help to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Bringing progress and prosperity to struggling nations requires growing amounts of energy. It's hard to grow your economy if you don't have energy. Yet, producing that energy can create environmental challenges for the world. We need to harness the power of technology to help nations meet their growing energy needs while protecting the environment and addressing the challenge of global climate change.

In recent years, science has deepened our understanding of climate change and opened new possibilities for confronting it. The United States takes this issue seriously. The new initiative I am outlining today will contribute to the important dialog that we—will take place in Germany next week. The United States will work with other nations to establish a new framework on

greenhouse gas emissions for when the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

So my proposal is this: By the end of next year, America and other nations will set a long-term global goal for reducing greenhouse gases. To help develop this goal, the United States would convene a series of meetings of nations that produce the most greenhouse gas emissions, including nations with rapidly growing economies like India and China.

In addition to this long-term global goal, each country would establish midterm national targets and programs that reflect their own mix of energy sources and future energy needs. Over the course of the next 18 months, our nations would bring together industry leaders from different sectors of our economies, such as power generation and alternative fuels and transportation. These leaders will form working groups that will cooperate on ways to share clean energy technology and best practices.

It's important to ensure that we get results, and so we would create a strong and transparent system for measuring each country's performance. This new framework would help our nations fulfill our responsibilities under the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The United States will work with all nations that are part of this convention to adapt to the impacts of climate change, gain access to clean and more energy-efficient technologies, and promote sustainable forestry and agriculture.

The way to meet this challenge of energy and global climate change is through technology, and the United States is in the lead. The world is on the verge of great breakthroughs that will help us become better stewards of the environment. Over the past 6 years, my administration has spent, along with the Congress, more than \$12 billion in research on clean energy technology. We're the world's leader when it comes to figuring out new ways to power our economy and be good stewards of the environment.

We're investing in new technologies to produce electricity in cleaner ways, including solar and wind energy, clean coal technologies. If we can get a breakthrough in clean coal technologies, it's going to help the developing world immeasurably and, at the same time, help protect our environment.

We're spending a lot of money on clean, safe nuclear power. If you're truly interested in cleaning up the environment or interested in renewable sources of energy, the best way to do so is through safe nuclear power. We're investing in new technologies that transform the way we fuel our cars and trucks. We're expanding the use of hybrid and clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel.

We're spending a lot of your money in figuring out ways to produce ethanol from products other than corn. One of these days, we'll be making fuel to power our automobiles from wood chips, to switchgrasses, to agricultural wastes. I think it makes sense to have our farmers growing energy, so that we don't have to import it from parts of the world where they may not like us too much. And it's good for our environment as well.

We're pressing on with battery research for plug-in hybrid vehicles that can be powered by electricity from a wall socket, instead of gasoline. We're continuing to research into advance hydrogen-powered vehicles that emit pure water instead of exhaust fumes. We're taking steps to make sure these technologies reach the market, setting new mandatory fuel standards that require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels by the year 2017. It's a mandatory fuel standard. We want to reduce our gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years, which will not only help our national security, it will make us better stewards of the environment. The United States is taking the lead, and that's the message I'm going to take to the G-8.

Last week, the Department of Energy announced that in 2006, our carbon emissions decreased by 1.3 percent while our economy grew by 3.3 percent. This experience shows that a strong and growing economy can deliver both a better life for its people and a cleaner environment at the same time.

At the G-8 summit, I'm going to encourage world leaders to increase their own investments in research and development. I'm looking forward to working with them. I'm looking forward to discussing ways to encourage more investment in developing nations by making low-cost financing options for clean energy a priority of the international development banks.

We're also going to work to conclude talks with other nations on eliminating tariffs and other barriers to clean energy technologies and services by the end of year. If you are truly committed to helping the environment, nations need to get rid of their tariffs, need to get rid of those barriers that prevent new technologies from coming into their countries. We'll help the world's poorest nations reduce emissions by giving them government-developed technologies at low cost or, in some case, no cost at all.

We have an historic opportunity in the world to extend prosperity to regions that have only known poverty and despair. The

United States is in the lead, and we're going to stay in the lead.

The initiatives I've discussed today are making a difference in the lives of millions; our fellow citizens have got to understand that. We're talking about improving lives in a real, tangible way that ought to make our country proud. That's why we've asked these folks to come. It's one thing for the President to be talking about stories, it's another thing for the people to see first-hand what our help has done.

I'm so proud of the United States of America. This initiative shows the good character and the decency of the American people. We are a decent people. We feel responsible for helping those who are less fortunate. And I am proud to be the President of such a good nation.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Manyongo "Kunene" Mosima Tantoh, member, Mothers to Mothers-To-Be, and her son, Baron; Jean W. Pape, director, Haitian Study Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections; and His Grace Bishop Paul, director, Coptic Hope Center. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq *May 31, 2007*

*President Bush.* It is my honor to welcome the President of a free Iraq back to the Oval Office. President Talabani, thank you for coming. I admire your courage. I admire your dedication to a united Iraq. I admire the leadership you have shown, and I welcome you.

We had a good conversation today about a variety of subjects. I told the President that I'm fully committed to helping the Iraqi Government achieve important objectives—we call them benchmarks—political law necessary to show the Iraqi citizens that there is a unified government willing to work on the interest of all people.

The President fully understands the need for the Iraqi Government to meet certain benchmarks, and he is dedicated to achieving those benchmarks. We're working very hard, for example, on getting an oil law with an oil revenue sharing code that will help unite the country. Working very hard on de-Ba'athification law and on reform, as well as Provincial elections.

We talked about a lot of issues. And I want to thank you very much for your vision, Mr. President, and your willingness to take the hard steps necessary to get the job done.

I told the President the decision I have made: I've asked one of my top aides, Meghan O'Sullivan, to return to Baghdad. Meghan has been an integral part of our team here at the White House. She has been in Iraq before. She's going back to serve with Ambassador Crocker, to help the Iraqis and to help the Embassy help the Iraqis meet the benchmarks that the Congress and the President expect to get passed. And I want to thank Meghan for her dedicated service to a free Iraq.

Mr. President, it is important that you succeed. Failure in Iraq would endanger the American citizens because failure in Iraq would embolden the enemies of a free Iraq. David Petraeus said: Public enemy number one in Iraq is Al Qaida. Al Qaida happens to be public enemy number one in America too. And that should say loud and clear to citizens who still remember the lessons of September the 11th that it's in our interest to help the Iraqis defeat Al Qaida.

We must not let Al Qaida have a safe haven in Iraq. We must not retreat in the face of the unspeakable violence that they perpetuate on your citizens. We must help you prevail. And if all Iraqis showed the same courage you showed, we will prevail. And there's a lot of a—courageous Iraqis there.

I'm confident we can succeed, Mr. President. And I want to thank you for coming here to the White House to join me.

*President Talabani.* I'm pleased and honored to meeting our great friend, whom we consider the hero of liberating Iraq, President George Bush, who was always with Iraqi people. And also, I must tell you that I'm committed, as the President of Iraq, to benchmarks and to do our best to achieve some progress forward for national reconciliation, for passing the law: oil law, de-Ba'athification, and investment and other laws which are now under discussion. And I think we are due to finish all of it and send it to Parliament to be achieved.

At the same time, we are committed to do our best to train our army and armed forces to replace, gradually, the American forces in taking responsibility of the security of our country. Of course, we are very grateful to the American people. And I present my condolences to the sacrifice which these glorious people America has always presented for liberating peoples all over the history and for Iraqi people and—*[inaudible]*—people and others.

We are always repeating our desire to strengthen the unity of Iraq and the unity of the National Government and to have the collective leadership in Iraq for dealing the oil problems. And I briefed His Excellency, Mr. President, about what we have done and what we have achieved for this purpose.

I'm glad to have the support of President Bush and the Congress. I'm grateful to Congress. I told President Bush that I'm grateful for the Congress for the last decision and for the—*[inaudible]*—decision, which was the resolution that was taken by Congress, the resolution of liberating Iraq at the time of President Bill Clinton.

So we are determined to success. Of course, you have problems. I don't think that everything is okay, everything is good, we have no problems; no, we have problems. We have serious problems with terrorism. The main enemy of Iraqi people is Al Qaida and terrorists cooperating with them. But there are groups who are now

raising arms against us. Now we are negotiating with them to give them back to the political process of the Iraqi people. And you have good achievements also. We hope that this will lead to more big steps forwards to national reconciliation in Iraq.

We are also determined to improve our political and economic life in Iraq. We achieved—unfortunately, media only concentrating on negative sides of Iraq. They are not concentrating on big achievements in Iraq: economic achievements, raising the salaries of the millions of Iraqis, improving the social life and the—that all universities, schools, hospitals are working well in Iraq. Besides the problems which we have—we don't deny it—we are trying to overcome these difficulties. But we have some achievements. Thanks to the United States of America and our great friend President Bush, we achieved some good, important success.

Besides some failure in the security, we have also successes in bringing democracy for the first time to Iraq. All kinds of democratic rights are now available for Iraqi people. We have free election. We have now Parliament elected by people. We have authorities—Presidency, Prime Minister—chosen by the people. This is happening for the first time in the history of Iraqi people.

Also, we have some kind of success in rebuilding our country. Not all parts of Iraq are terrible areas. You have in the north of Iraq, Kurdistan. [*Inaudible*]*—in Iraq is living in peace, security, and prosperity. And also, in the south, you have about nine Provinces now secure and gradually—days ago, the American forces delivered the responsibility of security to the authorities in the Iraqi Kurdistan. So we are going forward, with difficulties; I don't deny difficulties; I don't deny short—[inaudible]—I don't deny that still we are suffering from some problems. But we are determined to benchmarks, and we are determined to go*

forward and to achieve, as Mr. President mentioned.

Now we are due to end the oil law, which will be revolutionary for all Iraqis, due to review the de-Ba'athification. We have our new draft for this. We have another proper draft for investment. We are encouraging investment from outside to Iraq. And we are going to renew the local elections—shall in new—in near future for this country.

And again, I am grateful to American people, to the President of the American people, for what they have done for my people, for Iraq. We are now living in much better situation than we had in the past. And we are facing common enemy, which is still a reason; Al Qaida is the enemy not only of Iraq and America, but all people of the world. Look to the Arab countries, everywhere. Al Qaida—in Lebanon, in Niger, in Morocco, in Saudi Arabia, in Egypt—Al Qaida is starting to work against all peoples of Middle East. So we are fighting this enemy. And as President Bush said, there must be no place for Al Qaida in Iraq or in other places, because if they can have such a kind of bases, they will threaten Europe and the United States of America.

Again, Mr. President, thank you very much for your kind visit and for your important words you say.

*President Bush.* Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. President Talabani referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.



## Interview With Foreign Print Journalists May 31, 2007

*The President.* First, I'm really looking forward to the trip. It's a chance for me to see old friends, make new friends, and talk about an agenda that is based upon freedom and the obligation, for those of us who benefit from our free societies, to help less fortunate people.

Obviously, the G-8 is going to be the center point of the visit; it will be where the most focus is. But I take my bilateral visits very seriously. We're starting in the Czech Republic. I'm looking forward to seeing the President and the Prime Minister. That's my third trip? Second trip? Second trip. It's a beautiful city.

Besides my bilateral meetings with the leadership, I am looking forward to my democracy speech. Vaclav Havel has asked me to come and speak to a democracy forum. I feel very strongly that the United States must take the lead in promoting democracy around the world—even in places where it may not look like it could—that it's very hospitable because I believe, ultimately, it is hospitable. And so it's going to be an important speech, and I'm working on it.

And then, of course, I go to Germany for the G-8. I've been in that beautiful part of your country before. I'm looking forward to the seaside resort. Of course, I'm anxious to see the Chancellor. She and I have got a very strong relationship. I don't know if you know this or not, but we do visit via secure video on a fairly regular basis. I've had some—you know, a lot of meaningful conversations with her, other than by phone.

And then the G-8, it's going to be an important meeting, just like all G-8s are. And this year I'll be talking about the need for all of us to work together to deal with HIV/AIDS and malaria and education. And, of course, global climate change will be an issue as well.

And then we'll go on to Poland. I'm looking forward to going back—for my third time; twice in Czech Republic, third time in Poland. Of course, part of the discussions with both countries will be on missile defense. I'll be glad to answer any questions you have on that. It's just an important issue for us to discuss, and it's an important for me to allay people's fears.

My friend Vladimir Putin is making this to be a case where somehow this is going to jeopardize relations in Europe, and it's going to make the world a more dangerous place—quite the opposite. The reason one advocates and works for a missile defense system is to protect free peoples from the launch of a missile from a hostile regime. Russia is not hostile; Russia is a friend. We don't agree with Russia all the time, but nevertheless, I view them as a friendly nation, not a hostile nation. And I will work with Vladimir Putin not only at the G-8 but when he comes to visit up east here. But I know that's going to be part of our conversation.

By the way, in the case of the Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, and, to a certain extent, Bulgaria, and definitely Germany, there's a lot of obviously, you know, Americans who are very interested in this trip. Polish Americans are—there's a lot of them, and they really love their country of origin, their grandfathers' country of origin. And this is an important trip symbolically, as well, to see their American President in Poland—or in Italy, a lot of Italian Americans are very proud of their heritage as well.

So the trip obviously is the chance to visit on important issues, whether it be Afghanistan or Iraq, where these countries are supportive, as well as their common interests in bilateral issues.

I'm looking forward to two things in Italy, obviously seeing His Holy Father.

Sometimes I'm not poetic enough to describe what it's like to be in the presence of the Holy Father. It is a moving experience. And I have not been in the presence of this particular Holy Father. Obviously, three visits with the last great man, and I'm looking forward to this. I'm looking forward to hearing him. He's a good thinker and a smart man. I'll be in a listening mode.

And then Prime Minister Prodi, with whom I've had a long relationship. I knew him when he was the head of the EU. I can remember, fondly remember riding my mountain bike as hard as I could as he was jogging along the beaches in Georgia, needling him on the way by—a sign of close friendship. We've got a good relationship. He's having to make difficult decisions in Afghanistan, and I hope my visit will help boost his courage in doing the right thing in Afghanistan.

And then, of course, Bulgaria—I'm looking forward to that as well. I've never been; it's the first time. I'm looking forward to seeing the leadership there. Bulgaria has made some very difficult decisions, but necessary decisions. We're proud to be allies. It's going to be—I love going to countries that may not expect to see the U.S. President. It's pretty predictable that the President would go to Germany or Italy, probably Poland and the Czech Republic, but not necessarily Bulgaria and Albania. And it's going to be a great honor for me to be in your country. I'm looking forward to it.

I'm excited about the trip. I gave a speech today. I don't know if you suffered through it or not, but it's—anyway, I was proud to give it, and I meant what I said. And we've got a darn good record, and I'm going to be taking that record, on behalf of the American people, to the G-8 and hoping to encourage others to match it.

Teodor. Ted.

### *Missile Defense System*

Q. Teodor. You can call me Ted.

*The President.* Call me W. [Laughter]

Q. You just said that Vladimir Putin is your friend.

*The President.* Yes, he is.

Q. Now, given his angry response to missile defense, do you regret choosing Czech Republic and Poland as possible sites for the missile defense?

*The President.* No. The reason this country has been chosen is because it will make the missile defense system more effective as we provide defenses for most of our NATO allies.

Secondly, friends can disagree.

Q. Did he disappoint you?

*The President.* He is a—he is concerned about the missile defense system. He thinks it's aimed at him. It's not. It's aimed at rogue regimes that would use a missile to achieve political objective or to create unrest. And therefore, I sent Secretary Gates to see the leadership, the Russian leadership, to explain our intentions. We've invited the Russians to participate, totally transparent—

Q. They are not happy—

*The President.* Let me finish, Ted. We're totally transparent in our designs. We want them to see our technologies. They're welcome to come. Angela Merkel was very instrumental in us reaching out to the Russians; she was deeply concerned about the ramifications of this decision. And so we're working very carefully, but we think it's the right thing to do.

Secondly, it is—I repeat, we have nothing to hide. Bob Gates said, you know, this kind of rhetoric is the kind of rhetoric that relives the cold war. But the cold war is over. We're now into the 21st century, where we need to deal with the true threats, which are threats of radical extremists who will kill to advance an ideology and the threats of proliferation. And there's a lot of work we can do together to deal

with these threats. And that's what I'll continue talking to President Putin about.

Klaus.

*Russia-U.S. Relations*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. But certainly it's fair to say the relationship between the West and Russia has become more complicated—

*The President.* Yes, it has.

Q. —in recent months. What needs to be done to avoid this relationship to degenerate further into a deep and lasting crisis? And in general, on that note, you set up the conversation. Is Russia—a reassertive Russia, a friend, an ally, or a challenge?

*The President.* For the U.S.—I can't speak for the EU-Russian relationship; that's recently where there's been some tension, as you noted, for the U.S.-Russian relationship. It's a complex relationship where we've got some areas of agreement and some areas of disagreement. We believe strongly in democracy. Vladimir Putin will tell me that Russia is a democracy and that he's advancing democracy. We have got some questions about that, of course. We believe that actions taken in Estonia, for example—in relation to the actions taken in Estonia were—it sent a confusing signal to us. We obviously have got a difficult issue with Kosovo. We believe we ought to advance the Ahtisaari agreement through the United Nations Security Council.

But disagreement on issues doesn't mean that the relations aren't cordial. As a matter of fact, I have found that it's easier to disagree on issues when you have a cordial relationship. It means you can discuss your differences without hostility, which makes it easier that you can find common ground. And we have common ground with Russia on matters like Iran. We've worked closely with Russia in the U.N. Security Council to send a clear signal to the Iranians that their attempts at a nuclear weapon will be met with resistance, unified resistance.

The issue of proliferation is one where there's good cooperation between the United States and Russia. It's in the world's interest that the United States and Russia and other nations work together to stop proliferators from being able to get a hold of materials that could end up harming innocent people.

We've worked with Russia on North Korea. As you know, we spoke with one voice to the leadership in North Korea, that Russia and China and the United States and South Korea and Japan strongly oppose their desire to have a weapons program. And hopefully, we can make progress.

In other words, one shouldn't be surprised that there are differences. And the fundamental question in world diplomacy is, how do you deal with the differences? Do you deal with them that ends up, hopefully, creating more opportunities for cooperation, or do you deal with them in such a way as it creates—it widens gulfs and creates more antagonisms?

And my relationship with Russia is firm. I tell people what I believe based upon certain principles. But it's going to be in such a way that treats people with respect. I've noticed that Angela Merkel has also had to deal with Vladimir Putin and has done so in a very respectful but firm way. And I admire the way she's handled her diplomacy. She has proven herself to be a very strong leader. And for that, I'm grateful, and I hope the German people are as well.

Marcin.

*Poland-U.S. Relations/North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

Q. Mr. President, your administration, you just said, offers a lot to Russia to gain acceptance, Russia's acceptance to idea building—[inaudible]—missile shield. And at the same time, so far, it doesn't seem that you offer much to Poland, which is supposed to host the interceptor site. How would you convince people in Poland, who are frankly not that much afraid of uranium

threat, but they're listening to the threats from Russia very carefully?

*The President.* First of all, Poland and the U.S. are in NATO, and an attack on one is an attack on all. We can't offer any better security agreement than that, and we mean it. If you're an ally of the United States and NATO and you feel threatened by an outside force, we'll help you. I don't believe that there would be—I would certainly hope that Poland won't be threatened again by an outside force. I can understand why people in Poland could be nervous about that. After all, it's been a terrible part of your history.

But as an ally in NATO, I can't make a stronger statement than to say we stand with you, and in this case, this ally actually means it, and so do NATO allies. You know, I'm sure there's probably some skepticism from some older folks or those who study history, where Poland had been given assurances and those assurances didn't come through. Well, in this case, they will.

I don't view Poland as being under any military threat. I would hope the Polish people don't, either. Obviously, there are differences you have with Russia over meat, and I'm very aware of that. It's an EU matter; it's a matter that Angela Merkel is working hard, as the head of the EU at this point in time, to address that problem.

The best way to compensate Poland for our friendship is to have good, strong bilateral relations. As you know, we've worked hard on different agreements that would help create jobs. It's really the best thing that a relationship can do, is yield tangible benefits for people besides peace and security. And job creation and decent-paying jobs benefit society as a whole. And there's jobs as a result of our airplane deal; there's capital investment; there is more transparency in our relationship. And we'll keep it that way. I'm sure I'll be discussing that with the President.

Yes, Maurizio.

#### *Pope Benedict XVI/U.S. Foreign Policy*

*Q.* Mr. President.

*The President.* How are you?

*Q.* Very good. Thank you for having us back here.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Your first meeting with Benedict XVI: What are the values that you believe you share with this Pope? And besides this, on foreign policy: What common ground you may have with the Catholic Church on issues like Cuba or China or Lebanon?

*The President.* Yes. Thank you. The common values are respect for human life, human—and dignity. I think His Holy Father will be pleased to know that much of our foreign policy is based on the admonition, to whom much is given, much is required. I look forward to sharing with him our sincere desire to help alleviate poverty and hunger and disease.

I will remind him—in the Rose Garden yesterday, I talked about spending \$30 billion on our battle against HIV/AIDS, particularly on the continent of Africa. Our initiative is, thus far, a \$15 billion initiative over 5 years, that's helped provide antiretroviral drugs for about 1,100,000 people in a 3-year period, up from 50,000. Many of those folks who are helping to carry out that initiative are people from Catholic charities or Catholic congregations here in the United States. And I will tell him how proud I am of our Catholic citizens who have volunteered, in many cases, to help relieve suffering around the world.

I will also talk to him about our malaria initiative where we believe we will have gotten help to folks, particularly on the continent of Africa, in the form of nets and insecticides and medicines, to about 30 million people. I will remind him that this commitment is real and sincere.

I believe he believes—look, I don't want to put words in his mouth—I hope he believes in the universality of freedom because I certainly do. In other words, freedom is not just a Western ideal; it's just

not the ideal that some people—it's universal in application. I will remind him of my firm belief that freedom is not only universal, but history has proven democracies tend not to war with each other and that the best way to yield the peace—something I long for—is to help people become free.

I hope to get him talking. He's a sound thinker. I've read one of his works, and I'm looking forward to hearing this good, decent, honorable man share some thoughts with me. And I go in openminded, and I'm willing to listen.

Just in terms of other issues, I will—if he cares to talk about Cuba, I'd love to talk about Cuba. I believe Cuba ought to be free. And I believe that when there is a transition to new leadership, the world ought to work for freedom, not stability; that the leading edge of our agenda ought to be to say to whomever takes over that Government: We expect there to be elections and free press, free prisoners.

You mentioned Lebanon; I will confirm our strong support for the Siniora Government. I'm impressed by his courage. And I will explain to him that one of the reasons why we felt like it was important to go through with the Hariri trial for the U.N. was to enhance the Siniora Government. And it's to make it clear that there's been foreign interference in that country, and we expect that foreign interference to stop.

The other issue is China. I will tell him that there, too, we've got good relations, and I intend to keep them that way. Part of having good relations with a country is being in a position to talk about religious freedoms. I would remind him that I have been to church in China and actually found it to be a spiritual experience. It wasn't, like, fake; it was real. But I will assure him that I will continue to make the case for the Catholic Church inside of China.

One of the things I don't know if he knows I know, but there has been an attempt to get a good interface between the Chinese Government and the Catholic

Church so that eventually the prescribed leadership, Catholic leadership, would be able to have an active role in China. So far, the Chinese Government has resisted this, but I have been in—received several entreaties from our Catholic cardinals here on behalf of His Holy Father to reach out to the Chinese. And I have. And if he cares, I will be glad to summarize those contacts with him.

Petar.

### *Missile Defense System/North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

Q. Mr. President, concerning the shield, the antimissile shield, I know Bulgaria is one of the newest members of NATO. But as I know, the shield will not cover the southeastern part of NATO, including Bulgaria. And there are American military facilities in this country, which makes some people nervous there. Are you planning to change the situation?

*The President.* The missile defense that we're talking about is primarily for the longer term missile. That's where the debate is. And you're right; that won't cover all of NATO. As I said in my opening comments: "It will cover most of NATO."

Bulgaria will be covered by NATO missile defenses for intermediate-range missiles, and I will be glad to make that case. It's important for our NATO—when I'm in Bulgaria, it's important for our NATO allies not to feel like defenses apply to some but not everybody. And as you know, we're in discussions about access bases, which also, I would hope, would provide a sense of security.

The first goal, of course, is to work with everybody in your neighborhood to try to convince them to be peaceful in the first place so that the defenses aren't needed. But we've got to make sure, if they ever are needed, that they're effective. And as you know, I'm deeply concerned about Iran having a nuclear weapon that could fly toward Europe or, for that matter, toward any other allies. And we don't want to ever



have ourselves in a position where the world could become blackmailed.

And, therefore, one way to deal with this issue is through a missile defense system. However, such a weapon, in this particular scenario, would not affect Bulgaria; it would be a much smaller one for which we have different technologies, NATO technologies, available.

One more round? All right, Ted. Is it "Ted"?

#### *War on Terror*

Q. Yes, you can call me Ted. [Laughter]

*The President.* You already told me that once. I forgot.

Q. Mr. President, for better or worse, you undoubtedly changed modern history of this vote. I mean, are you happy with your decisions? Are you comfortable with your decisions? Are you listening to criticism around the world?

*The President.* Yes, there's a little bit of criticism out there, evidently. Yes, Ted, I hear what people say, and I'm very comfortable with my decisions, absolutely. Our country came under attack, and I vowed to the American people I would do all in my power to protect it. And it's still under threat. And the best way to protect America is to stay on the offense and bring people to justice before they hurt us. And we don't do that alone: we work with allies and friends, and we share intelligence. We help cut off money; we disrupt, jointly—

Q. Don't you—

*The President.* Let me finish, Ted. I also knew that we had to deal with threats before they came to hurt us, whether it be in Afghanistan and Iraq; I made the right decisions. And now the fundamental question is, will the world help these young democracies develop? And I believe it's in all our interests that these democracies survive. And I'm looking forward to thanking our host countries when I travel for their commitments: In some cases, Iraq and Afghanistan, in some cases, only Afghanistan; either case, they're very important.

If democracies can't help other democracies, then I worry about stability and peace in the long run. And so no, I believe the decisions I made were the right decisions.

Q. You don't feel abandoned?

*The President.* What?

Q. Abandoned. You don't feel abandoned?

*The President.* No, no, not at all. Matter of fact, I was amazed by—he asked, do I feel abandoned? Quite the contrary. I feel that we're in this long-term struggle with a lot of strong allies—a lot. There's a lot of people in Iraq that committed resources and manpower and effort. A lot of people in Afghanistan, all the NATO countries have got manpower there, plus a lot of other countries. No, quite the contrary. I feel these alliances are significant. And, you know, you've got to work at them. I constantly remind people there's a threat. And the stakes in the world—but, no. Thank you for asking.

Klaus-Dieter. My roommate in college was Rob Dieter. He was from Florida, though. [Laughter] You're Klaus-Dieter. Okay.

#### *U.S.-EU Cooperation on the Environment/ Alternative Fuel Sources*

Q. Mr. President, in the run-up to the G-8 meeting, our energy—our climate change turnout will be a divisive issue, at least to the German press.

*The President.* Really? You mean you want it to be divisive.

Q. No, not at all.

*The President.* Are you going to go in openminded?

Q. Yes, I'm always openminded.

*The President.* That's good. Is that the case—

Q. Always. [Laughter]

Q. Let's say, assuming it was true—you were—[inaudible]—this morning. Does it help to bridge the gap between the U.S. position and the European position, which

includes firm mandatory caps on greenhouse gases? And is there any prospect for a firm consensus at Heiligendamm? Or have you basically preempted Heiligendamm?

*The President.* No, look, first of all, your opening question was, the German press is looking for conflict. Is that what you said? I don't want to misquote you. [*Laughter*] I think, look, if people want to try to figure out a way to be divisive, they will try to create divisions. I don't view it that way. I view this as an effort by concerned nations to reach common accord to actually solve the problem.

And the initiative I laid out today said: We'll take the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases and come up with an international goal. In other words, there needs to be a post-Kyoto framework. And I suggested, here's one way to deal with the post-Kyoto world. First thing that the Chancellor wanted to know is, did I agree there ought to be a post-Kyoto framework. That's the threshold question, because if it's no, then we can end the conversation; if it's yes, then what are your suggestions? And so today I said I believe there ought to be a post-Kyoto framework. And I believe Angela will be pleased with that because she is—this was something she was working toward.

Secondly, I believe there ought to be an international goal. How we arrive at that goal is—I set out a process where greenhouse gas emitters, including developing nations, ought to be at the table. As you know full well, that one could have a very strict regime on greenhouse gases, but if nothing were done with countries like India or China, all would be for naught. So I thought it made sense to include a variety of nations that are actually producing greenhouse gases, including Russia and China and India and the United States and the EU and others.

Thirdly, I said that each nation needs to come up with an interim goal and develop the methodology to achieve that goal.

In other words, there's a commitment in our country. Now, I said this in the Rose Garden, next to the Chancellor and Jose Barroso, that each country has got to develop a plan that suits its own economy and suits its own political environment. If you want the U.S. to be an active participant, that's the best way to do it as well. A lot of people don't particularly want our environmental policy written by somebody else. They think we ought to be writing our own environmental policy, in this case, to achieve international goals. And that's my pledge. I'm looking forward to it.

And I also bring a very good record, because the truth of the matter is, technology is going to enable us to meet two objectives—or three objectives, in the U.S. case: One, energy independent; two, economic vitality and growth. And as an active trading partner with the United States, you would want us to be economically strong. You don't want your trading partner to be weak; there would be nothing to trade with. And finally, a strong steward of the environment, and technology is going to lead us there. And I look forward to explaining some of the technological breakthroughs that we have achieved and will achieve.

You probably don't know this, but we're up to about, I think, 6 billion gallons of corn ethanol now being used in our cars. Over the next years, 50 percent of every automobile in the United States will be flex-fuel. In other words, you can either use ethanol or gasoline; your choice. There's significant market penetration for ethanol in the Midwest. But we're spending billions of dollars—or millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, on coming up with the ability to break down different forms of feedstocks to produce ethanol. That's called cellulosic ethanol, like switchgrasses or wood chips. Wouldn't it be remarkable when we have a breakthrough to develop fuel to run our automobiles from wood chips? You got a lot of wood in Germany. I'd be glad to share that technology with you.

And so we're addressing greenhouse gases and tailpipe emissions to the point where I said to the United States: We'll have a mandatory fuel standard that will reduce our gasoline consumption by 20 percent over 10 years. It's a remarkable initiative. No President has ever said that. I happen to believe that there's going to be some significant battery technology breakthroughs as well, and I look forward to sharing that with our partners. Matter of fact, the Japanese are spending a lot of money on battery technologies, and it's very conceivable one day we'll be having hybrid plug-in battery-driven vehicles with a regular-sized automobile. You can do it with a golf cart now, but on a lot of our freeways, it would be dangerous—[laughter]—yours too.

The fundamental question facing America is, how fast can we develop zero-emission coal-fired electricity plants? And we're spending a lot of money there, and we look forward to sharing technologies with our allies and friends and people who need help.

And so we've got a very strong agenda that I'm looking forward to sharing in the G-8. And one of the things I'm going to do is encourage others to step up to the research and development arena. They ought to be spending as much as we are. They ought to be investing. And then we ought to be willing to share that technology with developing countries.

And finally, if you're really interested in solving greenhouse gases and making sure your economy grows, you ought to be for civilian nuclear power, Klaus.

Q. I'm open. [Laughter]

*The President.* There you go. You're my man. And we're spending—we're advancing an interesting initiative with Russia, Japan, France, Great Britain on coming up with new technologies on fast-burner reactors in order to be able to deal with the waste issue.

Anyway, there's a lot to talk about, and so I'm looking forward to it. It's an impor-

tant subject: just like feeding the hungry is important; just like solving HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa is important; just like dealing with malaria is important; just like poor children, particularly women, girls, getting an education is important. These are all important initiatives, and I can't wait to discuss them there.

Marcin.

#### *U.S. Visa Policy*

Q. Yes. Last time you were in Eastern Europe, last year in Estonia and Latvia, you promised changes in visa regime for your close allies. Now many months—

*The President.* I promised I would work on it.

Q. Many months went by.

*The President.* Marcin, make sure you quote me correctly.

Q. Okay.

*The President.* Yes, let me talk about it. It affects the Czech Republic, it affects Poland, and it affects Bulgaria.

I fully understand the frustrations of countries and people of countries who have supported friendship with the United States. And they look at neighbors in the EU or NATO and say, wait a minute; we're treated differently. I understand that.

This is an issue that your leaders have spoken very candidly with me. And I told them I didn't—I thought it was unfair that the German citizen be given a type of visa and not the Polish citizen. And we're working closely with Congress to change long-standing law. And I said I would. First of all, we set up a way forward, a roadmap to visa changes. And I said I would work with our Congress to come up with a fair law that treated people fairly. And we are. We have yet to pass the law, but we are working with Congress.

There is, as you may or may not know, a healthy immigration debate taking place in the United States. I'm a big proponent of what we call comprehensive immigration reform, as I am a proponent of visa reform, visa waiver reform.

I can't give you a firm prediction as to exactly when this will emerge from Congress, but we're working hard to see if we can't get it done.

Maurizio.

*President's Upcoming Visit to Italy/Italy's Role in Afghanistan*

Q. Mr. President, you said that you hope that your arrival will boost Mr. Prodi's energy on Afghanistan.

*The President.* No, let me rephrase that. Can I restate that?

Q. Of course.

*The President.* I don't want to boost his energy. I do want to sit down and talk to him about how important the Italian commitment is to Afghanistan and its future, is really what I meant to say.

Q. And that was what my question was about. What would you like Italy to do in Afghanistan and, more in general, in the war on terror? How do you see Italy as a global partner on this issue? And, also, if you can spend a few words on the protesters that will receive you in Rome. They are very angry.

*The President.* Oh, yes. I'm going to meet some protesters in Rome again? [Laughter]

Q. They declared a "No Bush Day."

*The President.* First of all, when you go to free societies, you tend to see protesters. Freedom of speech, that's what we're talking about. It's what happens when you travel. I presume there's going to be a few in Germany, just like there were—listen, when world leaders get together, or a leader shows up that people pay attention to, people get on TV by protesting. They've got different causes, and they want to express themselves. And I welcome going to a society where people are free to speak. That's actually a healthy thing. It's a sign of a robust society. We had a few, one time, in Genoa, if you remember.

Q. Who doesn't remember?

*The President.* Yes. Anyway, that's what happens when world leaders get together. Now the other—

Q. And the other question was about Afghanistan, Italy's role in Afghanistan.

*The President.* Yes, it's a very important role. First of all, commitment to Afghanistan, itself, helps. Basically it says to the Afghan people: We want to help you; we know you're struggling. And it encourages people. The idea of saying we're a robust, free society, and we want to stand with you as you try to develop your own society in your own image is important to the psychology of the country.

Secondly, Italy is making significant contribution: police training, judicial training. It's an important commitment. And in the war on terror, the idea of sharing intelligence when we find it, it's in both our interests. If we know somebody is plotting and planning in Italy, we'll share that information, and vice versa. And that's really what matters, is the ability to talk to each other in such a way that if we have information that is beneficial for one or the other, we're comfortable enough of sharing that information so we can protect ourselves.

Make no mistake about it, the enemy wants to strike again. We work a lot trying to find out where. This enemy is dangerous. These are ideologues who have got ambitions, and it's very important that we all take them seriously. The temptation is to say, well, maybe they're not that dangerous anymore. I'm telling you, they're dangerous, and they need the full commitment of free nations: the commitment to work together, the commitment to watch their finances, the commitment to understand what they're thinking and what they're doing. And they're moving. And they'll kill you like that, in order to achieve their objectives; make no mistake about it. And the temptation is to say, oh, no, it's just a couple of guys that aren't that dangerous. They're dangerous, and I will remind our friends. Italy has been a strong

partner in a lot of areas, and I appreciate it.

Petar.

*The Presidency/U.S. Foreign Policy/  
Alternative Fuel Sources*

Q. Back to Russia—you know that sometimes you spoke about the energy and energy security. Sometimes energy is used as a political tool, especially if there is a sense of—in Eastern Europe that Russia is using its oil and gas as a political tool. Do you have any leverage on Russia and the Kremlin in this field of energy security?

And if you allow, a second, more personal question.

*The President.* Yes, go ahead.

Q. Just 18 months from now your second term expires. And very crucial events happened during both your terms, and crucial decisions were taken here in this building. What world and what future for this great country do you envision in the next, say, 10 to 25 years from now?

*The President.* Thanks. I do have, I don't know, 19 months?

Q. Eighteen.

*The President.* Who's counting? [*Laughter*] I'm going to sprint. First thing you've got to know about me is, I'm going to sprint to the finish. I've got a lot to do, and I'm going to work as hard as I can to get it done. You've heard me talk about a lot of issues. We've got an engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, on HIV/AIDS and feeding the hungry and dealing with proliferation, and working on the environment. There's a lot to do, a lot of big issues. A lot to do here at home too: keep taxes low. I'm a tax cutter. I believe people ought to have more money in their pocket; that's how you grow your economies. We're talking about health care, a big education reform, and immigration reform.

There's a lot to do, and I don't have that much time to think beyond my Presidency. I'm occupied with the moment. That's the way—I'll put a lot of energy into the final 18 months and give it my

all. That's all you can do in life is give it your best. That's what I'm going to do. I owe that to the American people. I believe we're going to get a lot done too.

My concern for America is that we never become an isolationist nation or a protectionist nation. We've had those tendencies in the past. I'm not suggesting that's where we are, but I am worried that that might happen at some point in time. It's easy to say: "Well, the competition is too tough; let's just not trade." Or, "It's too difficult to fight the terrorists." Or, "It's too difficult to help advance democracy; let's just kind of retreat." I think it would be a huge mistake for America. I would hope that 15 years from now America still works with other nations to advance liberty.

I remind people about my Japanese friend Prime Minister Koizumi, now Prime Minister Abe, Shinzo Abe, a good guy. Isn't it interesting that the U.S. President sits at the table with the Japanese Prime Minister to talk about peace, and my father fought them, and they were the sworn enemy? And now we're working together on peace. Same thing can happen if the United States stays engaged and helps societies become free societies. Liberty has got an amazing way of transforming enemies into friends—same in Germany, in many ways. We're allies; Angela Merkel and I are very close. I would hope the United States would never lose sight of that capacity.

And the other question?

Q. About Russia, political——

*The President.* Oh, the energy, yes. Here's the thing: You've got your worries about supplies of energy, and so do I—where we get our energy from. And, therefore, our strategy is to diversify. If you're interested in reducing dependence on crude oil, then what you do is develop different ways to power your automobiles. And so we're using corn to power our automobiles. That way we don't have to use gasoline and therefore use crude oil as a feedstock.



My goal is to make us nearly totally independent from foreign sources of oil. And that ought to be the goal of a nation that worries from sole-source supplier, that you ought to figure out different ways to do it. How do you do it? Well, you can do it through nuclear technology, for example; as opposed to using natural gas to power your electricity, use nuclear technology. Hopefully, we can come with clean coal technologies so that you can burn coal.

We need to do it in the United States. We've got about 250 years of coal supply. Coal is a particular problem when it comes to pollution; we know that. We spent about \$2 billion on your FutureGen plant, clean coal technologies. We believe that we'll be able to develop a coal-fired plant that has zero emissions. And when that technology comes to fruition, if you can get yourself some coal, you've got your ability to diversify away from sole-source supplier of energy. And that's what technology is going to yield.

I truly believe over the next 10 to 20 years, you're going to see some amazing technological breakthroughs. And I believe and hope that those technological breakthroughs will make a lot of the discussions we're having here at the beginning of the 21st century moot, relative to energy security and environmental quality. I believe some of the discussions I have had with you about battery technologies will be real. I don't know if you know this: We're spending over a billion dollars on hydrogen technologies. We believe that cars will be powered by hydrogen, which will obviously relieve pressure on crude oil dependence. The emissions of hydrogen-driven automobiles is going to be dribblets of water, which will be good for the environment.

And you know, I would hope that mankind doesn't lose faith in the capacity of technology to transform the way we live in positive ways. Here in America, what's interesting is to watch some of the investment flows of private capital. We're a system based upon private capital. And so I

talked about, in my speech today, about public capital investment, public tax dollars going into research and development, over \$12 billion over the years that I've been President.

But there's enormous sums of money going into the private markets as well, because people see economic opportunity can be derived by new energy technologies. And it's that synergy to be derived from public participation and public policy, the declaration of a mandatory fuel standard coupled with private sector investments that could yield breakthroughs.

And it's also healthy that there be competition. I like the idea that the Japanese are pushing hard for battery technologies. I want our people pushing hard for battery technologies. Competition is healthy. It yields better product for consumers. It makes us all work more efficiently and wiser in the end.

And so I'm an optimistic guy. I think when you look back 10 or 20 years from now, you'll be amazed at what happens. And I'm excited to be a part of it. I've got 18 more months to be a part of it here in this capacity, and it's going to be an exciting 18 months.

Anyway, thank you for your time. Looking forward to seeing you over there. Yes, enjoyed it. Good visit.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:20 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vaclav Klaus, Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, and former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; President Lech Kaczyński of Poland; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European

Commission. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1.

A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Interview With Eberhard Piltz of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Germany May 31, 2007

### *U.S.-EU Cooperation on the Environment/ Upcoming G-8 Summit*

*Mr. Piltz.* Mr. President, the German Presidency of the G-8 has put the focus for the next meeting on climate change and what to do about it. Europeans want fixed caps. You have been opposed to that all the time. Now you announced a new proposal. Have you changed your position?

*The President.* First, let me, if I might—I think that my friend Angela Merkel, for whom I have great respect, wants to discuss a lot of matters, whether it be HIV/AIDS or malaria or hunger, depravation, as well as climate change. And I'm looking forward to it, I really am. I've been to this beautiful part of Germany before. It's a beautiful part of your country.

No, I've always taken the issue seriously. I've told the American people and those who are willing to listen that I take climate change seriously. And today I talked about a post-Kyoto framework in which the world can discuss this issue in a serious fashion.

Angela was concerned at one time whether or not I'd be willing to accept a post-Kyoto framework, and today I expressed my keen desire to work with her and other leaders on such a framework. And I also suggested that a good first step toward achieving serious accomplishments would be to have the major emitters gather and set a goal, an international goal by the end of 2008. And I'm very serious about that. I'm looking forward to working with G-8 partners and others.

I think one of the breakthroughs that I hope we can achieve in Germany at this G-8 is to get India and China as participants in setting an international goal. And

what that goal is, that will be determined as a result of these meetings. But Angela should be proud of leading the international community toward these kind of breakthroughs.

*Mr. Piltz.* Though this is the beginning of a process, at the end of which there could be fixed goals?

*The President.* There would be a goal, absolutely. And that would be determined by the major emitters, the major greenhouse gas emitters. Generally, sometimes people—some sit around the table and come up with what they think is the best solution. My view is, is that they need to get the United States, China, India, the EU, Russia, other countries as well around the table and say, okay, we agree on a goal. And each nation needs to come up with a way to achieve that goal.

And listen, the truth of the matter is, the best way to achieve, in our case, a couple of national objectives—energy security and economic security, as well as being good stewards of the environment—is a strong push for technologies. And I'll bring a very good record to the G-8. We've spent a lot of money here in the United States on developing clean technologies. We're driving a lot of our automobiles now with corn-based ethanol. That gets us off of oil, which is good for economic and national security, and it helps with the environment.

### *Missile Defense System*

*Mr. Piltz.* Missile defense, sir—the harsh Russian reaction on U.S. plans on missile defense signals some sort of deterioration in relations. Are we headed back to colder times?

*The President.* Yes, that's a really good question. I certainly hope not. Our message to—and my personal message to Vladimir Putin is, there's no need to try to relive the cold war. It's over. And we don't view Russia as an enemy, we view Russia as an opportunity to work together. We don't agree with every decision Russia has made. She doesn't agree with every decision I have made. But I have worked hard to make sure that we can find common ground on issues like proliferation and dealing with Islamic radicals and Iran or North Korea.

You know, Vladimir Putin has spoken out very strongly on missile defense. And so frankly, it—I visit with Angela quite often, and one of the things she talked to me about, is there not a way to open a dialog with President Putin on missile defense? So I sent Bob Gates, our Secretary of Defense, there, and my message to Vladimir Putin—and it will be when I see him at the G-8 in Germany as well as here in the States—is, you don't have anything to fear. As a matter of fact, this system is aimed at protecting NATO allies, and if you want to participate, we would like you to participate with us. We'll be totally transparent in the technologies that we're deploying. We want you to come and inspect our sites. We want you to talk to our military. We want to be wide open because this system is not geared toward Russia; it's geared toward a rogue state that may be able to acquire a nuclear weapon.

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Piltz.* You mentioned Angela Merkel's role. Is there a role for Germany in this difficult dialog, as a bridgebuilder or something like that?

*The President.* Well, it sounds like to me, Angela has had some pretty difficult dialogs herself as the leader of the EU. And I think the key thing is for Angela and me to work closely together to have a—when we can in dealing with Russia. But each nation has to deal with Russia in her own

terms. I don't need any help dealing with Vladimir Putin, and he doesn't need any help dealing with me. We're sovereign nations; we have our positions.

One of the things that I have worked hard to do is to—and received some criticism here in the States—is, I've worked hard to have a personal relationship with Vladimir Putin so that when I discuss things with him, I can find areas of agreement, but I've also got a relationship such that I can bring up areas of concern without rupturing relations. And it's—you know, some have suggested, well, there's no need to have relations with Russia. Well, I strongly disagree with that. I think it's important for the U.S. and Russia to have relations.

#### *War on Terror*

*Mr. Piltz.* Sir, how satisfied are you with international burden-sharing in the war on terror?

*The President.* Good, it's good. As a matter of fact, the coalitions are much bigger than anybody could have envisioned. You know, one of my concerns, however, is that, just in general, people don't take the threat seriously. In other words, they say: "Well, there haven't been many attacks; there's been a few attacks; but we shouldn't be that worried about it." I'm deeply worried about it, and I really strongly believe the free world ought to be worried about radicals and extremists who will kill in the name of an ideology.

See, I view this as an ideological conflict between people who are willing to murder and want to spread their vision, and those of us who believe in liberty and the universality of liberty. And so my main worry is complacency over the long run. I am pleased with the cooperation at this point in time. We've got great relations with Germany. Obviously, if we know of a plot that may be taking place in Germany, we will share information on an instant basis, and vice versa. And that ought to be comforting to the German citizens.

### *Germany-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Piltz.* That was my next question, the state of the relationship between America and Germany. Are we back to, as your father put it, “partners in leadership”?

*The President.* I think we are. First of all, I had a decent relationship with Gerhard Schroeder. I never bore any—look, there was a difference on Iraq, obviously; it was a clear difference on Iraq. But that didn’t cause me to say, well, Germany isn’t worthy as a worthy ally. Quite the contrary, I felt Germany always was a worthy ally and an important ally for the United States and an important player in Europe.

Angela Merkel comes at a different time in our relationship. She’s a woman who I—for whom I’ve got great admiration. I don’t know if you know this or not, but she and I, we speak by secure video on a regular basis. And that’s what strategic partners do, and our discussions are important discus-

sions. She understands the issues very well. She’s the kind of person that can get a fellow to talk freely and candidly, and she speaks the same way to me. And I admire her a lot. I would say our relations are vital, and they’re strong right now. And that’s the way I intend to keep it.

*Mr. Piltz.* Thank you very much, sir.

*The President.* Glad to have you. Looking forward to coming to your great country again.

*Mr. Piltz.* I’ll be there too.

*The President.* Yes, sir. [Laughter]

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:27 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel and former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Interview With Andi Bejtja of Albania’s Vizion Plus TV May 31, 2007

### *President’s Upcoming Visit to Albania*

*Mr. Bejtja.* Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank you for the opportunity you give to me and to Albanian public for this interview. And I have just a simple question in the beginning: What is the reason of including Albania in this European tour this time?

*The President.* That’s a fascinating question. First of all, I want to make sure the Albanian people understand that America knows that you exist and that you’re making difficult choices to cement your free society. I’m coming as a lover of liberty to a land where people are realizing the benefits of liberty.

Secondly, I’ve been impressed by your leadership. I have met your leaders at different times—

*Mr. Bejtja.* Impressed in what sense?

*The President.* In the sense that they’re committed to common values with the United States, that they believe in certain freedoms, and that people ought to be given a chance to live in a free society. And so my message is that we welcome our friendship, that I’m proud of the hard work that you’re doing, and I’m particularly grateful to be the first sitting President ever to come to Albania.

### *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

*Mr. Bejtja.* Yes, this is a historical visit. And Albanians hoping to get a—to receive

an invitation at summit to join NATO in 2008. How realistic this Albanian expectation is, according to you?

*The President.* Well, my message to the Albanian Government and the Albanian people is, first of all, thank you for your interest in joining NATO. But like I said to other countries that are at this stage in the process, that there's a certain map that has to be followed, a certain way forward. There are certain obligations that have to be met. And my only advice is, work as hard as you possibly can to achieve the different benchmarks that would cause the NATO members to accept Albania.

*Kosovo/United Nations Security Council*

*Mr. Bejtja.* And let's get to the hardest point: Kosovo. I mean, in the beginning of the week, you just had a phone call from Russian President Vladimir Putin, and you agreed with him to rediscuss Kosovo future once again. And people are worried about that. Do you expect any compromise with Russians that may affect our desired plan as it stands now?

*The President.* Well, let me make it clear what I did say.

*Mr. Bejtja.* Because everybody is worried about that.

*The President.* Yes, they ought to be worried about it; it's a difficult issue. But they ought not to be worried about my position. My position is that we support the Ahtisaari plan, and that's the instructions that I have given to Secretary of State Rice, who totally agrees with me. And those will be the instructions we give to the United Nations.

And so I don't know who characterized my phone call with Vladimir Putin, but as I told him on the phone, look, we don't want to—we would hope to avoid a major conflict in the area, but we feel strongly that the Ahtisaari plan is the right way to go; it's the right way to move forward. And that's the U.S. position.

*Mr. Bejtja.* So in case of a Russian veto next month at Security Council, does U.S. have plan B for Kosovo?

*The President.* Well, plan A is to try to make plan A work.

*Mr. Bejtja.* Yes, but is the plan A—

*The President.* I know, but you're asking me to think hypothetically. It happens, by the way, with the United States press too. They say, "If something doesn't happen"—my job is, make it happen in the first place. So we're working to try to convince all members of the U.N. Security Council to support the Ahtisaari plan, and we're out making our case as to why it makes sense and why this will make—yield peace. We would also hope that the EU would continue and NATO would continue to work with Serbia, to give them a way forward as well, that there be an opportunity for them to become participants in some of the European structures and, in this case, in NATO's case, an opportunity, perhaps, to join NATO and have U.S. as a partner.

*President's Decisionmaking/U.S. Foreign Policy*

*Mr. Bejtja.* Let me put another question. I mean, to be honest, it's very easy in the region to find pro-American governments, but it's not as easy to find so-called pro-American nations, or better saying, pro-American public or people. Does U.S. have any strategy to reverse this trend, to make U.S. policy more effective in long term?

*The President.* Well, first of all, it's like—people ask me the question about popularity, whether it be overseas or at home. You can't make decisions and try to be—and want to be popular. You make decisions because you want to be right. I make decisions for what's best for the United States of America. Sometimes that makes me popular; sometimes it doesn't.

But popularity comes and goes, but certain principles should never leave. And I believe firmly the United States must confront tyranny and disease and hunger. And I believe the United States must secure our homeland from further attack, and I will take the actions necessary to do so. I hope others understand why. I would like



for people to understand the decision-making I've done. I want people to respect my country and to like the American people, and most people do like the American people. Sometimes they like the American President, and sometimes they don't. But popularity is—I would ask the question: Are you still going to make decisions based upon solid principles? And the answer is, absolutely.

*President's Upcoming Visit to Albania*

*Mr. Bejtja.* Yes. And let me ask one childish question, because it is your first time in Albania and everyone is wondering: What does come to your mind when you heard the word "Albania"?

*The President.* Beautiful coastline, interesting history, Muslim people who can live at peace: that's what comes to mind. I'm excited to go. I must confess that I also

thought about the dark days of communism, when the society was a closed society. I'm looking forward—I met many Albanians who are excited to be living in an open society. And I can't wait to come to your country. I've heard great things about it, and it's going to be an exciting trip for me and Laura.

*Mr. Bejtja.* Thank you very much, Mr. President, and welcome.

*The President.* Yes, sir; thanks.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:37 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo.

## Interview With Vassilev Petrov of Bulgarian National Television May 31, 2007

*President's Upcoming Visit to Bulgaria*

*Mr. Petrov.* Mr. President, whom do you want the Bulgarians to meet: a demanding leader of a superpower, an ally, a friend, somebody feared or loved?

*The President.* I want them to meet a guy—that's a great question. I want them to meet a person who, one, respects the people of Bulgaria and appreciates Bulgarian contributions to the world, a person who understands how difficult the transition from one form of government to democracy is, and a person who represents a nation of decent, compassionate people.

You know, I tell people sometimes—in America they always respect the Presidency, and sometimes they like the President. And I made some tough decisions, you know, and I understand that. But I represent a country that really cares deeply about the human condition, and I bring

a spirit of friendship to Bulgaria and its people.

*Bulgaria-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Petrov.* Bulgaria is an ally; it's hosting three joint military bases. What will Bulgaria get in return?

*The President.* Well, first of all, you've got a good friend. And I don't think friends really kind of measure decisionmaking on a quid pro quo basis. In other words, relationships, they're evolving and they're growing. I presume Bulgaria made the decisions, first and foremost, for the basing because it was in her best interests. In other words, sovereign nations say, well, this is in my interests.

Secondly, look, there are some security issues, obviously. One of the great things about a relationship with the United States is we keep our word, or we should keep

our word. And we'll keep our word as long as I'm President, I promise you. And I would hope that the citizens would get a sense of comfort through the relationship with the United States and other nations that are involved with these great defensive alliances.

#### *U.S. Visa Policy*

*Mr. Petrov.* Mr. President, we are good enough to fight with you; why aren't we good enough to have a visa-free entry into the United States? Are we that dangerous?

*The President.* That's a great question. Listen, you're not the first person who has ever asked a question in that form. I want your people to know that I understand there is a contradiction that, on the one hand, you're a strong ally, and yet other allies of the United States are treated differently. And this is a tough issue, because it has to go through our Congress.

And I'm working very carefully with governments, as well as with our Congress, to come up with a solution that is satisfactory. I'm sorry it's taken so long, and I know it's created frustrations. And there is an inherent contradiction, and I can't deny that. The only thing I can do is pledge to make the system work better. We're involved in a very serious immigration debate here in America, as well, that's somewhat related to this issue, and hopefully, we can get a lot of these issues taken care of this summer.

#### *Military Operations in Iraq*

*Mr. Petrov.* On Iraq, Bulgarian civilians and soldiers died there, so it may be right and just to ask you, do you admit any mistakes in Iraq?

*The President.* Well, the first thing I want to say is, to the Bulgarian mother or father or wife or husband, my deepest sympathies go to your loved one. I deal with the pain of death here in America. One of my jobs as the person who made the decision to put our troops there, of course, is to try to comfort those who have

lost a loved one. And it's frankly the most painful aspect of the job: knowing my decision caused a child to be lost to a family.

And so what I tell those parents, and I'd like to share the same thing with the Bulgarian families, is, one, the cause was necessary and noble for peace, two, that I'm committed to helping this Iraqi Government succeed. And I think the people will look back 50 years from now and say, "Oh, I understand now why they were doing what they were doing," because democracies and liberties help yield peace; thirdly, that I won't let politics get in the way of making important decisions to help achieve the mission. In other words, we won't let their loved one die in vain. You can look back on any war and determine whether or not certain tactics could be changed, but the strategic decision, removing Saddam Hussein, was the right decision.

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations/Missile Defense System*

*Mr. Petrov.* Your competition with Russia elsewhere but also in our region is getting hotter. Where is Bulgaria in all that? Are we on our own in the superpowers game?

*The President.* First of all, you know, it's interesting. I guess the press tries to build up a major competition with Russia. I don't view it that way.

*Mr. Petrov.* Why?

*The President.* Well, I think, first of all, the cold war is over. I don't view Russia as an enemy. And I've got a good relationship with Vladimir Putin, and I intend to keep it that way. Now, that doesn't mean I agree with him on every issue, and he certainly doesn't agree with me. The latest flareup, of course, is whether or not we should be working with our allies to develop a missile shield. And to that end, I sent Bob Gates, our Secretary of Defense, to see Vladimir Putin, and I sent him a message. And then I told it to him recently myself. I said, we have nothing to hide; as a matter of fact, if you would like to

join, we would like to welcome—we welcome you. You're not the enemy.

We're not trying to isolate Russia. What we're attempting to do is protect ourselves and friends and allies against a rogue regime with a missile. That's a realistic possibility. I said: Why don't you send your generals or send your people to the United States, and we will show you our systems? We'll be fully transparent.

So I will work—I think it is important for the citizens of Bulgaria to know that they've got a great friend in the United States. But I am also working hard to make sure that we're—to prevent any escalation of rhetoric. I don't think there's a military threat toward Bulgaria, but if there were, you would have a friend to help you.

Secondly, I think it's important for the people of Bulgaria to know that if I think Russia is wrong, I've got the kind of relationship where I can explain it very clearly, and not afraid to do so, by the way. But there are areas where we can work together with Russia too.

### *Bulgarian Nurses Held in Libya*

*Mr. Petrov.* You've already supported the Bulgarian nurses jailed in Libya. Do you still support them? Do you think it will be a positive outcome?

*The President.* I do; I hope so, certainly. This has got to be painful not only to the families of the Bulgarian nurses but to the people of Bulgaria. I called the President a while back and told him that we're very much committed to helping to not only support the nurses but to free the nurses. And that's the position of the United States. We've sent that message very clearly to the Libyan Government. As I understand it, Tony Blair was working the issue the other day as well. We're very—we're committed, and would hope that this—the tragic case, it's a painful case, would be solved quickly, in a way that's satisfactory to the Bulgarian people.

### *President's Upcoming Visit to Bulgaria*

*Mr. Petrov.* Mr. President, if we conclude, once again, could you say to the citizens of Bulgaria, summing up—what kind of face will you present to them? We know you value convictions and values, but can you admit also making mistakes?

*The President.* I mean, if you're trying to say, did I make a mistake routing Al Qaida out of Afghanistan? The answer is, absolutely not. Getting rid of Saddam Hussein was the right thing to do. You've got to understand, my decisionmaking is based, of course, first and foremost on the best interests of the United States. And we got attacked. Nearly 3,000 of our citizens died, and it affected my thinking. I will continue to make decisions to help secure our country.

But you'll see a guy come to Bulgaria who is grateful for the hospitality, grateful for the friendship, someone who brings the great spirit of America. Listen, I represent a great country because our people are great. Our people are hard-working, decent, honorable, compassionate people, who care deeply about freedom and liberty. I'm really proud to be their President.

*Mr. Petrov.* Mr. President, thank you very much for this interview.

*The President.* Honored to be with you. Looking forward to coming.

*Mr. Petrov.* Thank you very much.

*The President.* My pleasure.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:45 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1.

## Remarks Following a Briefing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform June 1, 2007

First, I thank you very much for your hard work on a comprehensive immigration bill and your concern about our country. And the two go hand in hand. I believe that now is the time to address the issue of immigration. I think it's in our national security interests, and I think it's in the interest of making sure America never loses sight of who we are.

This is a difficult issue for a lot of folks; I understand that. But because it's difficult probably means we need to work doubly hard to get it done. And now is the time to get it done. No matter how difficult it may seem for some politically, I strongly believe it's in this Nation's interest for people here in Washington to show courage and resolve and pass a comprehensive immigration reform.

My administration is deeply involved in this issue. I feel passionate about the issue. I believe it's in this country's interest to solve the problem. I believe it's in our interest when we find a system that is broken to fix it, and the immigration system today is broken. And I've asked Michael and Carlos Gutierrez to work the issue on the Hill, and these men are doing good work. They understand the issue; they understand the bill; and they understand they need to work with the Republicans and Democrats to get the job done.

I say the system isn't working because there's a lot of Americans who say that the government is not enforcing our border. I say the system is broken because there are people coming into America to do work that Americans are not doing. And there are good, decent employers who unknowingly are hiring them, which is against the law.

The system is broken, in my judgment, because there are 11 to 12 million people living in the shadows of a free society. The system is broken because there are people

who are exploiting human beings for material gain. There are *coyotes*—those are human smugglers—charging decent people large sums of money to come and work to put food on the table for their families.

There's a document forgery industry in place, because the system is broken, providing people with false documentation so they can do work that Americans are not doing in order to provide for their families. There are so-called innkeepers providing substandard hovels for people who are smuggled into our country. In other words, we have got a system that is causing people—good, decent people—to be exploited. And therefore, now is the time to get it fixed.

For those concerned about border security, this bill focuses on border security. For those concerned about making sure that we have workers available to do jobs—decent jobs to make sure our economy continues to grow—this bill addresses that issue. For those concerned that we must enable 11 to 12 million people to come out of the shadows of our society, this bill addresses that. For those concerned about whether or not America will still have the capacity to assimilate the newly arrived, it addresses that issue too.

This is a good piece of legislation. I'm sure some of you in the audience here will say: "Well, it's not perfect; there are some aspects of the bill that I would like to see changed." On a piece of legislation this complicated, the question people have to answer is, are we going to sacrifice the good for the sake of the perfect? And my call to you is, is that we need to work on a comprehensive bill together. First of all, I know you're already doing that, so I'm really here to thank you.

I want to address a couple of the key issues that people are addressing. If you want to kill a bill, then you just go around

America saying, "This is amnesty." In other words, there are some words that elicit strong reactions from our fellow citizens. Amnesty is when a person breaks the law and is completely forgiven for having done so. This bill isn't amnesty. For those who call it amnesty, they're just trying to, in my judgment, frighten people about the bill.

This bill is one that says, we recognize that you're here illegally, and there's a consequence for it. We can argue about the consequences, but you can't argue about the fact that there are consequences in this bill for people who have broken our law.

People say, well, the bill is really—is not going to do much to enforce the border. Well, the truth of the matter is, certain aspects of the law don't come into being until certain border measures are taken. But I would remind people that you cannot fully enforce the border so long as people are trying to sneak in this country to do jobs Americans aren't doing. You can try, but doesn't it make sense to help the Border Patrol do their job by saying, if you're going to come and do a job, there is a legal way to do it, so you don't have to sneak across in the first place. If you're interested in border security, you've got to recognize that giving people a chance to come and work here on a temporary basis makes it more likely the border will be enforced.

There are some who—I don't know if they say this explicitly, but they certainly allege or hint that probably the best way to deal with 11 to 12 million people is to get them to leave the country. That's impossible. That's the kind of statement that sometimes happens in the political process aimed to inflame passion, but it's completely unrealistic. It's not going to happen. And, therefore, the fundamental question for those who disagree—and there's some good folks who disagree on both political parties, I might add—is, what's the solution?

This bill is not amnesty, but it recognizes that it is impossible for this country to rout

people out of our society and, quote, "send them home." It's just not going to happen. And so good people have come together and derived a solution based upon compromises that addresses this problem in a humane way.

I recently gave a speech at the Coast Guard Academy, and I was preceded by a young man, a Latino, who stood up as the head of his class, addressing his classmates and their families and the President of the United States. And he talked about his migrant grandfather, how proud the migrant grandfather would be. It struck me again what a remarkable country it is where a person with a dream for his immediate family and future family could come to this country, work hard, make sacrifices, and have his grandson address the President and his class.

This has been the American story for decades and decades: waves of people looking for a better life, seeking something better for themselves and their families, willing to sacrifice and work hard. And we've got to understand—and great successes have resulted from that spirit. And this country must never lose sight that what has made us unique and, in my judgment, great is that we welcome people like that in a legal way, that throughout our history there have been the stories of people who have enriched our soul and lifted our spirit by coming to America.

One of the great things about our country is, we've had the capacity to welcome people throughout our history. And we've become all Americans. We've got different backgrounds, different heritages. Our forefathers may have spoken different languages, but we're all American. We've been able to assimilate under the laws and traditions of our country. And as a result, we're a stronger nation for it.

America must not fear diversity; we ought to welcome diversity. We ought to have confidence in what we have done in the past and not lose confidence about what we will do in the future.



And so I want to thank you all for joining on a really important piece of legislation. It's the right thing to do. It's the right approach to take. It is right to address a problem. It is right to work with people in both political parties. It is right to argue for what you believe and recognize that compromise might be necessary to move the bill along. And it is right to take political risk for Members of the United States Congress.

I say—I don't think this is risky, frankly. I don't view this as risk reward. I frankly view it as doing what you ought to do. See, people ought to be running for office to do what's right for the United States of America. That's what I believe people run for office for. And so I want you to know that you've got an administration that looks forward to working with people. I will do my best to make sure that this debate does not denigrate into name-calling

and finger-pointing. And we'll spend energy and time and effort to help you advance a really important piece of legislation for the good of this country.

I've come by to say thanks. Chertoff and Gutierrez can tell you how the bill has gotten this far and what we see in the future. But I'm looking forward to signing a bill, and I think we will. I truly believe that when people with good will and good heart and with focus on helping this country come together, that we can get a good piece of legislation out. And I'm looking forward to signing it. I hope you'll be there when I do.

God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG. He also referred to S. 1348.

## Statement on the American Citizens Held in Iran

*June 1, 2007*

Several of our fellow American citizens—including Haleh Esfandiari, Parnaz Azima, Kian Tajbakhsh, and Ali Shakeri—are being held against their will by the Iranian regime. I strongly condemn their detention at the hands of Iranian authorities. They should be freed immediately and unconditionally.

These individuals have dedicated themselves to building bridges between the American and Iranian people, a goal the Iranian regime claims to support. Their presence in Iran—to visit their parents or to conduct humanitarian work—poses no threat. Indeed, their activities are typical

of the abiding ties that Iranian Americans have with their land of origin.

I am also disturbed by the Iranian regime's refusal so far to provide any information on Robert Levinson, despite repeated U.S. requests. I call on Iran's leaders to tell us what they know about his whereabouts.

The United States is committed to protecting its citizens at home and abroad. We will maintain our efforts on behalf of these citizens until all of them are reunited with their families.

Statement on the Resignation of Daniel J. Bartlett as Counselor to the President

*June 1, 2007*

Laura and I will miss Dan Bartlett very much. Dan has been a true counselor to the President. His contribution has been immeasurable. I value his judgment, and I treasure his friendship. Since coming to work for me 14 years ago as I prepared

to run for Governor, Dan has become a husband and a father. I understand his decision to make his young family his first priority. His most important job is to be a loving husband and father of three young sons. We wish him all the best.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Designations Under the Kingpin Act

*June 1, 2007*

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

This report to the Congress, under section 804(b) of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, 21 U.S.C. 1901–1908 (the “Kingpin Act”), transmits my designations of the following five foreign persons and one foreign entity for sanctions under the Kingpin Act and reports my direction of sanctions against them under that Act:

Victor Emilio Cazarez Salazar

Gulf Cartel

Jorge Mario Paredes Cordova

Haji Azizullah Alizai

Shahbaz Khan

Frederik Heinz Barth

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John D. Rockefeller IV, chairman, Senate Select

Committee on Intelligence; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Carl Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Max S. Baucus, chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; Joseph I. Lieberman, chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Silvestre Reyes, chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; John Conyers, Jr., chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary; Thomas P. Lantos, chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Isaac N. Skelton IV, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; Charles B. Rangel, chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; Bennie G. Thompson, chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security.

## The President's Radio Address *June 2, 2007*

Good morning. Next week, I will travel to Europe to attend the G-8 summit. At this meeting, the leaders of industrialized nations will discuss ways we can work together to advance trade, fight disease, promote development that works, increase access to education, and address the long-term challenge of global climate change.

It is in America's interests to help these efforts succeed. When we help lift societies out of poverty, we create new markets for American goods and new jobs for American workers. When we help reduce chaos and suffering, we make America safer, because prosperous nations are less likely to breed violence and export terror. And this week, my administration took several important steps to advance peace and opportunity across the world.

On Tuesday, America took new actions to address the ongoing genocide in Darfur. On my orders, the Department of Treasury tightened our existing economic sanctions against Sudan and imposed additional ones. I also directed Secretary Rice to work with our allies on a new U.N. Security Council resolution that will seek to impose new sanctions, expand the arms embargo, and prohibit Sudan's Government from conducting offensive military flights over this troubled region. The people of Darfur have suffered long enough. We will not avert our eyes from a crisis that challenges the conscience of the world.

On Wednesday, the United States demonstrated leadership on another crisis affecting Africa: HIV/AIDS. In 2003, my administration launched a \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS relief, and that plan has supported treatment for more than 1 million people. This is a good start, but only a start. So I've asked Congress to double our initial commitment for HIV/AIDS prevention to \$30 billion over the next 5 years. By making this commitment now, we

will help deliver lifesaving treatment, prevent new infections, and support care for millions of people across Africa.

As we fight violence and disease, America is also using its influence to help struggling countries transform themselves into free and hopeful societies. And on Thursday, I announced three new initiatives that will help the developing world.

The first initiative is a new project called the African Financial Sector Initiative. This initiative will help bring African nations the technical assistance they need to strengthen their financial markets. And it will encourage the international financial community to create several new private equity funds that will mobilize up to \$1 billion of new private investment in Africa. By taking these steps, we can help African entrepreneurs access capital, so they can grow their businesses and create jobs across the continent.

The second initiative is a new effort to help more of the world's poorest children get an education. In 2002, my administration launched the Africa Education Initiative, which has provided about \$300 million to improve educational opportunities throughout that continent. Now, with the support of Congress, we will devote an additional \$525 million over the next 5 years to help provide a quality basic education for up to 4 million children in poor nations. With this initiative, we will help young people get the skills they need to succeed and a chance to achieve their dreams.

The third initiative is a proposal to help developing nations meet their growing energy needs while protecting the environment and addressing the challenge of global climate change. Under my proposal, by the end of next year, America and other nations will set a long-term global goal for reducing greenhouse gases. And to meet this goal, we must help developing countries harness

the power of technology. The United States is investing billions of dollars in clean energy technologies and coming up with new ways to share these technologies with other nations. Through the spirit of innovation, we will help developing nations grow their economies and be responsible stewards of the environment.

In all these endeavors, the American people can be proud of our global leadership and generosity. Our Nation is delivering aid and comfort to those in need. We're helping expand opportunity across the world. We're laying the foundation for

a more peaceful and hopeful future for all our citizens.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on June 1 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Vaclav Klaus and Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek of the Czech Republic in Prague, Czech Republic *June 5, 2007*

*President Klaus.* Ladies and gentlemen, unusually, there are three of us here, but our meetings took on a platform of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic participating. And what we wanted to show by that was that with regard to the United States, the opinions of the President of the Republic and of the Prime Minister are identical. This was to demonstrate that.

We are happy about this is the second time we can welcome here the American President in the course of his office. He is the first American President to be here for a second time in his term. And we are also happy about he is actually starting his visit to Europe here.

We regard his visit as a confirmation of a traditional friendship between the Czech Republic and the United States, a friendship that has always been confirmed in the key moments of the previous century: in 1918, in 1945, and in 1989. We very much appreciate the U.S. friendship. There are things to follow up on, and I suppose this visit has brought new, enriching aspects to our friendship.

We've exchanged information on the situation in our respective countries and on the situation throughout the world. We are aware of the fact that the U.S. is highly responsible for the world's development at the moment, and I would like to emphasize that President Bush and the U.S. enjoys the support of the Czech Republic in that regard. We clearly demonstrate that in our participation in missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, et cetera.

We also talked about the stationing of the U.S. military facility in this country and in the neighboring country of Poland. And I think we've understood—we agree with President Bush on that. We regard it as important about President Bush has promised to make maximum efforts to explain these issues to Russia and President Putin. We have pointed it out to our guest that it is very important that we win maximum support for this project of the Czech public, who are very sensitive to those issues, and I suppose that this is what President Bush clearly realizes.

We've also exchanged views on the European integration process, and we've assured Mr. President that both myself and, too, the Government of the Czech Republic—the matter is that the U.S. must not be regarded as a competitor of Europe. We really are not involved in creating a united Europe as a certain counterbalance to the U.S. This is not our goal. We really care about a strong transatlantic relationship, relationship between the Czech Republic and the U.S.

We are aware of the fact that our bilateral relationship is seamless. And we have emphasized to the President that the solution of the visa waiver issue would certainly help that to be regarded that way throughout our country.

May I thank again President Bush for his short, but very busy visit to the Czech Republic and for his very open and friendly dialog we've engaged in. Thank you, Mr. President.

*President Bush.* Laura and I are really pleased to be back in this magnificent city. As the President noted, I had the honor of being here once before during my Presidency. We had a great stay then, and I'm really looking forward to my time here.

It's beginning an important trip to Europe. Obviously, I'm off to the G-8 later on this evening. I think it's important for the people of the Czech Republic to know, however, that my first stop is here. And the reason why is because the people of the United States marvel at the great strength of character that the people of the Czech Republic have shown, your great desire for freedom. People in this country took risk necessary so that the people could actually live in a free society.

And, Mr. President, we're honored to call you friend. We appreciate very much our relationship—our bilateral relationship and our relationship in the transatlantic community. I thank you very much for being strong allies, Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. President, against extremists and radi-

cals who would deny others the chance to live in a free society.

We live in a world in which there are ideologically driven people who murder the innocent in order to achieve their strategic objectives. And I thank the Czech Government, as well as the people of this important country, for their steadfast refusal to allow the extremists to intimidate, allow the extremists to undermine young democracies.

I appreciate so very much the fact that you have put troops in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. I expressed my deepest sympathies to the families who have lost a loved one. I would hope that those families understand, the cause is noble and just and necessary for peace for the long term.

I appreciate very much the fact that the Czech Republic supported our Fund for Democracy. One of the first countries to step up was the Czech Republic, under the leadership of the President. When given a chance to help others realize the blessings of a free society, this important country stood up and said, "We want to work together with others to bring the blessings of liberty to those who have not had it."

I want to thank very much the Government for stepping up and supporting those who have—don't have an opportunity to speak for themselves, whether they be the dissidents in Belarus or in Cuba. I find it inspiring to be in a country where the leadership and the people are willing to say: "We listen carefully for the voices of those who have been imprisoned. We care deeply about human rights and human dignity not only in our own country but worldwide." I am in such a country. And so, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, I'm proud to stand with you here.

We talked a lot about our mutual concerns. There's no greater issue for the people of the Czech Republic than visa waiver. I understand the issue well. I understand why people of this country would say: Here we are, sacrificing along with the United



States in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet our people don't have the same visa rights as other countries that might not be so supportive in the effort against the extremists. I see that contradiction, and therefore, I'm a strong supporter in changing our visa waiver policy. I will work with Congress to come up with a policy that, of course, meets our needs, security needs, for example, but also treats the people of the Czech Republic with respect and who listens to those cries.

I know this is a frustrating issue for your leadership. People in the Czech Republic say: "Get it done now. We're tired of waiting." I know that, Mr. President. I just want to assure you I'll work as hard as I possibly can. We're involved in a very important immigration debate here—in the United States now—and the visa waiver is a part of this important dialog. And the only thing I can do is to assure the people I'll work with Congress to get something done in a constructive fashion.

And then, of course, we discussed the missile defense issue. Let me first talk about a general principle when it comes to relations with Russia. The cold war is over; it ended. The people of the Czech Republic don't have to choose between being a friend to the United States or a friend with Russia; you can be both. We don't believe in a zero-sum world. We don't believe that one should force a country to choose. We believe, as a matter of fact, when we work together, we can achieve important objectives.

One objective is to safeguard free nations from the possibility of a missile attack launched from a rogue regime. See, that's a true threat to peace. As I've told President Putin, "Russia is not our enemy." The enemy of a free society such as ours would be a radical or extremists or a rogue regime trying to blackmail the free world in order to promote its ideological objectives. And so my attitude on missile defense is, is that this is a purely—it's not my attitude, it's

the truth—it's a purely defensive measure, aimed not at Russia but at true threats.

And therefore, as the President mentioned, I look forward to having conversations with President Putin, not only at the G-8 but up in the United States when he comes over. And my message will be: Vladimir—I call him Vladimir—that you shouldn't fear a missile defense system. As a matter of fact, why don't you cooperate with us on a missile defense system? Why don't you participate with the United States? Please send your generals over to see how such a system would work. Send your scientists. Let us have the ability to discuss this issue in an open forum where we'll be completely transparent. And I'll remind him that we're having these discussions not only bilaterally with the Czech Republic and Poland but also through the context of NATO, that the missile defense system will be coordinated with NATO.

And so I just want the people of this important country to understand that our intention is—and the reality is, is that we'll protect ourselves from the true threat. It seems like to me, it's in this country's interest to work cooperatively with the latest technologies to provide protection not only for themselves but for others. It's a noble gesture and an important gesture. And I'll tell Russia that they need not fear such a system, that Russia is—with whom we'd like to have positive relations. That's a complex relationship, no doubt. But there's a lot of areas where we can work together to deal with common threats. And that will be my message, Mr. President, to President Putin, not only in Germany but when he comes to visit me in the United States.

We had a really important and interesting discussion. We discussed a lot of important issues. That's what you should expect friends to do. I'm convinced that this relationship is really good for the United States of America, and I will continue to work to foster good relations.

Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality. I thank you

for your important discussions, and thanks for giving me a chance to discuss these issues with the media.

*Prime Minister Topolánek.* Mr. Honored President, I'm very happy that this meeting has taken place. And I will repeat what Mr. President Klaus said: I'm very happy that this meeting took place in this format. It appears that after a long time, the foreign policy of the Czech Republic goes in the same direction; it is coordinated; we are pulling in one direction. That's good news not only for the U.S., that's good news primarily for the people in this country.

This visit has confirmed that there are no major problems—no problems, I should say—between our two countries. On the contrary, the U.S. and the Czech Republic share the same values. Although each of those countries has a different size and, as a result, carries a different portion of responsibility, we need to say that is the same kind of responsibility. That's why we coparticipate in peace missions; we are involved in combating terrorism; we want to be involved in collective defense by building the missile defense system in the Czech Republic and in Poland.

I would like to emphasize that the cooperation with the U.S. does not concern only security issues, human rights issues, et cetera, and peacekeeping missions, et cetera. This is what the media has been paying most attention to. The U.S. is our—not only our major ally, but it is one of the major investors in the Czech Republic. Apart from that, we are after business cooperation, technology cooperation. The U.S. is world's innovation leader. It is dominant in science. And maybe this is our condition—and I may be putting this in a light at all—this may be our condition for the installation of the radar facility in the Czech Republic. We want cooperation in science technology and innovation. This is what we regard as very important, not only for the missile defense itself but for the Czech Republic and the U.S., as such.

I want to say that the point is not only to site the facility in the Czech Republic, but this is about the joint will for defense of freedom. And I think the Czechs are much more sensitive to that than any other—many other European nations. That's why we want to be involved. And we want to shift the collective defense not only to the Czech Republic but also to make sure it stretches over other friends in Europe.

In response to media speculation, I would like to say that neither me nor the American President link the siting of the radar facility to the visa waiver issue. Visa is unjust; it must be done away with. We've started discussing this much earlier than we started the radar facility talks. I trust President Bush and his clear promise that he will advocate the waiver of the visa, and talking about a bargain is, I think, rather undignified in this regard. We would be involved in visa talks even without the radar. And on the contrary, we would want to help our allies, protect our allies against a rogue state's rockets, even if there was no visa problem. These topics are interrelated only because we are the Czech Republic and they are the U.S.; otherwise, not.

We didn't discuss these issues only; we talked about human rights in Cuba, in Belarus, and our support of the opposition there. We talked about Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transdniestria's conflicts. We talked about Kosovo, about our missions to Afghanistan. We talked about energy security. All those are interrelated issues. We talked also about a number of other issues. You need to talk about such issues, and I'm happy that in a crushing majority of issues, rather in all issues, we could find agreement with the American President.

There are a lot of things that we could not discuss, and I hope we will be able to discuss them during my visit to the U.S. that is now being prepared.

If I were to pick two words from George Walker Bush today that characterize our

cooperation and friendship, I would call it active partnership. Thank you.

*President Klaus.* Thank you, honored President. Thank you, Prime Minister. And let me bring this conference to a close. Thank you, and have a good day.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:50 a.m. in Rothmayer Hall at Prague Cas-

tle. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. President Klaus and Prime Minister Topolánek spoke in Czech, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Remarks to the Democracy and Security Conference in Prague *June 5, 2007*

Thank you all. President Ilves, Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg, distinguished guests: Laura and I are pleased to be back in Prague, and we appreciate the gracious welcome in this historic hall. Tomorrow I'll attend the G-8 summit, where I will meet with the leaders of the world's most powerful economies. This afternoon I stand with men and women who represent an even greater power: the power of human conscience.

In this room are dissidents and democratic activists from 17 countries on 5 continents. You follow different traditions, you practice different faiths, and you face different challenges. But you are united by an unwavering conviction: That freedom is the nonnegotiable right of every man, woman, and child, and that the path to lasting peace in our world is liberty.

This conference was conceived by three of the great advocates for freedom in our time: Jose Maria Aznar, Vaclav Havel, and Natan Sharansky. I thank them for the invitation to address this inspiring assembly and for showing the world that an individual with moral clarity and courage can change the course of history.

It is fitting that we meet in the Czech Republic, a nation at the heart of Europe and of the struggle for freedom on this continent. Nine decades ago, Tomas Masaryk proclaimed Czechoslovakia's independ-

ence based on the "ideals of modern democracy." That democracy was interrupted, first by the Nazis and then by the Communists, who seized power in a shameful coup that left the Foreign Minister dead in the courtyard of this palace.

Through the long darkness of the Soviet occupation, the true face of this nation was never in doubt. The world saw it in the reforms of the Prague Spring and the principled demands of Charter 77. Those efforts were met with tanks and truncheons and arrests by secret police. But the violent would not have the final word. In 1989, thousands gathered in Wenceslas Square to call for their freedom. Theaters like Magic Lantern became headquarters for dissidents. Workers left their factories to support a strike, and, within weeks, the regime crumbled. Vaclav Havel went from prisoner of state to head of state. And the people of Czechoslovakia brought down the Iron Curtain with a Velvet Revolution.

Across Europe, similar scenes were unfolding. In Poland, a movement that began in a single shipyard freed people across a nation. In Hungary, mourners gathered at Heroes Square to bury a slain reformer and bury their Communist regime as well. In East Germany, families came together for prayer meetings and found the strength to tear down a wall. Soon, activists emerged from the attics and church basements to

reclaim the streets of Bulgaria and Romania and Albania and Latvia and Lithuania and Estonia. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved peacefully in this very room. And after seven decades of oppression, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

Behind these astounding achievements was the triumph of freedom in the battle of ideas. The Communists had an imperial ideology that claimed to know the directions of history. But in the end, it was overpowered by ordinary people who wanted to live their lives and worship their God and speak the truth to their children. The Communists had the harsh rule of Brezhnev and Honecker and Ceausescu. But in the end, it was no match for the vision of Walesa and Havel, the defiance of Sakharov and Sharansky, the resolve of Reagan and Thatcher, the fearless witness of John Paul. From this experience, a clear lesson has emerged: Freedom can be resisted, and freedom can be delayed, but freedom cannot be denied.

In the years since liberation, Central and Eastern European nations have navigated the difficult transition to democracy. Leaders made the tough reforms needed to enter NATO and the European Union. Citizens claimed their freedom in the Balkans and beyond. And now, after centuries of war and suffering, the continent of Europe is at last in peace.

With this new era have come new threats to freedom. In dark and repressive corners of the world, whole generations grew up with no voice in their government and no hope in their future. This life of oppression bred deep resentment. And for many, resentment boiled over into radicalism and extremism and violence. The world saw the result on September the 11th, 2001, when terrorists based in Afghanistan sent 19 suicidal men to murder nearly 3,000 innocent people in the United States.

For some, this attack called for a narrow response. In truth, 9/11 was evidence of a much broader danger, an international movement of violent Islamic extremists that

threatens free peoples everywhere. The extremists's ambition is to build a totalitarian empire that spans all current and former Muslim lands, including parts of Europe. Their strategy to achieve that goal is to frighten the world into surrender through a ruthless campaign of terrorist murder.

To confront this enemy, America and our allies have taken the offensive with the full range of our military, intelligence, and law enforcement capabilities. Yet this battle is more than a military conflict. Like the cold war, it's an ideological struggle between two fundamentally different visions of humanity. On one side are the extremists who promise paradise, but deliver a life of public beatings and repression of women and suicide bombings. On the other side are huge numbers of moderate men and women, including millions in the Muslim world, who believe that every human life has dignity and value that no power on Earth can take away.

The most powerful weapon in the struggle against extremism is not bullets or bombs; it is the universal appeal of freedom. Freedom is the design of our Maker and the longing of every soul. Freedom is the best way to unleash the creativity and economic potential of a nation. Freedom is the only ordering of a society that leads to justice. And human freedom is the only way to achieve human rights.

Expanding freedom is more than a moral imperative; it is the only realistic way to protect our people in the long run. Years ago, Andrei Sakharov warned that a country that does not respect the rights of its own people will not respond to the rights of its neighbors. History proves him right. Governments accountable to their people do not attack each other. Democracies address problems through the political process, instead of blaming outside scapegoats. Young people who can disagree openly with their leaders are less likely to adopt violent

ideologies. And nations that commit to freedom for their people will not support extremists; they will join in defeating them.

For all these reasons, the United States is firmly committed to the advance of freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to repression and radicalism. We have a historic objective in view. In my second Inaugural Address, I pledged America to the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. Some have said that qualifies me as a dissident President. If standing for liberty in the world makes me a dissident, I wear that title with pride.

America pursues our freedom agenda in many ways, some vocal and visible, others quiet and hidden from view. Ending tyranny requires support for the forces of conscience that undermine repressive societies from within. The Soviet dissident Andrei Amalrik compared a tyrannical state to a soldier who constantly points a gun at his enemy, until his arms finally tire and the prisoner escapes. The role of the free world is to put pressure on the arms of the world's tyrants and strengthen the prisoners who are trying to speed their collapse.

And so I meet personally with dissidents and democratic activists from some of the world's worst dictatorships, including Belarus and Burma and Cuba and North Korea, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. At this conference, I look forward to meeting other dissidents, including some from Iran and Syria. One of those dissidents is Mamoun Homsy. In 2001, this man was an independent member of the Syrian Parliament who simply issued a declaration asking the Government to begin respecting human rights. For this entirely peaceful act, he was arrested and sent to jail, where he spent several years beside other innocent advocates for a free Syria.

Another dissident I will meet here is Rebiya Kadeer of China, whose sons have been jailed in what we believe is an act of retaliation for her human rights activities. The talent of men and women like Rebiya is the greatest resource of their nations,

far more valuable than the weapons of their army or their oil under the ground. America calls on every nation that stifles dissent to end its repression, to trust its people, and to grant its citizens the freedom they deserve.

There are many dissidents who couldn't join us because they are being unjustly imprisoned or held under house arrest. I look forward to the day when a conference like this one includes Alyaksander Kazulin of Belarus, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Oscar Elias Biscet of Cuba, Father Nguyen Van Ly of Vietnam, Ayman Nour of Egypt. The daughter of one of these political prisoners is in this room. I would like to say to her and all the families: I thank you for your courage; I pray for your comfort and strength; and I call for the immediate and unconditional release of your loved ones.

In the eyes of America, the democratic dissidents today are the democratic leaders of tomorrow. So we're taking new steps to strengthen our support. We recently created a Human Rights Defenders Fund, which provides grants for the legal defense and medical expenses of activists arrested or beaten by repressive governments. I strongly support the Prague Document that your conference plans to issue, which states that "the protection of human rights is critical to international peace and security." And in keeping with the goals of that declaration, I have asked Secretary Rice to send a directive to every U.S. Ambassador in an unfree nation: Seek out and meet with activists for democracy; seek out those who demand human rights.

People living in tyranny need to know they are not forgotten. North Koreans live in a closed society where dissent is brutally suppressed, and they are cut off from their brothers and sisters to the south. The Iranians are a great people who deserve to chart their own future, but they are denied their liberty by a handful of extremists whose pursuit of nuclear weapons prevents their country from taking its rightful place



amongst the thriving. The Cubans are desperate for freedom, and as that nation enters a period of transition, we must insist on free elections and free speech and free assembly. And in Sudan, freedom is denied and basic human rights are violated by a government that pursues genocide against its own citizens. My message to all those who suffer under tyranny is this: We will never excuse your oppressors; we will always stand for your freedom.

Freedom is also under assault in countries that have shown some progress. In Venezuela, elected leaders have resorted to shallow populism to dismantle democratic institutions and tighten their grip on power. The Government of Uzbekistan continues to silence independent voices by jailing human rights activists. And Vietnam recently arrested and imprisoned a number of peaceful religious and political activists.

These developments are discouraging, but there are more reasons for optimism. At the start of the 1980s, there were only 45 democracies on Earth. There are now more than 120 democracies; more people now live in freedom than ever before. And it is the responsibility of those who enjoy the blessings of liberty to help those who are struggling to establish their free societies.

So the United States has nearly doubled funding for democracy projects. We're working with our partners in the G-8 to promote the rise of a vibrant civil society in the Middle East through initiatives like the Forum for the Future. We're cooperating side by side with the new democracies in Ukraine and Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. We congratulate the people of Yemen on their landmark presidential election and the people of Kuwait on elections in which women were able to vote and run for office for the first time. We stand firmly behind the people of Lebanon and Afghanistan and Iraq as they defend their democratic gains against extremist enemies. These people are

making tremendous sacrifices for liberty. They deserve the admiration of the free world, and they deserve our unwavering support.

The United States is also using our influence to urge valued partners like Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to move toward freedom. These nations have taken brave stands and strong action to confront extremists, along with some steps to expand liberty and transparency. Yet they have a great distance still to travel. The United States will continue to press nations like these to open up their political systems and give greater voice to their people. Inevitably, this creates tension. But our relationships with these countries are broad enough and deep enough to bear it. As our relationships with South Korea and Taiwan during the cold war prove, America can maintain a friendship and push a nation toward democracy at the same time.

We're also applying that lesson to our relationships with Russia and China. The United States has strong working relationships with these countries. Our friendship with them is complex. In the areas where we share mutual interests, we work together. In other areas, we have strong disagreements. China's leaders believe that they can continue to open the nation's economy without opening its political system. We disagree. In Russia, reforms that were once promised to empower citizens have been derailed, with troubling implications for democratic development. Part of a good relationship is the ability to talk openly about our disagreements. So the United States will continue to build our relationships with these countries, and we will do it without abandoning our principles or our values.

We appreciate that free societies take shape at different speeds in different places. One virtue of democracy is that it reflects local history and traditions. Yet

there are fundamental elements that all democracies share: freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly; rule of law enforced by independent courts; private property rights; and political parties that compete in free and fair elections. These rights and institutions are the foundation of human dignity, and as countries find their own path to freedom, they must find a loyal partner in the United States of America.

Extending the reach of freedom is a mission that unites democracies around the world. Some of the greatest contributions are coming from nations with the freshest memories of tyranny. I appreciate the Czech Republic's support for human rights projects in Belarus and Burma and Cuba. I thank Germany and Poland and the Czech Republic and Hungary and Slovenia and Georgia, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia for contributing to the new United Nations Democracy Fund. I'm grateful for the commitment many new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe are making to Afghanistan and Iraq. I appreciate that these countries are willing to do the hard work necessary to enable people who want to be free to live in a free society.

In all these ways, the freedom agenda is making a difference. The work has been difficult, and that is not going to change. There will be triumphs and failures, progress and setbacks. Ending tyranny cannot be achieved overnight. And of course, this objective has its critics.

Some say that ending tyranny means imposing our values on people who do not share them, or that people live in parts of the world where freedom cannot take hold. That is refuted by the fact that every time people are given a choice, they choose freedom.

We saw that when the people of Latin America turned dictatorships into democracies, when the people of South Africa replaced apartheid with a free society, and the people of Indonesia ended their long authoritarian rule. We saw it when Ukrain-

ians in orange scarves demanded that their ballots be counted. We saw it when millions of Afghans and Iraqis defied the terrorists to elect free governments. At a polling station in Baghdad, I was struck by the words of an Iraqi. He had one leg, and he told a reporter, "I would have crawled here if I had to." When democracy—was democracy—I ask the critics: Was democracy imposed on that man? Was freedom a value he did not share? The truth is that the only ones who have to impose their values are the extremists and the radicals and the tyrants.

And that is why the Communists crushed the Prague Spring and threw an innocent playwright in jail and trembled at the sight of a Polish Pope. History shows that ultimately, freedom conquers fear. And given a chance, freedom will conquer fear in every nation on Earth.

Another objective—objection is that ending tyranny will unleash chaos. Critics point to the violence in Afghanistan or Iraq or Lebanon as evidence that freedom leaves people less safe. But look who's causing the violence: it's the terrorists; it's the extremists. It is no coincidence that they are targeting young democracies in the Middle East. They know that the success of free societies there is a mortal threat to their ambitions and to their very survival. The fact that our enemies are fighting back is not a reason to doubt democracy. It is evidence that they recognize democracy's power. It is evidence that we are at war. And it is evidence that free nations must do what it takes to prevail.

Still, some argue that a safer goal would be stability, especially in the Middle East. The problem is that pursuing stability at the expense of liberty does not lead to peace, it leads to September the 11th, 2001. The policy of tolerating tyranny is a moral and strategic failure. It is a mistake the world must not repeat in the 21st century.

Others fear that democracy will bring dangerous forces to power, such as Hamas

in the Palestinian Territories. Elections will not always turn out the way we hope, yet democracy consists of more than a single trip to the ballot box. Democracy requires meaningful opposition parties, a vibrant civil society, a government that enforces the law and responds to the needs of its people. Elections can accelerate the creation of such institutions. In a democracy, people will not vote for a life of perpetual violence. To stay in power, elected officials must listen to their people and pursue their desires for peace; or, in democracies, the voters will replace them through free elections.

Finally, there's the contention that ending tyranny is unrealistic. Well, some argue that extending democracy around the world is simply too difficult to achieve. That's nothing new. We've heard that criticism before, throughout history. At every stage of the cold war, there were those who argued that the Berlin Wall was permanent and that people behind the Iron Curtain would never overcome their oppressors. History has sent a different message.

The lesson is that freedom will always have its skeptics, but that's not the whole story. There are also people like you and the loved ones you represent: men and women with courage to risk everything for your ideals. In his first address as President, Vaclav Havel proclaimed, "People, your Government has returned to you!" He was echoing the first speech of Tomas Masaryk who was, in turn, quoting the 17th-century Czech teacher Comenius. His message was

that freedom is timeless. It does not belong to one government or one generation. Freedom is the dream and the right of every person in every nation in every age.

The United States of America believes deeply in that message. It was the inspiration for our founding when we declared that "all men are created equal." It was the conviction that led us to help liberate this continent and stand with the captive nations through their long struggle. It is the truth that guides our Nation to oppose radicals and extremists and terror and tyranny in the world today. And it is the reason I have such great confidence in the men and women in this room.

I leave Prague with a certainty that the cause of freedom is not tired and that its future is in the best of hands. With unbreakable faith in the power of liberty, you will inspire your people, you will lead your nations, and you will change the world.

Thanks for having me, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. in the Large Hall at Czernin Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Toomas Ilves of Estonia; Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg and former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic; former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Natan Sharansky, former Soviet dissident and author; former President Lech Walesa of Poland; and former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom.

## Statement on the Death of William C. France, Jr. *June 5, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Bill France, Jr. Bill was a legend in the world of NASCAR whose passion and vision for stock car racing led the sport to the national prominence it enjoys today.

Bill brought racing's excitement to millions of new fans through his steadfast and innovative leadership. Bill also helped ensure that the NASCAR community found many ways to support the men and women

of the U.S. Armed Forces. Our thoughts and prayers are with the France family.

## Statement on the Death of Senator Craig L. Thomas

*June 5, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Wyoming Senator Craig Thomas. During nearly 23 years of public service as a Senator, Congressman, and State legislator, Senator Thomas was a tireless and effective advocate for the people of his beloved home State. He was a man of character and integrity, known for his devotion

to the values he shared with the people of Wyoming. He leaves a lasting legacy as a guardian of Wyoming's lands and resources and our country's national parks. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Senator Thomas's wife Susan, his family, and friends.

## Interview With Members of the White House Press Pool in Heiligendamm, Germany

*June 6, 2007*

*The President.* Let me start off by talking about my speech yesterday. The purpose of the speech is to remind our allies and those who are wondering as to whether or not the United States is firmly committed to democracy that we are. I strongly believe that we are in a war with a group of ideologues and that we can eventually win this war by promoting an alternative ideology.

And so the speech yesterday was to speak clearly to people around the world that the United States is committed to this freedom agenda, that there is a realistic reason why we promote freedom, that it's for our own security. There's a moral imperative to promote freedom, and that is to recognize that there are people who live in societies that are still repressive and that free nations have an obligation to work to secure their liberty. I made it very clear that democracy takes time, that it takes different forms in different places, but nevertheless, there are

underlying principles which are essential to free societies.

I pointed out that freedom has made great progress over 20 years. The reason I did that was, one, to express my optimism about the future. But, two, make it clear that things—the freedom agenda just doesn't bloom overnight; it takes hard work. But I also made it clear, it's necessary work. And then, as you know, I went around the world and talked about different spots around the world.

And I think it's very important for the G-8—nations in the G-8 to recognize the power of liberty to transform societies. And so I'll be talking, of course, about that here. I think it's important for nations that are free to recognize they have an obligation to help others. I was moved by the people I met. It was just very heartwarming to meet with heroic souls that do have the capacity, with proper support, of changing their societies and, therefore, changing the world.

Anyway, it was an important speech to give. It's always important for the American President to keep setting an agenda based upon values. And those of you who followed me know full well that I believe that liberty has transformed Europe, liberty has transformed the Far East, and I believe liberty can transform the Middle East. And I'm determined to advance that cause.

Here at the G-8, there's obviously a variety of subjects. One, it's going to be very important for us to continue to discuss climate change in a way that actually accomplishes an objective, which is the reduction of greenhouse gases over time and the advancement of technologies, which will yield to better environmental policy as well as energy security.

The United States can serve as a bridge between some nations who believe that now is the time to come up with a set goal, as well as a—I said, the remedy, and those who are reluctant to participate in the dialog. So I laid out an agenda that can move the process forward within the framework of the United Nations, that, in essence, says that we'll be setting a goal at the end of 2008—that “we” being the major emitters—within the framework of the U.N. In other words, this will fold into the U.N. framework. And that enables us to get China and India at the table to discuss how we can all move forward together.

Secondly, in my speech, I said we'll come up with our own policies to meet an interim goal for our country as well as a national goal—or international goal for the rest of the world. And I'll be talking to Angela about that at lunch. I think it fits into her desires to see the process move forward. One of the concerns was, is that there would not be a constructive result of this meeting that basically announced that there should be a post-Kyoto framework. And we will achieve that objective here at the G-8 because we will have set a post-Kyoto framework.

This is an important subject. I also hope we spend an equal amount of time on HIV/

AIDS on the continent of Africa or reducing malaria on the continent of Africa or helping feed the hungry. So it's a—and finally, it's going to be important for us to continue to discuss vital cooperation on fighting extremists and radicals who still pose a threat to our respective nations. The temptation is to sit back and say, well, maybe they're not dangerous anymore because they haven't launched an attack on our respective homelands. They are dangerous, they do want to attack, and the best way to deal with it is to work closely together.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to this. It's obviously a lovely spot. I've been here before. I think some of you came with me—nice and relaxing. Went for a good-hour bike ride today with a couple of Secret Service agents and some German police, got out in the woods and charged around, felt pretty good about it.

*Q.* Can we ask some questions?

*The President.* No. That's all I wanted to tell you. Go on home. [Laughter] I feel so good about life, I'm not going to answer questions. [Laughter] No—yes, you can, please. Please ask a few.

#### *Missile Defense System/Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* What kind of military response would the United States take if Russia retargeted its missiles on Europe, as President Putin has threatened?

*The President.* As I said yesterday that Russia is not an enemy. There needs to be no military response because we're not at war with Russia.

You know, my first meeting with Vladimir Putin, I told him, I said, “What we need to do is get the cold war behind us and work constructively on how to deal with the threats of the 21st century.” Russia is not a threat; nor is the missile defense we're proposing a threat to Russia. So I'm going to talk to Vladimir about that. I've already talked to him about it once on the telephone. I sent Bob Gates to talk to him.



And we'll have a good dialog about how we can constructively work together to deal with—modernize our capacity to deal with the threat to the—the true threats.

So I don't see any military response needed. Russia is not going to attack Europe. The missile defense system is not aimed at Russia. As a matter of fact, I believe it would be in Russia's interest to participate with us, and have made that offer and will continue to make the offer.

Q. Do you take that threat seriously, though?

*The President.* I don't think Vladimir Putin intends to attack Russia—I mean, Europe. So I'll talk to him about it, but it's—if he's saying, "The missile defense system is a threat to us," our—the need, therefore, is to make clear there is not.

By the way, a missile defense system that is deployed in Europe can handle one or two rocket launchers. It can't handle a multiple-launch regime. Russia has got an inventory that could overpower any missile defense system. The practicality is, is that this aimed at a country like Iran, if they ended up with a nuclear weapon, so that they couldn't blackmail the free world.

Q. What do you make of his motivation for all—

*The President.* I haven't had a chance to talk to him about it. I'm going to.

Q. Right, and say, this is just some sort of misunderstanding that he doesn't—you don't see any political purpose behind what he's doing?

*The President.* For his own sake inside his country? I'm not sure. I haven't had a chance to visit with him about that. As you know, I've got a visit here, and then I'll visit with him in Maine.

#### *Kosovo/United Nations Security Council*

Q. Do you think it might be an effort to obtain bargaining chips for negotiating over other issues, like Kosovo?

*The President.* I talked to him about Kosovo the other day, and I don't recall missile defense coming up. In other words,

it wasn't a quid pro quo. So, he's got deep concerns about Kosovo, and so do we. It's an issue that we're just going to have to continue to work with him on. We believe we ought to move the Ahtisaari plan forward through the United Nations, and he's got reservations about it.

#### *Democracy in Russia*

Q. Garry Kasparov, who you met with yesterday, has said that Russia is now a police state, and he said the West should stop giving Putin democratic credentials. What do you—

*The President.* I think there are—as I said yesterday, society has advanced a long way from the old Soviet era. There is a growing middle class; there is prosperity; there's elections. It's interesting you would ask the question. Do you think he is trying to position himself at home? Thereby meaning that he is concerned about public opinion, which is a sign that there is a—when public opinion influences leadership, it is an indication that there is involvement of the people. I think what you're referring to is the upcoming elections. Is he trying to say something about the upcoming elections? I frankly haven't talked to him about that aspect. But if, in fact, he is concerned about the upcoming elections, it does say something about the state of the political scene in Russia.

And as I said yesterday, we've got a friendship with Russia, and there is a lot of common interest in Russia. But I expressed concerns about what were Western expectations and what has now happened inside Russia, for example, rule of law or some press decisions he's made. I've had these discussions with Vladimir frankly over my time as President. I remember our meeting in Slovakia. It was a good, frank discussion about decisions he's made, and he asked me about decisions I made.

Now, the fundamental question is, does it make sense to have relations with Russia? I think it does. Do we agree on everything? No, we don't. Are there areas where we

can work together? You bet. And that's why I call it a complex relationship.

Same issue with China. China has got a—we've got an economic interest in China. We've got interest with China in working with North Korea, just like we have with Russia. And yet we disagree with China's reluctance to advance the democratic process.

*International Cooperation on the Environment/Climate Change*

Q. On the issue of climate change, are you frustrated at always being portrayed as the odd man out? And what do you make of the portrayals of the U.S. trying to upstage Merkel with your climate announcement last week?

*The President.* Well, Angela Merkel and I have had a lot of discussions about this issue. And as I told you, she was interested in whether or not there should be a—whether or not we agree there ought to be a post-Kyoto framework. And my announcement clearly said there should be one and that the United States will be directly involved in developing that framework.

I've got a very substantial record when it comes to advancing technologies to make the air cleaner in the United States. We've actually had a reduction of greenhouse gases and—in spite of the fact that our economy grew. In other words, it's hard to reduce greenhouse gases in the face of economic growth, but we were able to do so. We've laid out a substantial initiative when it comes to tailpipe emissions, and that is the reduction of our usage of gasoline by 20 percent over a 10-year period. So I'm looking forward to telling people exactly what we've done here in the United States.

Q. Will you give any ground on the two-degree target that she wants?

*The President.* No, I talked about what I'm for—remember? I said I'm for sitting together with the nations, to sit down and discuss a way forward. I think when people

really look at what I've said, they say, well, that's an interesting way to bridge the difference between what China has said, for example, and what others in Europe have said. And in order for there to be—first of all, you're not going to have greenhouse gas emissions that mean anything unless all nations, all emitters are at the table. And if China is not a part of the process, we all can make major strides, and yet there won't be a reduction until China and India are participants. And what I have said, is, here's a way to get China and India at the table.

*Pakistan*

Q. Can I go back to your democracy speech?

*The President.* Yes. Did you like it?

Q. I loved it.

*The President.* Thank you. Say that in your stories.

Q. I'll say it anywhere. [Laughter]

*The President.* What did he say?

Q. I'll say it anywhere.

*The President.* Okay, good. How about in print? [Laughter]

Q. Oh, well—

*The President.* That may be taking it too far. [Laughter]

Q. How do you square your commitment to democracy and as a priority for your foreign policy with what we're seeing in Pakistan now, major ally in the war on terror, but also a place where a core leadership of Al Qaida has found some sanctuary in tribal areas. The Government has been taking a repressive attitude toward a free press; it's got into this conflict with the judiciary, firing the chief justice. Have you had conversations with Musharraf about democracy in his country? Do you want to see free and fair elections in Pakistan?

*The President.* I do, and said that in Pakistan the time I was there, standing right next to President Musharraf. And we do discuss democracy, as well as routing out foreigners in his country who are an

equal threat, a threat to America and a threat to him.

It's a very—Pakistan is an important ally in this war against these extremists. As you mentioned, there are some in his country, and I'm convinced that he would like to rout them out. But it's not easy territory in which to rout people out. We've had some successes inside Pakistan, thanks to his leadership. And in terms of the democracy issues, he's going to have to deal with it. And the interesting question is, is the issue about uniform, and he addressed that at the last—only time I've been in Pakistan. He said he would seriously consider—I don't want to put words—you'll have to pull up the press conference.

### *Spread of Democracy*

Q. But if you think democracy is the best way to confront radicals and terrorists, shouldn't we be pushing hard for democracy to really get established in Pakistan?

*The President.* Well, democracy is—it's a lot more established in Pakistan than some of the other nations I mentioned. And there's upcoming elections. And what you're seeing is a lot of posturing about the election process, and it's not perfect. Neither was our democracy perfect for 100 years when we enslaved people.

And so it's—we do push for democracy. We push in the context of the reality on the ground as well. I mentioned Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is a close ally in the war on terror. His Majesty has done and his services have done the world a service, a good service by bringing people to justice. And he is also making some incremental reforms. He will go at a pace slower than some would like to see; nevertheless, he's moving. And the question is, is there progress?

We live in a world where people expect things to happen overnight, and that's just not the way it works. I think it's going to be important for whoever is President to take a long-term view of the ability of

democracies to progress and, therefore, change.

I mentioned South Korea as an example of what I'm talking about. I'm sure—I suspect that if a President were having this conversation with a press corps in the sixties and seventies, they'd say, well, we're for democracy; therefore, how come you're not? How come it hadn't happened yet in South Korea? And yet it did eventually happen in South Korea.

The process and progress move at different paces and different places, and the role of the United States is to help encourage them along, while at the same time achieving certain national objectives. It just so happens that the key national objective in the beginning of the 21st century is to make sure we don't get attacked again and innocent people get murdered. And so we can do both. We can say that in the long run, the best way to secure your society is through liberty. In the short run, let's work collaboratively to protect ourselves.

### *Missile Defense System/Russia-U.S. Relations*

Q. Can I go back on missile shields for a second?

*The President.* Yes.

Q. Vladimir Putin says that you're building a shield for weapons that don't exist now—

*The President.* Right.

Q. Doesn't he have a point? Do you see why he might be suspicious of that?

*The President.* Well, I would argue that it's best to anticipate what might happen and work to see that it doesn't happen, as opposed to not be prepared if it does happen. I mean, if somebody pops up with a weapon and says, "Hands up," people will say, well, how come we didn't have a shield? And so it's—I think we need to do both. I think we need to protect ourselves of what might happen and then work collaboratively to make sure it doesn't happen.

*Q.* On the missile defense system: If there's a misunderstanding between President Putin saying that this is a threat towards Russia and the U.S. saying it is not, what's more important, pushing the system through or maintaining a solid, good relationship with Russia, especially since he's leaving office?

*The President.* I think it's important to make sure we have a system to protect ourselves against the threats of the 21st century, the true threats. And that would be the threat of rogue regimes using a weapon of mass destruction to either blackmail and/or attack allies and friends, cells moving through our societies with the intent upon killing, radical forces undermining young democracies. Those are the threats, and therefore, we need to address them.

And I will continue to work with President Putin—Vladimir Putin—to explain to him that this is not aimed at him. And there's all kinds of ways you can do that. One is total transparency between our militaries and scientists—military people and scientists, which I'm more than happy to do.

#### *President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia*

*Q.* Do you see this as hurting the relationship between you and President Putin?

*The President.* No. As I said, it's a complex relationship. We've had issues before. I think if you look at the history of our relationship, there's been some moments where we've agreed and moments where we disagreed. That's just the way—that's what happens when you've got nations that are influential.

And we've had our disagreements with different allies, had disagreements with France over Iraq. We've had disagreements with other nations, but that doesn't mean they're not friends, or that doesn't mean we can't work with them.

Yes, sir.

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Are you at all concerned, though, that this current state of the relationship between you and President Putin might have some implications for the outcome with regard to Iran? You've sort of relied on his——

*The President.* Well, we've been working very closely with Russia on Iran, and I don't think that this—first of all, my comments yesterday were very realistic in the sense that said, we're friends; we've got a complex relationship; we can work together, but we've had some disagreements. I just don't see how—why that, those kinds of statements are going to prevent the United States and Russia from working closely together on key issues like Iran or proliferation, areas where we can get along.

Obviously, there's disagreement. You mentioned Kosovo. No question, he doesn't agree with our position. And so we've got to work together and see if we can't understand each other on a lot of issues. But it's an interesting question about, well, shouldn't you just scrap the system? And the answer is, is that the system exists in the first place to deal with threats. And that's why it needs to go forward.

#### *Situation in Sudan/United Nations*

*Q.* Can I ask about Darfur?

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Have you expressed your frustration with why the international community hasn't been moving on Darfur? You obviously introduced sanctions. Would you be prepared to see a no-fly zone over Darfur to have some direct interaction?

*The President.* We would consider that. And, yes, I've expressed my frustrations.

*Q.* You would consider it in what context? Would you want to see other people help establish——

*The President.* Look, I want to see other people helping Darfur and—by joining us and sending clearer and stronger messages to President Bashir. And yeah, I'm frustrated. It—because there are still people

suffering, and yet the U.N. process is moving at a snail's pace. As you know, I gave this speech at the Holocaust Museum and caveated it because the Secretary-General asked for a reasonable period of time to see if he could not get the process moving.

*Q.* And the reasonable period is over?

*The President.* Yes, it was. That's why I gave my speech. And I don't know if you noticed, but Sudan is now headed to peacekeeping at the U.N.

#### *Iran/Trial of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby*

*Q.* Sir, will you pardon Scooter Libby?

*Q.* [Inaudible]

*The President.* It's interesting, isn't it? And the second in charge is Iran.

*Q.* And a no-fly zone, have you—

*The President.* I can't give you all the tactics on it yet, but I understand the principle and said so in my speech that we would consider such.

Listen, that was a sad day for—yesterday was a very sad day for Scooter and his family. But there's an ongoing process, and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to discuss it until the process has run its course.

*Q.* Do you think it says something about you and Vice President Cheney, that you continue to embrace a man who has been convicted and sentenced?

*The President.* No, it's a sad day for him, and my heart goes out to his family. And it wouldn't be appropriate for me to discuss the case until after the legal remedies have run its course.

*Q.* Well, there's a lot of speculation that you are going to pardon—

*The President.* Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Back to Russia?

*The President.* Yes, back to Russia. [Laughter]

*Q.* Fun stuff. [Laughter]

*Q.* Nice going, Terry. [Laughter]

*Q.* Yeah, right. [Laughter]

*Q.* You seemed to have carefully calibrated your response to some of the comments that you made—

*The President.* Well, I think what you ought to do—look, I would suggest going back and looking at a series of my responses. In other words, put—and yesterday was an important speech to give about democracies. And I think in terms—if you want to really figure out how I conduct relations with Russia, it would be helpful for you—if you're interested in writing a genuinely—I know you are—an in-depth piece about how I've conducted relations with Russia to look at different comments I have made relative to different moments of drama or moments of discord or moments of agreement.

And I have always said that, one, this is an important relationship. It's an important relationship because when we work together, we can solve problems. I've also said it's a complex relationship because there are disagreements. You asked why—I haven't had a chance to talk to him about it. The insinuation was that he's doing this for internal political reasons. I can't make that the case, and it would be unfair for me to put words in his mouth, and so therefore, I won't.

I've also said it's important for there to be a personal relationship between me and President Putin so that we can have frank discussions in a way that enables us to more likely deal with the problems we face. That's why I'll visit with him here, and that's why I'm looking forward to welcoming him to my dad's house in Kennebunkport. It's an opportunity to continue to have a serious dialog with serious players in trying to keep the peace.

There will be disagreements; that's just the way life works. And—but that doesn't necessarily lend itself to speculation that somehow the relationship between me and the President is not a positive relationship. It is a positive, and I'm going to work to keep it that way.



There are some who say we shouldn't have any relations with Russia. I strongly disagree with that. I think it's important for us to maintain relations with Russia and—on a variety of fronts, whether it be—you know, look, I want him to join the WTO for a reason. I believe it's—I think if trade increases between Russia and the United States, it's important to have some structure and ways to resolve the inevitable disagreements that will arise. And that's what happens not only with a nation like Russia; that's what happens all the time in Europe. There's trade disputes where there needs to be a dispute resolution mechanism. And that's one of the things that the WTO provides.

Yes, sir.

#### *Russia/Energy Resources*

*Q.* You talked about the need to prevent extremists from getting their hands on oil in the Middle East or anywhere else. How would you characterize how Vladimir Putin manages his country's energy resources?

*The President.* Well, first of all, he is—he has got the opportunity to really develop the greatest asset of Russia, and that's her brainpower. He's inherited a very difficult situation in Russia. The demographics indicate that it will be a shrinking society for a variety of reasons. One, it's health care system is good in parts of the country and not so good in other parts. They've got a needle issue; they've got HIV/AIDS issues. They've got a series of issues that he knows he has to deal with. They've got an old pensioner system. So that cashflow from oil will enable him to modernize his society, and he's making steps to do that.

Secondly, it is a—obviously, it creates tensions with Europe. His being a sole source of natural gas for certain countries creates a degree of tension, and that's why the European Union and Russia are continuing to work through their issues.

The fundamental question is, will he make enough investment in his oil infrastructure to take advantage of these

cashflows and, at the same time, make an investment inside his country? And he believes he is committed, enhancing human capital. The question is, is that—is the middle class going to continue to grow? It looks like it has grown substantially in the past.

This country, again, is certainly not perfect in the eyes of many Americans. On the other hand, if you consider where it's come from, it has made substantial progress toward a freer society in the sense that there is a middle class that's growing and will eventually make more demands. Now, having said that, there's been—as I said yesterday, there's been some backtracking. We had expectations, and those expectations weren't met.

#### *Progress in Iraq*

*Q.* Can I ask about Iraq? The idea of the surge seemed to be to buy some time for the political leaders in Iraq to make progress on reconciliation. Have you seen any real, meaningful progress on that front?

*The President.* Yes, look, they're close to getting an oil deal done. It's—it hadn't been the closure on certain issues, but they're working hard to get it there.

*Q.* Is that—I mean, they've been talking about that for a long time. It doesn't seem that they—the increased security operations have moved them to speed—

*The President.* Well, I think on certain fronts, they have made progress. They've got a budget that's now moved out. They've got a—I know they're working on an oil law. They're working on different—discussing whether or not they have Provincial elections, and we hope they get—hope these issues come to fruition.

But you're right, that's what the surge is intended to do, plus provide enough time for these Iraqi forces to step in, prevent the sectarian violence from spilling out of the capital. What's difficult is the fact that Al Qaida continues to kill. And it frustrates the Iraqi people, and it should frighten the American people that Al Qaida is active in Iraq looking for a safe haven from which

to launch further attacks. And they're the primary—they're the ones primarily responsible for these EID [IED]\* and suicide bombers.

#### *Alternative Fuel Sources*

*Q.* Can I go back to Brendan's [Brendan Murray, Bloomberg News] question for a second?

*The President.* What was it?

*Q.* About Russia's economic situation and the use of its oil wells. I guess my question is, are you concerned that Russia's enormous energy wealth is going to kind of create a situation where its leaders are vulnerable to the arrogance of power? In other words, they've got an immense amount of wealth concentrated in their hands, and inevitably that tends to make people act in aggressive ways, doesn't it?

*The President.* I think what—one reason why I promote rule of law throughout the world is to make sure that that very scenario doesn't accelerate. A second initiative that we all have got to take is to diversify away from hydrocarbons, and that's what will eventually yield to national security and economic security for countries that are dependent upon hydrocarbons from other places, such as ourself.

You know, there is—there are mechanisms in place to basically enable nations to protect themselves; the EU is a mechanism. If you noticed, there's constant jockeying here in Europe with Russia about security. No question, some nations are concerned about their supplies of gas being used for political purposes. And therefore, all of us need to work collaboratively to convince nations not to do that, whether it be Russia or any other nation that is supplying hydrocarbons to the world.

You've heard me say, we import oil from places that don't necessarily like us. Oil is fungible, by the way. But nevertheless, we do. And therefore, it is in our interest, just like it's in the interest of other countries,

to diversify. And that's really going to be the interesting challenge here as we move forward in this 21st century. One of the dividends of diversification through new technologies is better environmental quality. And that's why this issue is—it's got a real poignancy, as far as I'm concerned. One, I know we can be better stewards of the environment. But also, at the same time, it ends up making us less dependent on crude oil from overseas, in our case.

It's coming, and the question is, how do you stimulate new technologies? What is the most effective way to get technologies to the market that will enable the world to control greenhouse gases, for example? And that's really where the—see, once you get people to agree to a goal, then the next question that needs to be answered is, how best to achieve that goal? We've taken the lead in achieving that goal by spending billions of dollars on new technologies.

We've got new technologies being advanced in cellulosic ethanol. That will help nations once that becomes able to compete in the market. There's new battery technologies being promoted, primarily out of Japan. But nevertheless, it's—will have the beneficial effect of enabling people to drive without the use of gasoline. Clean coal technologies are going to be a really important part of a strategy to deal with what will be an international goal.

And so the question is, how best to stimulate that type of investment? And that's an important discussion to have here at the G-8. It's also an important discussion to have at home.

#### *Iran*

*Q.* Iran—President Ahmadi-nejad says that Iran's nuclear program cannot be stopped. Is he right?

*The President.* Therefore, let's build a missile defense system. And, yes, we're going to work to stop him. That's why we are constantly working through diplomatic channels to continue to apply pressure. And

---

\* White House correction.

I mentioned the other day, I think we need to go back to the U.N. Security Council. And we'll see.

*Spread of Democracy*

*Q.* You mentioned South Korea earlier. Do you think South Korea could be a model for Iraq?

*The President.* I think that—first of all, the situation inside South Korea is different—or was different than it is in Iraq. On the other hand, U.S. presence enabled the South Korean economy and system to evolve and, at the same time, provided assurances to the Chinese and the Japanese.

And you hear me say that—and compare the situation in the Middle East to what happened in the Far East. It's not to say that the cultures were the same or the difficulties in the different countries are the same. It is to say, however, that the U.S. can provide a presence in order to give people confidence necessary to make decisions that will enable democracies to emerge and say to other people, step back and let the democracies emerge.

It's very interesting to note that the U.S. presence in the Far East was welcomed by different countries with different interests. But it helped achieve an objective for all of us, and today, the Far East is peaceful. And it wasn't peaceful at the end of the Korean war; it was a place where thousands of Americans had lost lives.

And so the comparison between Korea and the Middle East is, again, not to say that the religious situation was the same—of course, it was different—nor to say that some of the influential players were the same; it's different. But it is to say that given time, these democracies will emerge.

*President Nicolas Sarkozy of France*

*Q.* What do you think of the new French President?

*The President.* I haven't met him yet—I have met him—excuse me—but not as President.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:45 a.m. at the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. A reporter referred to Russian chess grandmaster and political activist Garry Kasparov. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany in Heiligendamm

*June 6, 2007*

*Chancellor Merkel.* Well, ladies and gentlemen, this was our first meeting here during the G-8 meeting with the President of the United States of America. And we wanted to use this meeting in order to prepare the agenda of all of the issues that we're going to discuss here during the sum-

mit meeting. And it was a very satisfactory meeting, indeed, although in some areas there remain a few things here and there that we still need to discuss.

But what we would like to see coming out from this G-8 summit is, we would like to send a signal as to how we wish

to shape globalization in the sense that we would like to give it a human face; we would like to shape it for human beings. We want to combat poverty. We want to ensure the freedom of investments. We want to also see to it that globalization respects the social dimension. We want to work on world trade issues. And there are a number of international conflicts that we wish to concentrate on and that we hope we will together be able to contain.

There are two priority issues that loom large on the agenda and could be seen, I believe, also in the preparatory phase leading up to this meeting. The first one is climate change, and the second one is combating poverty in Africa. And on these two issues, we just had a very intensive and a very good conversation, a very good debate. As I said, there are few areas here and there where we will continue to work on, but I trust that we will work out joint positions on that.

So let me say yet again, I do hope and trust that a very strong message will come out of this summit meeting, and we started here on a very good footing, indeed.

*President Bush.* Angela, thank you for your hospitality. You picked a beautiful site.

I'm appreciative of your leadership. I think that when people take an objective look at what's been accomplished here, people will see that there's been major progress made on key issues. I come with a deep desire to make sure that those suf-

fering from HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa know that they'll get help from the G-8. I come with a deep desire to work with people around the table to reduce malaria on the continent of Africa and feed the hungry. I know you share that desire as well. Thank you for your leadership.

I also come with a strong desire to work with you on a post-Kyoto agreement about how we can achieve major objectives. One, of course, is the reduction of greenhouse gases. Another is to become more energy independent, in our case, from crude oil from parts of the world that—where we've got some friends and sometimes we don't have friends. We have a good chance to share our technologies with the developing world to make sure that we're good stewards of the environment. And I thank you for your leadership on this issue, and I'm looking forward to working with our fellow G-8 members.

It's good to be back in this part of the world. And I know it takes a lot of hard work to put on one of these G-8s, and your team has done a fine job. Glad to be with you.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:25 p.m. at the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm. Chancellor Merkel spoke in German, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan in Heiligendamm

*June 6, 2007*

*President Bush.* It's good to be with a friend, Shinzo Abe. We recently met at Camp David, and now we have a—and we were on the phone since then, and now we have a chance to further our discussions.

We talked about a lot of subjects; particularly, we talked about North Korea. There is a common message here, and that is, we expect the North Koreans to honor agreements. And it's very important for the Japanese people to know that I strongly

support Shinzo Abe's desire to deal with this very important issue of—the abduction issue.

Likewise, we had an extensive discussion about energy and climate change. I reminded the Prime Minister that his great country and great economy is going to lead the way when it comes—along with the United States, in leading the way coming to develop technologies that will enable us to be—change our energy habits and, at the same time, be good stewards of the environment. And we discussed ways to develop a framework that has the flexibility and, at the same time, the goals, so we can encourage the world to move in that direction.

It's good to be with a friend.

*Prime Minister Abe.* This is the sixth time that I'm having discussions with George, and as we always do, this time we were able to have a very frank exchange of view on many things. On North Korea, unfortunately, the North Koreans have not done anything to implement the initial actions. And also on the issue of abduction, they have not taken any sincere actions to resolve that issue. So we agreed that the G—

8 leaders need to send a strong message to North Korea on these issues. And also on the abduction issue, I explained the Japanese position to George once again, and I was able to gain his understanding on this issue, as he has always shown understanding.

On climate change, I explained the Japanese proposal to the President, and we agreed that Japan and the United States would be working together to—for the creation of an effective framework which is flexible, and that we would be cooperating to achieve that end in the future.

So we reconfirmed the fact that the alliance we have between Japan and the United States in dealing with issues like North Korea and climate change is truly an alliance for Asia and an alliance for the entire world, for that matter.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:29 p.m. at the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters in Heiligendamm

June 7, 2007

*Prime Minister Blair.* Right, obviously, this is a summit where we'll be discussing two crucial issues. One is the change in the climate and the actions that we need to take in order to address that. And I think there is a very substantial coming together around the need to make sure that we have a substantial reduction in emissions and find the right process and the right way that we can achieve that.

And I think with the President's speech last week, this has moved the situation on a great deal. I think there is a real desire

to come together. I think everyone wants to be part of a post-Kyoto deal. Everyone wants to try and make sure that that is a deal that's got to be—that includes all the major emitters. And everyone wants to make sure that that deal can then command broad agreement right across the international community and deliver what people want to see, both for reasons of the environment and for reasons of energy security.

However, I think both myself and the President are very concerned, as well, to



make sure that we do not simply focus on climate change. We've also got to focus on recommitting ourselves to the Gleneagles process on Africa, on making major steps forward there in relation to things like HIV/AIDS and education. In addition to that, of course, there's the situation in Darfur, where we both are anxious that there is strong action taken. And then we've also managed to have a word, too, about the world trade talks, which we want to see reach a successful conclusion.

So, I mean, there's still obviously a lot of talking and discussing going on, and we're about to go in for the main session now. But I do feel, myself, that people are coming together, and I think that's important.

*President Bush.* Yes. Good start there.

*Prime Minister Blair.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* You know, we had a press conference in the Rose Garden where, you know, it was the last time on U.S. soil I'll be standing next to the Prime Minister talking about a—what we believe and how our efforts are going to lead to peace and to a better world for a lot of people. This is the last meeting I will have had with him as Prime Minister. It's a nostalgic moment for me. I'm sorry it's come to be, but that's what happens in life. We'll move on.

We—Tony said we talked about global climate change. I told him in Washington, and I recommitted myself today that the United States will be actively involved, if not taking the lead, in a post-Kyoto framework, post-Kyoto agreement. I view our role as a bridge between people in Europe and others and India and China. And if you want them at the table, it's important to give them an opportunity to set an international goal. And that's why I laid out the initiative I laid out. And I told Tony that we're deadly earnest in getting something done; this is serious business. And the fundamental question is, how best to

send proper signals to create the technologies necessary to deal with this issue?

And as we discuss global climate change, it's really important we don't forget those who are dying. And I appreciate this man's commitment to global AIDS—fighting global AIDS. We do that ourselves—laid out a \$30 billion initiative. I'm very proud of the United States citizens for supporting such an initiative. Over the past 3 years, antiretroviral drugs has been extended from—to over a million people, up from 50,000. So it's important to debate the environment and discuss it. It's also important for those of us who have got the wealth to put it to use to save lives. The malaria initiative we talked about is a really important initiative, and I hope that countries here at the G-8 join Great Britain and the United States in saving lives that can be saved in a pretty easy way. It just takes will, focus, and effort.

We did discuss Darfur. I'm frustrated, but the international organizations can't move quickly enough. I don't know how long it's going to take for people to hear the call to save lives. I will be stressing, along with Tony, the need for nations to take action. If the U.N. won't act, we need to take action ourselves, and I laid out a series of sanctions that I think, hopefully, will affect Bashir's behavior. But enough is enough in Darfur.

We talked about Doha. We're committed to doing a deal in Doha. If you're interested in alleviating poverty around the world, then they ought to be joining and making the necessary concessions to have a global trading system that helps affect the poor.

So I've come with a broad agenda and a serious agenda, and so has the Prime Minister. And it's been a good, meaningful discussion, as usual. We'll answer one question apiece, then we've got to go get our picture taken.

*United Kingdom-Saudi Arabia Relations/  
International Cooperation on the  
Environment*

Q. Mr. President, you've said it's important to set an international goal. How long does the world have to wait for America to set a goal that others can measure of how much you're cutting greenhouse gases by?

And Prime Minister, if I could ask you about another matter. Were you aware that your Government was approving payments to a friend of President Bush's as part of British Aerospace's kickback system? And is that why you suspended a fraud inquiry?

*President Bush.* Glad you're answering that question—[laughter]—a friend of mine. [Laughter]

*Prime Minister Blair.* On the point you asked me—let me make one thing very clear: I'm not going to comment on the individual allegations. And a lot of this, of course, relates to things that go back to the 1980s.

But let me just make one thing very, very clear to you: This investigation, if it had gone ahead, would have involved the most serious allegations and investigations being made of the Saudi royal family. And my job is to give advice as to whether that is a sensible thing, in circumstances where I don't believe the investigation, incidentally, would have led anywhere, except to the complete wreckage of a vital strategic relationship for our country in terms of fighting terrorism, in terms of the Middle East, in terms of British interests there, quite apart from the fact that we would have lost thousands—thousands—of British jobs.

So I totally understand why you guys have got to do your job, but I've got to do mine. And mine is sometimes taking these decisions about what I believe to be in the strategic interests of our country and holding to it. And that's what I've done.

*President Bush.* Greenhouse gases declined last year in the United States, in

spite of the fact that our economy grew. Not many countries can make that claim. In other words, we're taking steps necessary to be good stewards of the environment; at the same time, advance technologies. Our record is a strong record. We've spent billions of dollars on technologies necessary to make us less dependent on foreign sources of oil and, at the same time, good stewards of the environment.

Secondly, as I proposed, that by the end of 2008, the world's emitters of greenhouse gases should come together and set an international goal. Nothing is going to happen in terms of substantial reductions unless China and India are participating, see. And so I—it is our role to serve as a bridge between people who have got one point of view about how to solve greenhouse gases and about how to get the developing nations such as China and India at the table.

In the meantime, we'll move forward with a very aggressive agenda. I don't know if you've followed my speeches in the United States, but I said, we'll reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. And the way you do that is through technologies and ethanols and battery technologies, and I'm convinced we'll meet that goal. And in so doing, we'll be, yet again, a world leader when it comes to new technologies.

Q. Is there an international goal for many years to come, Mr. President?

*President Bush.* Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

*Missile Defense System/Russia-U.S.  
Relations*

Q. Thanks. Last night, the Russians said again—Putin's spokesman said again that everything they've heard from you and from your staff about missile defense has left them unconvinced. Is there—what can you say to President Putin today that's maybe different or more specific than what we've heard so far that might change his mind?

*President Bush.* Well, I mean, the—I'm looking forward to my meeting with Vladimir Putin. A missile defense system cannot stop multiple-launch regimes. In other words, the facts are, is that—the fact is this: that you can't stop two, three, four, five missiles. And therefore, I will explain to him once again that a missile defense system is aimed at a rogue regime that may try to hold Russia and/or Europe and the United States hostage. I'll—I think the best thing for me to do is just talk about the facts.

Secondly, it is important for Russia and Russians to understand that I believe the cold war ended, that Russia is not an enemy of the United States, that there's a lot of areas where we can work together, for example, in Iran or areas of proliferation. There's a lot of constructive work we can do.

And so I'm looking forward to my dialog with Vladimir Putin this afternoon. It's, hopefully, an attempt to find other areas where we can work together and make sure our rhetoric doesn't cause concern in our respective countries and here in Europe. There's—he can be—he doesn't have to be viewed as a—in his—as an enemy, see. And

the missile defense system should say, we'll—we can work together. I actually think that Russia ought to participate with us. If it's aimed at dealing with a rogue regime, then it makes sense for Russia to say, "Let's join, let's share technologies."

And so I will reiterate the proposal we made, and that's: Send your generals to the United States, send your scientists to the United States, and we'll share our vision. And hopefully, that will help. Hopefully, the visit this afternoon will make it clear that we have no animosity; we bear no ill will. We're simply trying to deal with the true threats of the 21st century. And I repeat: Russia is not a threat; they're not a military threat. They're not a—something that we ought to be hyperventilating about. What we ought to be doing is figuring out ways to work together.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:26 a.m. at the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in Heiligendamm

*June 7, 2007*

*President Bush.* Vladimir and I just had a very constructive dialog, particularly about missile defense. He expressed his concerns to me. He is concerned that the missile defense system is not an act that a friend would do. He made some interesting suggestions. As a result of our discussions, we both agreed to have a strategic dialog, a opportunity to share ideas and concerns between our State Department, Defense Department, and military people.

This will be a serious set of strategic discussions. This is a serious issue, and we want to make sure that we all understand each other's positions very clearly. As a result of these conversations, I expect there to be better understanding of the technologies involved and the opportunities to work together.

I told Vladimir we're looking forward to having him up to my folks' place in Maine the beginning of July. And we'll be able

to continue our discussions, our bilateral discussions on a variety of issues.

*President Putin.* I'd like to confirm what the President of the United States has just said, except for one thing: I have not said that friends do not act in this way. [*Laughter*] We have an understanding about common threats, but we have differences. The difference is ways and means in which we can overcome these threats. We considered the proposal by the American side very thoroughly, and we have ideas of our own. I have stated these ideas in a thorough way.

The first proposal is to use the radar station rented by us in Azerbaijan, which is entitled "Gabala." Yesterday I had a conversation of this matter with the President of Azerbaijan. The existing agreement with Azerbaijan makes it possible for us to do this, and the President of Azerbaijan stressed that he will be only glad to contribute to the cause of global security and stability.

We can do it automatically, in an automatic regime. And in this case, the system, which is to be constructed, can cover not only part of Europe but the entire Europe without any exception. This will fully exclude the possibility for the missile debris to fall on European states because they will fall in the ocean. This will make it possible for us not to change our stance on targeting our missiles. On the contrary, this will create necessary grounds for common work.

But this work should be multifaceted with the engagement of states concerned in Europe. And we agreed with George that our experts will start doing it as soon as possible. This will make it impossible—unnecessary for us to place our offensive complexes along the borders with Europe. And this will make unnecessary to place the appropriate American complexes in the outer space.

But we hope that these consultations will not serve as cover—to cover some unilateral actions, and I have told George about that. Because as soon as a country, for in-

stance, Iran, carries out the first test of its long-range missile, our reconnaissance means and American reconnaissance means will register this immediately. Three—five years will be necessary from the first test until the systems are operational. This time is fairly enough to deploy any ABM system. Therefore, no matter how long our talks are going on, we will never be late. The major thing for these negotiations is that they should be viewed and should take into account joint interests in the security area.

I'm grateful to the President of the United States for a constructive dialog today.

*President Bush.* We'll answer one question apiece. Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters]. Then we got to go to a meeting.

#### *Missile Defense System*

*Q.* President Putin, are you saying now that you do not consider the missile defense issue a serious threat to your country anymore? And were you satisfied with what President Bush presented to you in this meeting?

*President Putin.* I think that if we work together to overcome the threats we are discussing today and if we take into account the concerns of each other, if we make this work transparent and if we provide for an equal access to the system, then we'll have—through the management of this system—then we will have no problems. And I'm, of course, satisfied with the spirit of openness in which we discussed this problem today on behalf of President of the United States.

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* My question is to both Presidents. In your today's dialog, what was more: constructive things, or rather differences? What's prevailed?

*President Bush.* Well, you just heard that, the desire to work together to allay people's fears. There's a lot of people who don't like it when Russia and the United States argue, and it creates tensions. Russia is a

great country, and so is the United States. It's much better to work together than it is to create tensions.

Good. Thanks. See you later.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. at the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm. President Putin referred to President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Statement on House of Representatives Action on Stem Cell Research Legislation *June 7, 2007*

Today the United States House of Representatives, with its vote on the embryonic stem cell bill, chose to discard existing protections on human life. This bill puts scientific research and ethical principle into conflict, rather than supporting a balanced approach that advances scientific and medical frontiers without violating moral principles.

My administration has sought to understand the dilemmas of stem cell research not as a choice between science and ethics but as a challenge to advance medicine while meeting our solemn obligation to defend human life. That is why in 2001, I authorized the first Federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells, under careful safeguards. This policy encouraged ethical research, while requiring taxpayer funds not be used to support the creation, destruction, or harming of living human embryos.

Recent scientific developments have reinforced my conviction that stem cell science can progress in ethical ways. Researchers

have been investigating innovative techniques that could allow doctors and scientists to produce stem cells just as versatile as those derived from human embryos but without harming life, and the House vote on this bill took place just after significant advances in stem cell research were reported in leading scientific journals. These reports give us added hope that we may one day enjoy the potential benefits of embryonic stem cells without destroying human life.

I am disappointed the leadership of Congress recycled an old bill that would simply overturn our country's carefully balanced policy on embryonic stem cell research. If this bill were to become law, American taxpayers would, for the first time in our history, be compelled to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos. Crossing that line would be a grave mistake. For that reason, I will veto the bill passed today.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 5.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Lech Kaczynski of Poland in Gdansk, Poland *June 8, 2007*

*President Kaczynski.* Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to wel-

come everybody to the meeting with President Kaczynski and President Bush.



The talks have been longer than expected, yes. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, we have had a longer meeting with President George W. Bush, and the subject of the conversation were the issues of interest to the United States of America and for Poland, our country.

Certainly, we talked about the issue of missile defense system. We talked about problems pertaining to the relations with our very important Russian partner. We talked about the situation in Iran a little, also, a little about the situation in Kosovo. But, of course, the main subject of talks were the two first issues.

I can tell you that as far as the missile defense system is concerned, the two parties fully agree. And this is in line with the obvious thing, that the system has no aggressive intentions. This is the plan which is to reinforce the protection of Europe against the dangers, which result from the fact that not all the countries of the contemporary world are responsible. We do not mean Russia here; it's about other states.

As far as relations with our Russian partner are concerned, well, we agree that Russia is an important country in the world and that the status of Russia, which is very extensive territorially, and it is also very numerous in terms of population, and it has nuclear capability, which is the legacy from the previous period—that all these factors gives Russia basis for being a country important in the world, a country which really is very important. And the United States and Poland do not question that situation.

However, it is important that our Russian partner, with which Poland wants also to have as good relations as possible—well, the United States has good relations with that country—but that Russia should recognize that the world has changed for the last 18 years, and it concerns also Central and Eastern Europe, and in particular, it concerns our country.

None plans of the United States, as the U.S. President said, or Polish plans are directed against the interests of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation can feel totally safe, at least from the respective of our countries, although there are some other larger states—large states in the world, and some other entities are responsible for those states. However, the whole plan of the missile defense system is the plan which gives rights to more stability and defense, defense which is needed to guard against irresponsible actions, without any additional objectives here.

However, as far as other uses are concerned which were subjects to our talk, I introduced what I know about the issues related to the Western Balkans because it is known that not long ago, there was a meeting in Brussels, where I talked with almost all the leaders of the western Balkan States. We talked also about Kosovo, the crucial problem there. We talked also about how, in Polish opinion, the solution pertaining to that region, formerly the part of Serbia—however, in reality, it is a separate identity—and how the relations pertaining to that region can be really reflected on other parts of the world.

We also talked about the stabilizing role of NATO today, and I hope that tomorrow to an even larger extent. We also talked a little about the European Union. We talked about the states with which the United States is befriended and Poland is befriended, as for example, the, well, German Federal Republic. We also exchanged the views on France. President George W. Bush had already had a chance to talk longer with President Sarkozy during the meeting of G-8, and I had only a brief encounter with him 2 years ago when I was not President yet. But in a few days' time, I'm going to meet him.

The conversation which we have had, very interesting, important for myself at least. I'm sure it will be followed up another meeting in mid-July. And then we

will come to concrete results. The beginning of that was the meeting today, very fruitful for myself. And I want to thank you very much, Mr. President, for coming to Poland. Thank you. Thank you very much.

And now, President George W. Bush.

*President Bush.* Mr. President, thank you for your gracious hospitality. Laura and I are so honored to be with you and Mrs. Kaczynska I think probably the highlight was to meet your granddaughter, and congratulations on the birth of another granddaughter.

This is our third trip to Poland. We have never been in this beautiful part of your country, and it's spectacular. We really thank you for inviting us to Jurata. Thank you for the walk in the woods, and thank you for the very friendly and important dialog we had.

The President talked a lot about what we talked about. One thing I do want to do is praise this good country for being so strong for freedom. I love to be in a land where people value liberty and are willing to help others realize the blessings of liberty. Kosciuszko has a statue right across the street from the White House, on which it says, "For our freedom and yours." Isn't that interesting: for our freedom and somebody else's? Poland is a great advocate for democracy in the world today.

And I thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in the cause of freedom. You're very much involved in the cause of freedom in two very difficult theaters: Afghanistan and Iraq. I thank you and I thank the people of Poland for the sacrifices being made so that others may live in a free society. You've deployed nearly 900 troops in Iraq, troops that are helping the Iraqi people defend their young democracy against extremists, radicals who murder in the name of an ideology to deny people the right to live in a free society. And I thank you for the leadership. I appreciate the fact that you've made the decision to extend the deployment through 2007. That is a bold and

hard decision, I know. The people of Iraq will never forget it.

And it's important for those families who have lost a loved one in the Iraq theater to understand, the American people won't forget it either. And we send our prayers and blessings to those families.

Recently in Afghanistan, there was a call for more NATO help, and this Government stepped up quickly by sending more troops to help that young democracy survive as well. So, Mr. President, thank you for your leadership. It's a proud moment in history when free countries are able to help others.

That's how you set the stage for peace. Free societies don't war with each other. That's why Europe is now whole, free, and at peace. Our dream is, the same blessings of liberty be extended to the Middle East. I thank you for your stalwart support.

We discussed our—as well, the efforts by Poland to help people who are—who need to be free from governments that are—darken their vision. I thank you very much for your leadership for Belarus, the people of Belarus, a nation where peaceful protesters are beaten and opposition leaders are disappeared.

I appreciate so very much your speaking out on behalf of the dissidents in Cuba, an island right off our coast, as you know, Mr. President. And it is inspiring for the people of Cuba who want to live in a free society to hear the voices from Europe, such as yours or the Czech Republic's.

We had a—spent a lot of time talking about the Ukraine. I thank you for your insight. And then, of course, we did talk about missile defense, a subject that the President and I spent a lot of time talking about. It's a subject I spent a lot of time talking about with President Putin yesterday.

First, let me say, I appreciate the support of the deployment of the missile defense interceptors here in Poland. We will negotiate a fair agreement that enhances the security of Poland and the security of the entire continent against rogue regimes who

might be willing to try to blackmail free nations. That's the true threat of the 21st century. It's a subject that I told you I discussed with President Putin.

I have made clear what you just made clear, Mr. President: The system we have proposed is not directed at Russia. Indeed, we would welcome Russian cooperation on missile defense. We think it makes sense to have a—and I proposed and he accepted a working group from our State Department, Defense Department, and military to discuss different opportunities and different options, all aimed at providing protection for people from rogue regimes who might be in a position to either blackmail and/or attack those of us who live in free societies.

All in all, we had the kind of conversation you'd expect strong allies to have. It was candid; it was over a really good meal. And I'm looking forward to bringing you back, Mr. President, to the White House. I can't wait to see you there in mid-July. Again, thank you all for your wonderful hospitality. God bless the people of Poland.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:22 p.m. at Gdansk Lech Walesa International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Maria Kaczynska, wife of President Kaczynski; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. President Kaczynski referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France. President Kaczynski spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Statement on the Nomination of Admiral Michael G. Mullen To Be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General James E. Cartwright To Be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

*June 8, 2007*

General Peter Pace has served our Nation with great distinction for 40 years. He is an outstanding marine, and he made history as the first marine to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Pete's job has been to help ensure that America's military forces are prepared to meet the threats of this new century. This is a difficult task in a time of peace. Pete Pace has done it in a time of war, and he has done it superbly. As part of our senior military leadership, Pete has helped oversee the liberation of more than 50 million people. I have relied on his unvarnished military judgment, and I value his candor, his integrity, and his friendship.

Pete's life is the story of the American Dream. He grew up in an immigrant family, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, and went on to hold the highest position in our Armed Forces. He is a man

of character who leads by example. I thank his wife Lynne, who knows from long experience that military service is a family commitment. I also thank his son Peter and his daughter Tiffany. America has been blessed by Pete's lifetime of service. And I wish all the best for the Pace family as this good man begins a new chapter in his life.

I am pleased to accept the recommendation of Secretary Gates that I nominate Admiral Michael Mullen to succeed General Pace. Admiral Mullen has performed ably as Chief of Naval Operations. He holds degrees from the U.S. Naval Academy, the Harvard Business School, and the Naval Postgraduate School. He has served ably in both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, as well as in both Allied and Joint Commands. And when he is confirmed by the United States Senate, he will make a superb Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Admiral Edmund Giambastiani has been a strong and effective Vice Chairman. He is an officer of vision and determination, and he has served at a time of unprecedented danger for America. His time in the Joint Chiefs capped an exemplary military career. As commander of the U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, he helped transform our Nation's military so it could better face the new threats of a new century. And he did the same for NATO while serving as its first Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation. The admiral is a highly decorated officer, but he is most proud of his unit awards and commendations because they represent team accomplishments. I thank his wife Cindy, his daughter Cathy, and his son Pete, for the support they have provided. I salute Admiral G for his long career of

distinguished service. He has earned the thanks of a grateful nation.

I am also pleased to announce that I am accepting Secretary Gates's recommendation to nominate General James E. Cartwright as the new Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Cartwright is a Marine Corps pilot who serves as commander, United States Strategic Command, where he has done an outstanding job managing America's global strategic forces. In that role, he is responsible for the global command and control of U.S. Strategic Forces. He is an exceptional officer, and when he is confirmed by the Senate, he will be an outstanding Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

## The President's Radio Address *June 9, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I am traveling in Europe, where I am meeting with world leaders to discuss ways to address challenges like climate change, to work together to combat diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS, and help advance freedom throughout the world.

Back at home, America is engaged in an important discussion about immigration. Most Americans agree that the 1986 immigration law failed. It failed because it did not secure our border; it did not include tough worksite enforcement; it did not help people assimilate; and it encouraged more people to come here illegally. Today, illegal immigration is supported by criminal enterprises dedicated to document forgery, human trafficking, and labor exploitation. This is unacceptable, and we need to fix it in a way that honors our finest traditions.

People have strong feelings on this issue. I believe we can express our feelings, dis-

agree on certain elements, and still come together on a solution. We can accomplish that through the bipartisan Senate bill. It is based on months of negotiation. The result is legislation that puts border security first, establishes a temporary-worker program to meet the legitimate needs of our growing economy, sets up a mandatory system for verifying employment eligibility, and resolves the status of the estimated 12 million people who are here illegally. If this bill becomes law, America will finally have in place a system that addresses all these problems and can be adjusted to address future problems that may arise.

I understand the skepticism some Members of Congress have regarding certain aspects of this legislation. Like any legislation, this bill is not perfect. And like many Senators, I believe the bill will need to be further improved along the way before it becomes law. In the heat of the debate,

critics and supporters can sometimes talk past each other, so I want to speak to Members about some of the concerns I have heard.

I know some of you doubt that the Federal Government will make good on the border security and enforcement commitments in this bill. My administration is determined to learn from the mistakes of the past decades. And that is why we are now committing more resources than ever before to border security, doubling the number of Border Patrol agents, building hundreds of miles of fencing, and employing advanced technology, from infrared sensors to unmanned aerial vehicles. The bill builds on this progress by requiring that we meet border security objectives before certain other provisions can take effect.

This bill also addresses other problems with the 1986 reform. Unlike the 1986 law, this bill includes a temporary-worker program to ensure that those who come here to work do so in a legal and orderly way. Unlike the 1986 law, this bill gives honest employers the tools they need to ensure that they are hiring legal workers, beginning with a tamper-resistant identity card. Businesses that knowingly hire illegal aliens will be punished. Workers who come here illegally will be sent home. And unlike the 1986 law, this bill does not grant amnesty for those who are already here.

Amnesty is forgiveness with no penalty for people who have broken our laws to get here. In contrast, this bill requires illegal workers to pay a fine, register with the Government, undergo background checks, pay their back taxes, and hold a steady job. And if at the end of 8 years they want to apply for a green card, they will have to pay an additional substantial fine, show they have learned English, and return to

their home country so they can apply from there. In short, they will have to prove themselves worthy of this great land.

I also want to say a word to those in Congress concerned about family unification. This bill will create a merit-based point system that recognizes the importance of family ties by granting points to some applicants who have family members here legally. More than half of new green cards will go to family members. Immigrants will be allowed to bring in their spouses and minor children, and we will clear the backlog for millions of people who have been waiting patiently in line.

Securing the border and upholding family values are not partisan concerns; they are important to all Americans. They must be addressed, and this bill is the best way to do it. I urge Senator Reid to act quickly to bring this bill back to the Senate floor for a vote, and I urge Senators from both parties to support it. The immigration debate has divided too many Americans. By coming together, we can build an immigration system worthy of this great Nation, one that keeps us safe and prosperous, welcomes dreamers and doers from across the globe, and trusts in our country's genius for making us all Americans, one nation under God.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on June 8 in Heiligendamm, Germany, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on June 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 8, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.



## Remarks in a Discussion With Members of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome, Italy

June 9, 2007

*The President.* I want to thank the good folks of Sant'Egidio for joining us. Sant'Egidio is one of the great faith-based organizations in the world. And we're here to talk about our common commitment to help the poor, feed the hungry, and help eradicate disease. The United States is firmly committed to helping people on the continent of Africa. We have committed in our Congress—and we'll work with our Congress—to spend \$30 billion to deal with HIV/AIDS, over a billion to deal with malaria, billions to deal with hunger, money to deal with education.

But these programs cannot be effective without loving people on the ground helping a neighbor in need. I want to thank you for being a part of the international army of compassion. I thank you for hearing the call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. I'm looking forward to hearing your strategies in dealing with some of the most difficult problems in the world. I'm proud of your organization, and I thank all members of your organization for being such loving souls.

Thank you for having us here.

*Marco Impagliazzo.* Thank you, Mr. President. Before our strategy, some little word about our community, with your permission.

*The President.* Please.

*Mr. Impagliazzo.* The Community of Sant'Egidio was born in Rome, in this city, in 1968. At that time, the West was wondering about its future and the young people were looking for something. Andrea Riccardi, who is the founder of our community, was a student at the time in a high school of Rome. He called some of his fellow students to listen and to live according to the gospel, gospel of Jesus.

In those years, people believed that the revolution would have changed the world.

Andrea understood that there would have been no lasting change unless the people's hearts were touched by the word of Jesus. This word put into practice, meant, first of all, to be friends with the poor.

Today, there are communities of Sant'Egidio in 70 countries, with 60,000 members all over the world. Its spirituality is founded on several pillars—just three pillars, Mr. President. First, prayer, which takes place every day in all our communities—a personal prayer, reading the Scripture every day, but also common prayer. It means that every day, 60,000 people open the Scriptures. They read it and pray to the Lord from the beautiful churches of Rome—like the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere that you would have visited—to the hearts of Africa, or so many places in the immense lands of Latin America. Mr. President, prayer is our strength.

The second pillar is mission, reaching out to all those who seek and ask for a sense for their lives.

Finally, the third pillar, solidarity with the poor. There's a voluntary service carried out for free because no one is paid for his service to the poor in our community. No one.

Gratuitousness, Mr. President, is what our society is missing today. Everything is there to buy or to sell. But Jesus said: You received without payment; give without payment—Jesus said. This word of Jesus is the source of our members' work. In our story, one thing has always proved too: There is no love for the poor without faith.

Christians must live the primacy of the heart. One never has the solution to everything, but we must not close our hearts when we do not have a solution. We are all at the window of the world. That is why we cannot forget demands of the poor peoples of the world.

So what is striking in our story is that these signs, signs of resurrection, to place in those very places where it seems there is no hope left, like Africa. With your permission, therefore, Mr. President, I would like to pass now the floor to my friends who works every day in Africa.

Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you very much. Thank you all.

*[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; the discussion continued, however, and no transcript was provided.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:01 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy. Participating in the discussion were Andrea Riccardi, founder; Marco Impagliazzo, president; Mario Giro, director for international affairs; and members Cristina Marazzi, Leonardo Palombi, Elard Sadimba Allumando, Beatrice Kun Adon, and Claudio Betti, the Community of Sant'Egidio.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy in Rome

June 9, 2007

*Prime Minister Prodi.* Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to have received President Bush today, and I thank President Bush for having chosen to spend a couple of days in Rome for his European mission, a rather long European mission, I would say. And this is the first in his second term.

Our talks today have been very, very interesting, indeed, very friendly talks. And I must say that we took the opportunity, in fact, to pursue some issues that we already began discussing in Heiligendamm. And, in fact, we had a bilateral meeting today and discussed some of the issues, as I said, that we already went over in Germany.

We talked about climate change, energy, our fight against poverty, our Africa policies. These are all very, very important decisions and choices that we have to make and, of course, that are going to be important for the future, the next generation as well.

We briefly went over some bilateral issues. Fortunately, we don't have any bilateral problems—I would say—no serious problems that have created any divisions

between our two countries. And in particular, in fact, we do share the same views with regard to many issues, many matters. And we basically agree on how the future of the world should look, should be.

Now, I thanked President Bush for some symbolic gestures that he has shown. Our countries are becoming closer and closer. And, in fact, Italian, the Italian language is one of the language that can be freely chosen in American schools. All high schools in America offer Italian as a language of study. And I think that this is a wonderful step, a wonderful way to bring two countries closer, especially when we consider that the flow of immigration between our two countries has stopped; it stopped a long time ago.

Now, going on to other issues, of course, we agree that we need some new major players, new major world players, and we have to, in fact, work together with China, India, Brazil, Mexico. And we agree on that approach.

We also talked about some meetings that we had with Mr. Lula and President Hu Jintao after the end of the G-8 summit. And we realize, as I've said, that we've

got to work more and more together. And I think that the progress that has been made by the United States in reaching an agreement, a broad agreement on climate change has been a wonderful step forward, and I think that this is taking us in the right direction. In other words, we have to work together on these issues.

We haven't yet finalized some of the quantitative details of this agreement, but obviously, the underlying message is to work together, to cooperate. And I would say that maybe just a few months ago that seemed to be unlikely.

Now, we also had a good discussion on other issues of common concern. We talked about Kosovo, for example, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and we spoke about some responsibilities that we should take on together. So both our countries should work together in order to restore peace and stability in these different areas of the world.

We need to do more. We need to keep working together, especially when it comes to Middle Eastern issues. We know, of course, that we have not yet been able to put an end to the crisis which has been ongoing now for a number of years. And in Lebanon, in fact, the peace mission has certainly led to some positive outcomes; yet, there are still tensions; there are still many difficulties. And that's an open-ended issue, therefore, that we have to continue being concerned about.

Now, that's what we discussed today. I don't wish to add any further remarks. I would like to give the floor right over to President Bush. And I thank you so very much for having come today, and I thank you for making it possible to cooperate together and, of course, for enabling this cooperation with success in the future. Thank you.

*President Bush. Buongiorno.* Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. Laura and I are glad to be back in your beautiful country. Rome is a spectacular city. And I'm sorry we're disrupting traffic, but, nevertheless, it is great to be back here. Thank you for the

wonderful meal, and thank you for our friendship. I think it's important for the people of your country to know, relations between our countries are strong, and we intend to keep them that way. And I appreciate that; I appreciate the good conversation we had.

I thank you for your commitment to the people of Afghanistan. Your country has been an integral part of the NATO mission. You provided a lot of important troops for NATO; you're involved with the PRTs in Afghanistan. I thank you, but no more so than the Afghan people thank the people of Italy. These people are desperate to live in a free society, and you ought to take great pride, Romano, and I know you do, in making a significant contribution to their freedom. I also appreciate your very—your strong advice in making sure that we all understand this is not just a military operation, that there has to be a political track and a reconstruction track in order for this democracy to survive. And so I'm looking forward to continuing to work on this important issue.

I thank you, as well, for your leadership in Lebanon. It was a year ago when we were at the G-8. You remember the attacks came on Israel, and then, all of a sudden, the situation began to look like it needed some help. And there was a lot of doubt in the world's mind until Italy stepped up and said: We will provide troops, and we'll be the military leader in Lebanon. And then the world followed. And I want to thank you for your leadership on that important issue.

And now we've just got to make sure the Siniora Government survives. One of the best ways to do so is to insist that we proceed forward with the Hariri trial, to make sure that there are consequences for behavior that may affect the stability of a democracy. I don't want to prejudge the outcome of the trial, but I do think it's an important measure for all of us to see the truth in that part of the world.

And I know we can continue to work together. It's very important that foreign influences, like that of Syria, not be continually disrupting the Siniora Government.

I want to thank you very much for our discussions on Kosovo. This is a part of the world you know a lot about, and Romano made some very significant contributions during the roundtable discussions at the G-8 and was, again, very eloquent today about two things: One, that obviously, a deep concern about the Kosovars, their desire to be independent, coupled with making sure there is a avenue forward for Serbs through the EU and maybe NATO. And I appreciate your leading on this issue. It's important that the United States and Italy work together on common problems. After all, we share common values. And today's discussion just goes, at least, to show me how much we can do when we work in a collaborative way.

As Romano said, the bilateral relations are pretty darn solid. And I appreciate that. There's a lot of Italian Americans who have got great pride for their homeland. They're watching this press conference—well, they may not be watching all of it, Romano, but they'll be watching some of it, and they're going to want to know, are we doing well? And the answer is, we are. And I'm grateful.

Answer a couple of questions, or what do you think?

*Prime Minister Prodi.* Yes.

*President Bush.* Okay, yes.

### *Italy-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Mr. President, you just said that you had lunch with Prodi today. Then later you'll have a coffee break with Mr. Berlusconi. What do you enjoy most, the lunch or the coffee break? [*Laughter*] Or would you have preferred to be on a diet today? [*Laughter*]

And to Prime Minister Prodi, now, I'm perhaps not going to be so ironic in my question. Now the friendship is wonderful. You've made progress. But I know that

there have been some differences between the U.S. and Italy over the months, even though the friendship is solid and progress has been made. So President Bush is asking you to perhaps change your rules of engagement in Afghanistan, and even with regard to Iran, there are some differences of opinion and, in general, in the Middle East. So have you managed to close that gap a bit? Or how do you think you might be doing that in the future?

*President Bush.* Yes, I'm going to have coffee with the former Prime Minister, Prime Minister Berlusconi. I'm doing so for a couple of reasons: One, he is the opposition leader; two, he is a friend. And I mentioned this to Romano, and his attitude was, I don't blame you; it's the kind of thing he does when he goes to other countries. And I'm looking forward to seeing Silvio. It's a—one shouldn't read anything into it, other than we made some decisions together. We've known each other for a while, just like I've known Romano—actually, I've known Romano a long time too. He was President of the EU early on in my Presidency. And so I consider it an honor to have friends with two important leaders here in Italy.

*Prime Minister Prodi.* We spoke very frankly about many of the issues that you've just raised in your question. And, yes, there certainly is an active cooperation between us. And this is with regard to problems we've had in Afghanistan and, of course, the very difficult situation in Iran. And we both share the same position, the same views when—with regard to the danger that we are running if we allow the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and we also agree on the course of action that should be followed.

So I think that in the future we'll certainly be able to work together, and we'll be able to exert pressure, both of us, on the Iranian Government. We don't want them to exceed the limits, as it were, of a peaceful and monitored or controlled use

of nuclear technology. So, this is our position, and, as I said, we share the same view.

Now, of course, we also discussed other issues on our common agenda, and we were able to reiterate the fact that there is an interdependence here and a need to work together, not only because it is helpful or useful, but it is a strong need that we have to focus on to restore peace in the world.

Now, we spoke about climate change, about global warming in our meetings over the past few days. And I think that this has somehow set out a course of action for the future: how we can perhaps harmonize our production systems; how we can make sure that our political decisions are, in fact, in conformity with these needs. And I think, again, that we'll definitely be able to make huge progress together.

*Pope Benedict XVI*

Q. Thank you, sir. Can you talk about your conversation with Pope Benedict earlier? Did you have a fundamental disagreement over whether Iraq was a just war? And what of his concerns about Iraq did you take to heart?

And if I could, to the Prime Minister: What did you tell the President today about the trials going on here involving Americans?

*President Bush.* Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press], I'll be glad to share some of the private conversation with His Holy Father. First, I'll give you an impression. I was talking to a very smart, loving man. And I—you know, after 6½ years of being the President, I've seen some unusual—I've been to some unusual places, and I've met some interesting people. And I was in awe, and it was a moving experience for me.

We didn't talk about "just war." He did express deep concern about the Christians inside Iraq, that he was concerned that the society that was evolving would not tolerate the Christian religion. And I assured him

we're working hard to make sure that they—people lived up to the Constitution, that modern Constitution voted on by the people that would honor people from different walks of life and different attitudes.

We talked about a lot of other subjects. We talked about our attempts to help the people in Africa deal with HIV/AIDS and malaria and hunger. I reminded him that we made a significant commitment to that end, that about 3 years ago, 50,000 people were getting antiretroviral drugs. Now over 1,100,000 people are getting them, as a result of our initiative on HIV/AIDS, and that I'm going to double that commitment—or ask Congress to double the commitment from 15 billion to 30 billion.

I talked to him about our malaria program, about how we intend to reduce malaria by 50 percent in certain countries, and that I'd continue to remind the world of our duty to work together to achieve a major goal, which is to try to eradicate malaria throughout Africa.

And I talked to him about our attempts to feed the hungry, and I also reminded him that we've got poor people in our own neighborhood that need to be affected.

He talked about immigration. He's watching the immigration debate very closely in America. And I told him I was a person who strongly supports comprehensive immigration reform that, on the one hand, we'll enforce our law; on the other hand, we need to treat people with dignity. And we had a good discussion.

Q. —the Pope has said—

*President Bush.* What?

Q. The Pope has said Iraq was worrisome.

*President Bush.* Yes, he's worrisome about the Christians inside Iraq being mistreated by the Muslim majority. He's deeply concerned about that, and we spent a lot—spent a fair amount of time talking about it.

*Prime Minister Prodi.* We did not discuss the issue that you raised in your question



just a moment ago. And I've already clarified many times that Italy, of course, is a democratic country. We have very clear-cut rules that we follow, and we, therefore, enforce our rules. And I am confident that there is no conflict here, in terms of our friendship and our cooperation with the United States.

*Italy-U.S. Relations/Kosovo/G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany*

Q. Thank you. You've just told us that you and President Bush have just returned from your G-8 summit. Now, the outcomes that have been stated on the many issues that you discussed—climate, development, and the missile shield—now, are those real—is that real progress, or not? And the deadline for the Kosovo independence—

*President Bush.* What? Say that again.

Q. Deadline for the Kosovo independence?

*President Bush.* A decline?

Q. Deadline, deadline.

*President Bush.* Oh, a deadline—beg your pardon. My English isn't very good. [Laughter]

Q. Sorry. And do you wish that President Prodi will pay a visit to you in Washington in the next months?

*President Bush.* Yes, and yes.

Q. What kind of deadline?

*President Bush.* I'd love to welcome the Prime Minister. And it—we're just going to have to work through our schedules, but he's invited any time. Listen, Italy is a great friend. There are millions of people in our country who love Italy because that's where their heritage is from. My Ambassador's grandfather was from Italy. I'm sure you know this, but the heritage, the Italian heritage, is a powerful part of our country and its culture. And the Prime Minister is welcome.

In terms of the deadline, there needs to be one. This needs to come; this needs to happen. Now it's time, in our judgment, to move the Ahtisaari plan. There was a—there's been a series of delays. You might

remember: There was a moment when something was happening, and they said, no, we need a little more time to try to work through a U.N. Security Council resolution. And our view is that time is up.

And so we're working with our friends and allies, and I had a long discussion with Vladimir Putin on the subject. To share with you my thoughts, what I told him there at the table was, "It's time, it's time to bring this issue to a head." And obviously, there's deep concern about what that would mean, whether he'd accept it, or not. I understand that. But the Kosovars are eagerly anticipating a decision by the world.

And at the same time, Romano is right, we need to make sure that the Serbs see a way forward. And one good way forward is through, potentially, EU membership. I don't have that much to say in it, but I can talk to the Serbs about economic development and can talk about a better relationship with the United States. And therefore, we will.

*Prime Minister Prodi.* Going back to the summit, I can say that it has been an actual success, real progress, in other words. I mean, just think; people were expecting a rift, problems, arguments, and, instead, we did reach some important conclusions. Now, even the issue of global warming, for example, we realize that there is a predominant, a prevalent principle, and that is that global issues have to be dealt with globally. In fact, we all talk about the Kyoto Protocol, for example, and we said that this was the first step towards international cooperation in this field, in this sector.

Now, again, we still have some technicalities to work out; some little pieces there are missing, as it were. But definitely there is a clear-cut will to move forward. We have a resolve there; India, China, Brazil, Mexico, everyone has shown the same resolve. There were other countries in addition to these; even though they're not G-8 members, they're all there to work on global solutions because this is the only way

we can possibly reach some kind of equilibrium in the future.

Now, with regard to the other issues—Kosovo, for example, and our relations with Russia—well, I would say that during our meeting, there was a certain ambiance. We talked about interdependence. I think that's a good way of putting it. We didn't feel any tensions, but rather we were all seeking this—a way to strengthen our interdependence. And I think that this is something that should be guiding us in our relations with Russia, and this is how we can build up a peaceful system for the future.

Those are the goals of the G-8. In fact, G-8 summits don't always have technical agendas that are predefined, predetermined. That's not how it works. We need to meet and to freely discuss some of these long-term issues. So we were able to do that very freely, very openly. And I must say that we all agreed on our future course of action, and I think that we couldn't have hoped for any better than that.

Now, with regard to Kosovo, again, now we know how to move forward, after our discussions there. And I think that that, basically, I mean, we couldn't have hoped for any better outcome than that there.

#### *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

*Q.* Thank you, sir. Mr. President: General Pace, an Italian American—Pace, as you know, is leaving—a distinguished marine, with a lengthy career, somebody that all indications are, you and Secretary Gates enjoyed working with a great deal—is on his way out. And I wonder what this says about the political climate in Washington, that it was decided that maybe it would be better to have a new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, rather than have a bruising battle on Capitol Hill.

*President Bush.* Yes. Pete Pace is a fine man and a great general. And I think the fact that Secretary Gates made the recommendation not to move forward with a renomination speaks to the U.S. Congress and the climate in the U.S. Congress.

Pete Pace always gave me candid advice. Pete Pace is an excellent strategic thinker. And the interesting thing about Pete Pace, even though he had four stars on his shoulder, always talked about the private. He speculated out loud about Private Pace: What would Private Pace think of this decision? What would Private Pace's families think about a decision that he was recommending to me?

And so the decision has been made, and I'm going to miss him. And the country owes him a great debt of gratitude for years of service, first at Vice Chairman and then as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thank you all.

*Prime Minister Prodi.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* Thank you. Thank you for that ovation. They must have been yelling, "Brilliant answer."

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:48 p.m. at Chigi Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. Prime Minister Prodi referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; and President Hu Jintao of China. Prime Minister Prodi and some reporters spoke in Italian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania in Tirana, Albania

June 10, 2007

*Prime Minister Berisha.* Honorable Mr. President Bush, honorable close collaborators of Mr. President Bush, ladies and gentlemen: Today is a beautiful day. Today is a great day, historic for all Albanians. Among us is the greatest and most distinguished guest we have ever had in all times: the President of the United States—[inaudible]—George W. Bush; his lady, Mrs. Laura Bush; and their close aides. For me, it's a great honor and a special pleasure to thank them with gratitude and extend the most heartfelt welcome in this historic visit, the first visit ever of a United States President in Albania.

Thank you heartily, Mr. President, from the bottom of our hearts, fulfilling ardent and long-awaited wish of all Albanians to have a special guest in their home. *Tungjatjeta*, an Albanian word, means "May you have a long life." This is a most traditional greeting of Albanians that I chose to greet you on their behalf, on behalf of Albanians. Welcome to Albania, President Bush.

Mr. President, you are today an honorable guest and friend of a nation whose gratefulness and friendship towards your great Nation and your country have been deeply embodied in the historic memory and in the conscience of its citizens. No other nation in the region or in Europe has ever gone through so much suffering, ethnic cleansing, racism, partitions, occupations, and severe dictatorships as we Albanians have. History was unjust and very severe to us.

We have been blessed, however. We have won in all our efforts to defend our identity in Western-oriented national vocation to emerge from the age of oppression to the age of dignity, from the age of darkness to the age of freedom. We have won because our just cause has always had the

powerful support of the U.S.A., the greatest and the most precious friend of Albanian nation. God bless your great Nation.

At the beginning of last century, President Wilson did not allow the partition of the newly proclaimed Albanian independent state. The U.S.A. recognized Albania 85 years ago. Your visit on this anniversary is its most beautiful crown, is the climax of excellent, friendly relations between our two countries.

Afterwards, President Truman made big efforts to free Albanians from their Orwellian dictatorship. At the outset of the nineties, President George Herbert Bush and his administration provided an exceptional contribution to the fall of Berlin Wall, but the fall of this wall in Tirana as well, opening the doors of freedom for Albanians.

President Bill Clinton led the North Atlantic Alliance in the fight for Kosovo liberation from the barbarian occupation. And today, Kosovo citizens find in you and your administration, Mr. President, the greatest hope and support for their project of a free, independent, and integrated state in Europe.

Centuries ago, until our present days, hundreds and thousands of Albanians migrated to your great country. They are loyal and honorable citizens of the United States who have always loved and still love the nation and the country of origin. They have—[inaudible]—a lot; they have kept a life of hope and freedom for Albanians always on.

In your presence, I'd like today to extend the most cordial greetings and my deepest gratitude. The friendly feelings towards the—your Nation and your great country, the proud Americanism of Albanians are indeed a matter of their national pride. Albanians are very proud about the friendship with the U.S.A. and the cooperation they

have with your nation in the war against international terrorism, of their presence on your side in Iraq, Afghanistan. I assure you that they will be on your side wherever their modest, but resolute contribution is needed against international terrorism, this most dangerous enemy of free people.

Above all, Albanians feel proud of their friendship with your nation because we share the values and the principles of freedom and market-oriented democracy. In this road, they have received an exceptional overall political, economic, financial, and technical assistance provided—military—provided by the U.S. and the EU countries and other friendly countries, for which we remain truly, always grateful.

Sixteen years ago, Secretary James Baker brought to Albanians the message from the country of freedom, “Freedom works.” Today, after 16 years, I can say that despite the hardships of our country, experienced by our country, freedom for Albanians has worked more than any other nation. Albania, a country of denied freedoms and human rights, banned the Constitution, a country of hypercollectivization and true human slavery and the most extreme isolation, today is the country of political, economic, consolidated pluralism, of excellent religious tolerance, of functioning, working democracy. It is the country with a fast economic growth, with the private sector accounting for 80 percent of GDP. And the income per capita have increased 20 times more.

Albania is the country that signed and is implementing successfully their stabilization association agreement with the EU and received the message from Riga summit on the possibility of receiving an invitation for NATO membership. It is a country that welcomes today the President of the United States of America, George W. Bush. God bless Albanians.

Ladies and gentlemen, in our talks with President Bush, we have discussed our excellent, friendly bilateral relations and their further development. I informed him of

other reforms launched by my Government and their results in strengthening the rule of law, the zero-tolerance fight against organized crime, the valuable assistance that law enforcement agencies from the United States and other friendly countries are providing to this end. We talked about the fight against corruption and the much-expected assistance that a series of projects funded by the Millennium Challenge Account related to e-taxes, e-procurement, and one-stop shop offer in this regard and other reforms in the judicial system, police, education, et cetera.

I briefed President Bush on the significant reforms that we are undertaking in the view of turning Albania into a very attractive country for U.S.A. and the foreign investors—other foreign investors. We hope that this visit will encourage others.

A special place was the question of Albania’s membership into NATO as the main priority of Albania. In this regard, we have decided to increase our defense budget to 2 percent of GDP, to triple our presence in Afghanistan, and implement with seriousness the requirements of the ninth MAP cycle. In addition, let me mention that 90 percent of Albanians support Albania’s membership to NATO. The support of President Bush and his administration is of a vital importance to Albania for membership into NATO as the most secure future.

We discussed about the situation in the region. After this press conference, we’ll continue the discussion in the framework of Adriatic Charter, A-3, with the very good friends of Albania, the Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader, and Prime Minister of Macedonia, Nikola Gruevski.

Special attention in our discussion was given to solution of the final status of Kosovo in compliance with the proposal of President Ahtisaari for its independence as a—gradual independence as a precondition for stability and peace in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, in December 1990, students and citizens in Tirana took

to the streets and the squares with—shouting, “U.S.A., long live President Bush.” We want Albania like the rest of Europe. President Bush visit Albania in 1994—2004 and 2006, and Mr. Jimmy Carter before. And after this visit, Mr. President, our country will be visited by other Presidents of the United States. But in their memory of Albanian citizens, the great honor that you made to them with your first visit of a United States President in office in Albania.

Thank you very much, Mr. President Bush, great friend of Albanian nation, of my nation.

*President Bush. Miredita. [Laughter]* Thank you for having me. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality. I thank the President for his hospitality as well.

I am proud to be the first American sitting President to visit Albania. It’s a great honor to represent my country here. I’ve really been looking forward to this trip, and so has my wife Laura. The reason being is that I love to come to countries that are working hard to establish the institutions necessary for a democracy to survive. I’m particularly pleased to be here in Albania, in a country that has casted off the shackles of a very repressive society and is now showing the world what’s possible. And I congratulate the people of Albania, and I thank you for the warm welcome we received on your streets.

We had a very good discussion. I learned a lot about your country. I learned the fact that this is a country that embraces the markets, is willing to do necessary reforms to make sure that the small-business person survives, that the entrepreneur is strong, that the tax code is fair. I’m impressed with the desire of the government to fight corruption, to make it clear that the government is of the people, that the government can be trusted by the people, by routing out those who would use their exalted positions to steal from the taxpayers. I appreciate that kind of commitment, Mr. Prime Minister.

I appreciate the fact that Albania is a model of religious tolerance. And I appreciate the fact that Albania is a trusted friend and a strong ally. And this visit today, hopefully, will send the signal to the people of Albania: You can count on America, just like America can count on you, to do hard work necessary to spread freedom and, therefore, peace.

We discussed a lot of issues. We discussed Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank the Prime Minister and his Government for putting troops in harm’s way. Albanians know the horror of tyranny, and so they’re working to bring the hope of freedom to people who haven’t known it. And that’s a noble effort and a sacrifice, and I appreciate your sacrifice.

Albania now has 120 of its elite commandos stationed in Iraq. I had the privilege of meeting some of the Albanian soldiers. Here’s what I told them, I said, “First of all, you are respected by our military.” Your soldiers are good at what they do. They’re well trained; they’re disciplined; they’re courageous. I told them that the United States appreciates their contribution; so do the Iraqi citizens. And also told them, when they went home, to make sure that they told their wives and their children, “thanks,” on behalf of the United States of America as well. The families are just as much a part of a soldier’s life as the soldier himself.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, we thank you very much for your commitment to freedom in Iraq as well as Afghanistan. The Prime Minister has announced that Albania will deploy 120 additional troops to Afghanistan this summer. These are two vital fronts on the war on terror, and the United States has a strong friend in Albania in this war. And I thank you.

We also talked about NATO and Albania’s aspirations to join the NATO alliance. I commended the Prime Minister for the progress that Albania has made in defense reform. In other words, part of becoming a member of NATO requires a reformation



of the defense forces. And Albania is working hard to do that, as well as to meet performance-based standards for membership. In other words, you're just not accepted into membership; you just can't say, I want to join. There are certain standards that are expected to be met.

And so I talked to the Prime Minister, first of all, about my deep desire for Albania to join NATO. I support it. I also told him that there needs to be additional political and military reforms, progress against organized crime and corruption. And he understands that. He said, "We're committed." That's what the Prime Minister said—Albania is committed to meeting those standards. And I said: "We're committed to help you."

And it's very important for the political figures here in this country to understand what's at stake. The politicians have got to work together now to meet the standards. They've got to set aside political differences and focus on what's right for Albania. If the Albanian people want to join NATO, then the politicians have got to work to meet the standards.

And so I call upon all in the Government and the opposition to do what is necessary to join NATO, and we'll support you and help you. I think it's best that Albania be a NATO ally. I look forward to welcoming you someday into NATO.

We also talked about Kosovo. I'm a strong supporter of the Ahtisaari plan. I said yesterday in Rome, the time is now. A fellow asked me a question: "Well, when does this end? When does the process end?" I said, "The time is now." In other words, I put a sense of—I made it clear that—two things: One, that we need to get moving; and two, that the end result is independence. And we spent a lot of time talking about this issue here. The Prime Minister was anxious to hear my views. He wanted to make sure that what I said was clear for everybody, and what I said was, independence is the result, let's get the process moving.

Now, we want to make sure that Serbia hears that the United States supports their aspirations for closer integration with the West. That means working with the United States in a bilateral fashion. It also means potential membership of NATO, for example. I urged the Prime Minister to work with the leaders in Kosovo to maintain calm during these final stages of Kosovo final status process. He assured me he would. He's got good contacts there, and Kosovars look to the Prime Minister of Albania and the President for Albania for leadership, and they're willing to provide it.

And so we discussed a lot of issues, and, I must say, I was very impressed by the conversations; impressed with the vision; and want to help. The United States wants to be a good ally and friend.

And again, I thank you all for the hospitality, and I know you're proud of the historic progress that you have made. May God bless the people of Albania and, of course, the people of the United States.

Thank you, sir.

*Prime Minister Berisha.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* A couple of questions here. He's calling on you.

#### *International Support for Kosovo*

Q. You guaranteed President Bush that you will talk with the Kosovo leaders concerning the proposal of President Sarkozy that may lead to the loss of patience of the Kosovars, that they may self-proclaim independence. And what would the attitude of Albania be in this case? And did you touch this factor, this opposition with President Bush?

*Prime Minister Berisha.* We discussed at large about Kosovo with President Bush. What I may publicly transmit to the leadership and the citizens of Kosovo is that their project has the full understanding, good understanding and support, full support, of President Bush. And in this context, as before—now, as well—I don't expect and I don't advise any movement. On the contrary, I suggest persistence and calmness,

coolbloodedness. This is in the heart of—Kosovo is in the heart of President Bush.

*President Bush.* What's important is for the people of Kosovo to know that the United States and Albania strongly supports independence, as did most of the people in the G-8.

President Sarkozy's recommendation was to try to provide some time for people to possibly work out differences. However, what would be acceptable to the United States and, I think, most people in the G-8 was that at the end of any process, there be certain independence. That's what's important to know.

And that's—the issue is whether independence or not. We strongly believe in independence. And then the question is, the diplomatic moves necessary to achieve that. I happen to believe it's important to push the process along. The time is now. And by that I meant that Secretary Rice will be moving hard to see if we can't reach an agreement. And if not, we're going to have to move because independence is the goal, and that's what the people of Kosovo need to know.

Thank you for your question.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

#### *Kosovo/Missile Defense System*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday you called for a deadline for U.N. action on Kosovo. When would you like that deadline set? And are you at all concerned that taking that type of a stance is going to further inflame U.S. relations with Russia?

And is there any chance that you're going to sign on to the Russian missile defense proposal?

*President Bush.* No, thanks. A couple of points on that. First of all, I don't think I called for a deadline. I thought I said, time; I did? What exactly did I say? I said, "deadline?" Okay, yes, then I meant what I said. [Laughter] The question is whether or not there is going to be endless dialog on a subject that we have made up our

mind about. We believe Kosovo ought to be independent.

The G-8 discussions were all aimed at determining whether or not there is a way to make this acceptable to Russia. The ideal would be for Russia to say: "Okay, we understand, and we accept this conclusion as well." And obviously, they're not there yet. And therefore, the reason why I said there needs to be movement is that there just cannot be continued drift, because I'm worried about expectations not being met in Kosovo. That's what I meant. And therefore, we'll push the process.

President Putin made an interesting proposal on missile defense for Europe. I suggested—and I've made an interesting proposal for missile defense in Europe, by the way, all aimed at protecting Europe, not aimed at Russia. The reason I did is because the true threats we'll be facing will be from rogue nations that may end up with a deliverable weapon. So, I thought it was in the interest of peace that we have the capacity to intercept such a missile, and, therefore, need to proceed.

And President Putin said, "Well, I think I've got an idea that makes sense." And this is the joint use of radar in Azerbaijan. I said, "Well, why don't we look at it?" But during the discussions, it became apparent that he also had doubts about the proposal I made, as to its effectiveness or necessity. And I said: "Well, you put out an idea, and I put an idea. Why don't we both get a group together to discuss our relative ideas in a transparent fashion; so put—get people from your Foreign Ministry, and we'll get people from the State Department and our respective defense departments and militaries to sit at the table and to share different ideas, to share ideas about technologies on how to intercept a missile and radar positioning to make sure that there's effective coverage?"

I thought his statement was an important statement to make. In other words, he recognized that there's an opportunity to work together. That's what friends do, by the

way. Russia is not our enemy. As I said repeatedly, the cold war is over, and now we're dealing with threats in the 21st century. And I appreciated his recognition that there could be an opportunity to work together to deal with those threats. I viewed it as a very positive gesture, and looking forward to continuing discussions on this very subject in July when he comes to Maine.

*Prime Minister Berisha.* I would like to add for the citizens of Kosovo and its leadership, in my discussions, I found out consciousness and awareness of President Bush for the consequences of prolongation on—unacceptable prolongation around justifiable—prolongation of the process. And in this context, they should be clear that the President is aware of these consequences and is not willing them to be.

#### *Albania's NATO Membership Bid*

*Q.* In your meeting with President Bush, what important place was occupied by NATO membership—Albania being made a member of NATO? Do you assure us that you have won the support of President Bush for quick integration of membership into NATO? And further, do you observe differences in speed of Adriatic 3 countries, A-3 countries?

*Prime Minister Berisha.* I can assure you totally that President Bush and his administration support powerfully Albania's project for full membership into NATO. In this framework, I would say that this help and support has been of extraordinary importance in all reforms of democratic institutions, of the armed forces, and in cooperation in the framework of NATO during these years.

Of course, the invitation is defined to be given on the basis of performance. We are determined to take any decision, adopt any law, undertake any reform that would make Albania suitable to receive the invitation.

I think that the cooperation with Adriatic Charter, A-3, was fruitful—and very fruitful

and very successful. Our three countries have common things in specifics. If we take the level where—from which Albania started and it's progress, it is one of the most evaluated, appreciated.

Second, Albania has a loyal cooperation with NATO for 15 years. I have to stress, one moment, that in '99, when Milosevic cleansed 1 million Albanians from their homes, thousands of the area's homes, the friendly countries built camps to receive the refugees. But about 500,000 Albanian families turned their houses into tents of welcome for NATO. You may say, they did it for Albanians. Absolutely, yes. But no one can prove that Albanians wouldn't do that for every citizen of another ethnicity who would be in need, like the Kosovo people were at that time. Ninety-three percent of Albanians support membership into NATO. We have our own advantages.

#### *International Support for Kosovo*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. You've said that it's time to move the Kosovo—the Ahtisaari plan forward. What specifically are you going to do to accomplish that? And at what point do you say, it's not working? And then what?

*President Bush.* What you do is, you get your diplomats working with Russian diplomats, as well as EU diplomats, to see if there is not common ground. In other words, there has to be an effort to see if we can't find a way for everybody to say, well, it's a good idea. And if you end up being in a position where you don't, at some point in time, sooner rather than later, you've got to say enough is enough; Kosovo is independent, and that's the position we've taken.

The people of Kosovo need to know that it is a solid, firm position. And even though there's diplomacy and talks, hopefully, trying to find a way forward to accommodate Russia and Serbia and the EU—by the way, most people in the EU are very much in favor. The EU position is for the Ahtisaari plan. They just hope that there is some

way that we can reach an accommodation with a variety of interests so that the transition to independence will be as smooth and easy as possible. But if that becomes—is apparent that that's not going to happen in a relatively quick period of time, in my judgment, we need to put forward the resolution. Hence, deadline.

Thank you all for your attention. Mr. Prime Minister, it was a great press conference. Proud to be the first American sitting President to actually hold a press conference on Albanian soil as well. Thank you very much.

*Prime Minister Berisha.* Thank you, President.

*President Bush.* Thank you all.

*Prime Minister Berisha.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* Good job. Thank you.

*Prime Minister Berisha.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:40 p.m. in the Courtyard at the Council of Ministers. In his remarks, he referred to President Alfred Moisiu of Albania; President Nicolas Sarkozy of France; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Prime Minister Berisha referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo. Prime Minister Berisha and some reporters spoke in Albanian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania in Tirana

June 10, 2007

Mr. Prime Minister, if I might offer a toast. Thank you for your hospitality. I'm honored to be in the presence of the leaders of three important allies and friends of the United States: Croatia, Macedonia, and of course, our host, Albania.

We thank you for your strong leadership. We join you in your aspirations to join Euro-Atlantic institutions. We appreciate you working for peace. Thank you for the

Adriatic Charter. May God bless your nations. May God bless you all.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. at the Prime Minister's villa. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia; and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of Macedonia.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Small-Business Owners in Fushe-Kruje, Albania

June 10, 2007

One of the exciting moments for our trip to Albania is to meet with small-business owners. Laura and I thank the mayor. We thank the owner of the restaurant, and we thank these entrepreneurs for joining us to talk about your story, about your dreams,

and about the opportunities a microloan program, provided by the taxpayers of the United States, is giving you to create jobs.

And so we're excited to be here. Thank you for coming. And we're looking forward to hearing your stories.

Thank you.

Mayor Ismet Mavriqi of Fushe-Kruje, Albania.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. at Cafe Cela. In his remarks, he referred to

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

*June 8, 2007*

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2008 Budget amendments for the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, and Transportation, as well as the Legal Services Corporation. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2008 Budget would not be increased by these requests.

This transmittal also contains FY 2007 proposals and FY 2008 Budget amendments for the Legislative Branch. As a mat-

ter of comity between branches, appropriations requests of the Legislative Branch are transmitted without change.

The details of these amended requests and proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 11.

## The President's News Conference With President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria in Sofia, Bulgaria

*June 11, 2007*

*President Parvanov.* Distinguished members of the delegation, ladies and gentlemen: I would like briefly to outline the results of the discussions we just had and just closed with the President of the United States, George Bush. I must say, this is a very significant visit. It is another proof, a very cogent proof of the fact that our two countries' relations are in their best state now in more than a hundred years of their establishment.

I am happy we had a chance today to draw the balance sheet of what has happened in the interim since the meeting, our visit there in Washington in October 2005. And indeed, the balance sheet is definitely positive. The United States and Bul-

garia continue to be good, reliable partners within NATO, within the peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world. This is a firm, long-term commitment. It is not affected by the changes and setup of the political situations in both countries.

The second thing that strikes about it is the new dynamics in the development of our economic relations. We have either new or updated treaties, bilateral treaties, which give the framework of our business contacts. There has been a sharp trend of improving the term over, and the American investments in Bulgaria, and the number of U.S. tourists to Bulgaria also is on the increase. However, this is not the ceiling.



We believe there is a much greater potential, and this is why we should seek and explore the avenues of promoting these trends in several directions: A, by presenting a better, fuller, and more adequate image of Bulgaria in the United States, with an emphasis on the business information, addressed to the businesspeople. And I hope that the newly setup foundation, America for Bulgaria, will promote these efforts.

Second, in the foreseeable future, very soon we will, hopefully, have a positive solution on the visa regime, on facilitating, lifting the visa barriers. And we do appreciate everything that President Bush has personally been doing in the light of the negotiations within the United States and the European Union. And we, in turn, pledge to do our best to meet our commitments on the security, which is one of the major criteria in addressing this issue.

I believe we should make an effort to improve the structure of trade and investment. And I did lay down to my guest, President Bush, the possibility for a more significant involvement of American businesses in the major energy projects, both in Bulgaria and the Balkans, in the infrastructure, in the defense industry. A better cooperation in this area, in the defense industry, could be an important incentive for the development of our economy as a whole. I do hope we will have President Bush—the support of President Bush and the United States—in our effort to modernize our armed forces at a faster pace, so that we could be effective and efficient in performing—discharging our commitments as allies.

And next, I would like to thank President Bush for the support we've always enjoyed from the United States to our efforts to find a fair, a just solution to the crisis with the Bulgarian medics in Libya and for their release. And I was happy to hear from him this repeated support.

At the same time, we discussed the two countries' possibilities, both within the—our

interaction with the European Union and otherwise, to support and help for the treatment of the AIDS-infected children and their families as a longer term commitment through involvement in the International Fund, which is meant to streamline this process. And I did point out to President Bush that there are expectations both among the public and in the media in this country, an expectation from the major companies to get involved and to donate to this fund.

We also discussed a wide range of international issues related to the situation in the Balkans, to our desire to play a stabilizing role in the Balkans, to be a factor of stability here. We also commented on some of the issues that are on both countries' agenda and on the agendas of the European Union and NATO.

Thank you.

*President Bush.* President Parvanov, thank you very much. I call him George. He calls me George. It's good to be here in your beautiful country. Laura and I are looking forward to our lunches together. Thank you very much.

We are allies, we share values, and we believe in freedom. And I appreciate the progress your country has made toward a free society. And I thank you for being an ally in helping others realize the blessings of liberty. We have accepted our responsibilities to help defend freedom against terrorists and extremists, and it's hard work. And I thank the people of Bulgaria for understanding the stakes, the true challenges of the 21st century.

We had a great discussion, and that's what you'd expect among friends. I am impressed by the transition that Bulgaria has made to a free market economy. Success is evidenced by results, by the results of attracting more capital. I know U.S. companies are seriously looking at Bulgaria, and that's because there is transparency and fairness in taxes. In other words, when somebody invests in a country, they expect to get a reasonable rate of return, and they

expect government to not interfere but, in fact, to expedite the flow of capital. And so therefore, when the President talks about more capital coming to your country from the United States, it means that the government has made reforms necessary to attract capital.

My call, of course, is to continue to make reforms and, if you find corruption, rout it out. People of Bulgaria expect their government to be open and honest, and so do those who spend capital in countries. And the President is committed to that; I know.

We talked about the energy diversification program for Bulgaria. America has got to diversify its energy too. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. So, we share a common goal about diversification of energy supply. We're in the process of spending a lot of money on new technologies that will enable us to diversify our energy supply and, at the same time, be good stewards of the environment. And I look forward to sharing those technologies with countries, once they become fully developed.

I appreciate very much the reforms you made so that the EU is comfortable in accepting Bulgaria as a member state, and I congratulate you on those accomplishments. And of course, we're proud to stand with you in NATO. These are big achievements for this country, and the people of Bulgaria ought to be proud of the achievements that they have achieved.

We discussed, of course, Iraq. And I thank the President and I thank the people of Bulgaria for supporting those in Iraq who long to live in a free society. The fight's tough in Iraq, and I know some of your families have suffered. And on behalf of our Nation, I extend our condolences and prayers to the families who have lost a loved one against these extremists and murderers.

I thank you for your commitment to Afghanistan. And I appreciate so very much your willingness to do the hard work nec-

essary to enable young democracies to survive in the face of significant opposition from ideologues who use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. Mr. President, I firmly believe the commitments that we're making are laying the foundations of peace for generations to come.

I thank you for your advice on Kosovo. We spent some time talking about Kosovo. The time is now to move the Ahtisaari plan. We—America believes that Kosovo ought to be independent, and I sought the President's advice. One of the things he made clear is something I agree with, and that is, is that as we seek independence for Kosovo, we've also got to make it clear to the—Serbia that there's a way forward, maybe in NATO, maybe in the EU, and definitely in better relations with the United States. So, I thank you for your sound judgment and your solid advice.

We talked about the Bulgarian nurses. This is not the first conversation I've had with the President on this subject. He's deeply concerned about the fate of the nurses. We spoke in person about it at the White House, we have had phone calls on the subject, and of course, today again he emphasized his deep concern for the nurses and their families. And I appreciate your compassion, Mr. President.

We strongly support the release of the Bulgarian nurses in Libya. That's the position of the United States. They should be released, and they should be allowed to be returned to their families. We will continue to make clear to Libya that the release of these nurses is a high priority for our country.

Our hearts also go out to the children who have been infected by HIV/AIDS. Together with the EU, the United States is contributing to a fund to provide assistance to the Libyan children suffering from this disease and to their families. My hope is that this issue gets resolved quickly.

We talked about visa reform. I assured the President, what I said in the past is

what I still believe, and that is: We need to reform our visa system. The system is stuck in the past. It can be reformed to work better for the citizens of this country. And I'm working with Congress to get it done. We're in the middle of an immigration debate, as well, in America. I hope that my country understands that it's in our interest to treat people with respect and to treat people fairly. And so I told the President that we'll continue to work with Congress to resolve this issue in a satisfactory way. I've laid out a way forward, and I'm committed to seeing it through.

And so, George, thanks for having me. It's been a good visit. I'm looking forward to lunch. And I guess we'll answer some questions.

*Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/  
Immigration Reform*

*Q.* Good morning, Mr. President. You've had quite a week in Europe, and I wonder, as we head home, if I could ask you to turn to some domestic issues. Your Attorney General is under fire in the Senate. General Pace has had a setback. The immigration reform bill seems not to be moving very quickly. And I won't even mention the latest polls. So I'm just wondering, sir, as you head home, to what extent do you still have the political clout and capital to get some of these issues done? Do you have any left? If you do, how do you intend to use it?

*President Bush.* First of all, we've had a great trip, Ed [Edwin Chen, Los Angeles Times]. It's a chance for America to talk about a liberty agenda and a chance to talk to our allies about how we can advance it and what we can do together to make our respective countries better off.

Listen, the immigration debate is a tough debate. I'm under no illusions about how hard it is. There are people in my party that don't want a comprehensive bill; there are people in the Democrat Party that don't seem to want a comprehensive bill. I was

disappointed that the bill was temporarily derailed.

I frankly find it interesting that a so-called important subject they need to get to would be to pass a political resolution on my Attorney General that's going to have no bearing on whether he serves in office or not.

I believe we can get an immigration bill. Now, it's going to require leadership from the Democrat leaders in the Senate, and it's going to require me to stay engaged and work with Republicans who want a bill.

Last—earlier in this trip, I called three members of the Senate from the Republican Party and said: "What can we do together to get the bill back up? What do we need to do to work with Senators like Senator Ted Kennedy, who is strongly committed to a comprehensive bill?" And tomorrow I'll be going to the Senate to talk about a way forward on the piece of legislation.

It's important that we address this issue now. And I believe we can get it done. Listen, there was—a lot of progress was made between people in both parties making hard decisions necessary to move a comprehensive plan. It's in the Nation's interest to get a comprehensive bill done. So the political process sometimes isn't pretty to look at it. There's two steps forward, one step back. We made two steps forward on immigration, we took a step back, and now I'm going to work with those who are focused on getting an immigration bill done and start taking some steps forward again. I believe we can get it done. I'll see you at the bill signing.

*Bulgarian Nurses Held in Libya*

*Q.* President Bush, you have already voiced your support in favor of our medics and their release. We appreciate that. Although, despite the fact that our fellow country people are still in prison—absolutely innocent, as you well know—I would like to ask you, as a part of the general effort to solve this drama, which has been

going on for more than 10—8 years now, my question is: Would you commit yourself to lobbying in front of the U.S. Congress and doing so that some of the funds under your 5-year program for fighting HIV/AIDS can go to supporting the children infected with AIDS and their families?

And, President Parvanov, I would be happy to hear your view on the Libya issue, and, notably, how would you comment the fact, or rather the Bulgarian media's idea, who are covering the trial in Libya, to send a letter to the hundred most influential representatives of the economy and business, according to the Forbes ratings, and call on them to donate to the building of modern, up-to-date medical center where children, all people, with HIV/AIDS could be treated?

*President Bush.* There's a fund into which we're contributing money. And I don't think you ought to be concerned about the source of the funding. What you ought to be focused on is whether or not the U.S. is willing to commit funds, along with the EU. And we are. And at the same time, we're willing to send messages to the Libya Government that we expect the release of the nurses. We've been very much in concert with your Government. This is an issue that we care about. And so—but we do agree with the strategy that there ought to be some compensation for the Libyan children and their families.

*President Parvanov.* Ladies and gentlemen, many of you know that I have visited Libya; I have visited the hospital in Benghazi. I've spoken with the parents and the infected children, and I'm clearly aware of the great drama they're suffering, they're going through, and how much it needs to be done in order to invest in this hospital and in order to relieve the pain and suffering of both the children and their kin, and their families and friends.

This is a Bulgarian; this is a European; this is a commitment of the entire democratic public, worldwide. By all means, Bulgaria and, I believe, our friends from the

United States and the European Union consider this not a one-off, not a temporary—an attempt to release the nurses, and then we quit. For us—and I'm happy that this was—we went along with George on this. For us, this is a long-term commitment. This is a commitment we take in respect of the both those suffering in Benghazi, but also everyone suffering of AIDS, not just in Benghazi, but in the whole of Africa. Let's remember G-8 and their decision: \$60 billion were allocated to this policy by the world democratic community a few days ago.

I, for one, 6 months ago, in addressing the European Parliament, I said—and I appealed to the big players, so to speak, worldwide, in the businesses worldwide, to take a more—a firmer commitment to this fund, to donate more, contribute more to this fund. In this sense, I join my voice and I welcome and I do support the appeal which the Bulgarian media have issued. I hope their voice will be heard. I know, whenever the media speak, their voice is heard more clearly than that of politicians.

*Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

*Q.* Mr. President, I want to take you back to domestic issues again. You say the no-confidence vote has no bearing as to whether Alberto Gonzales remains as Attorney General. How can he continue to be effective? And it seems like you're not listening to Congress when it comes to Gonzales, but you are listening to Congress when it comes to Peter Pace.

*President Bush.* Yes, it's an interesting comment about Congress—isn't it?—that, on the one hand, they say that a good general shouldn't be reconfirmed, and, on the other hand, they say that my Attorney General shouldn't stay. And I find it interesting. I guess it reflects the political atmosphere of Washington. And they can try to have their votes of no confidence, but it's not going to determine—make the determination who serves in my Government.

Pete Pace was going to go up for confirmation; that's the difference. I have—I had confidence in Pete Pace. But people view this as an opportunity to make statements, and upon the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Gates, I agreed to send up another nominee.

And as to Al Gonzales, first of all, this process has been drug out a long time, which says to me it's political. There's no wrongdoing. You know, he—they haven't said, "Here's—you've done something wrong, Attorney General Gonzales." And therefore, I ascribe this lengthy series of news stories and hearings as political. And I'll make the determination if I think he's effective or not, not those who are using an opportunity to make a political statement on a meaningless resolution.

#### *Missile Defense System/Energy*

Q. President, clearly the relations between our two countries, politically, have been very good. How could we achieve the same in the area of security, in the context of the antimissile shield, our common—our cooperation in using common sites, and also in respect of the trade investment?

*President Bush.* Do you want me to start on the missiles? The proposed missile shield is aimed at long-range missiles, missiles that would fly over Bulgaria. There are missile systems and defense systems available that would deal with intermediate-range missiles. And so just because Bulgaria is not a part of the longer range missile shield doesn't mean that there won't be equipment and help available for intermediate range. That's how I can answer that question.

I know this creates some concerns around Europe, this missile shield, because of Russian objections. And so I had a meeting with President Putin in Germany at the G-8 and explained to him what I've been saying publicly, is, the missile shield would be developed to deal with a rogue regime that would try to hold a free nation

hostage, or free nations hostage; that it's not aimed at Russia.

I talked to Vladimir Putin a lot about our relations and made it clear that I simply do not view Russia as an enemy. I view Russia as a country with whom we should have and can have good relations to solve common problems.

One such problem is Iran. Another problem is proliferation. There are areas we can work together, and he brought an interesting proposal. He said: "I have an idea. Why don't we jointly use a radar in Azerbaijan to help deal with a potential threat?" And I said: "That's a good idea. I don't know how—whether it's technologically feasible; I'm not an expert. I've got experts in my Government, however, who could analyze your proposal, and I'd like for you to maybe—not maybe—I'd like for you to assign some experts in your Government to analyze my proposal."

And that's where we left it in Germany. So we're going to have a group of people come together from the State Department, Defense Department, and the military to discuss how to deal with the true threats of the 21st century.

And I would hope that would help explain some of the rhetoric that people in your country have seen coming out of the G-8, that there's a process where we can collaborate and share information in a very transparent way, which I think will be beneficial. And I would hope that the Russians would see the meetings as beneficial and out of the meetings realize our true intent, and hopefully, design systems that protect us all.

*President Parvanov.* I would like to begin by saying that we welcome the strategic dialog, and it was described as a strategic dialog by both leaders, both by President Bush and by Putin, a dialog which started within the framework of G-8. We Bulgarians would accept any solution that



would provide more guarantees, more security guarantees, more guarantees of the indivisibility of the security of the Euro-Atlantic space, any solution that has been achieved, hammered out through dialog and in transparency, and any solution that is not directed against a third country, notably Russia in this case.

I would take the liberty of paraphrasing something that was said in Prague—hopefully, my source was reliable; the President would correct me if I'm wrong or imprecise—the Bulgarians mustn't choose between their friendship with the United States and that with Russia. The Bulgarians should and can maintain friendly relations with both countries. Just as I am a friend with George and a friend with Vladimir, we could maintain, within the context of our Euro-Atlantic orientation, friendly relations with both without diluting the things, without losing sight of our strategic priorities. We should maintain relations with everyone who thinks likewise.

This means the same approach would apply to the energy, the infrastructure sphere. This is why Bulgaria maintains—

has maintained active relations with Russia on the major infrastructure, or rather energy projects.

I myself, earlier today, offered to President Bush a clearer, firmer commitment by American companies to the energy project. Chevron, in respect of Bourgas-Alexandroupolis, or AMBO—I'm not going to list them all here—this is an investment in peace and the security of the region. This is a geostrategic contribution. And I'm saying this both as the President of Bulgaria, but also as a citizen of the Balkans, a region for whose fate and future I feel responsible.

*President Bush.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:35 a.m. at the National Museum of Archaeology. In his remarks, he referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo. President Parvanov and some reporters spoke in Bulgarian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria in Sofia

*June 11, 2007*

Mrs. Parvanova, Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, members of the Government, and distinguished guests: Laura and I are thrilled to be with you, and we're really happy to be in your country.

You know, sitting here in this beautiful museum reminds me of the great history of Bulgaria. And it was important for me to be with leaders who are still writing a history of this important country. And for a person who was raised in the deserts of Texas, this is a magnificent view. It reminds me of the beauty of your country. I was

telling the President, my only regret is that we didn't have this meeting on the beaches.

I congratulate you on your admission into the EU. A lot of people said, there is no way that Bulgaria can do the necessary things to join the EU. And you proved the critics wrong. We're proud to be a member of NATO with you. Bulgaria is a valued ally of all of us in NATO and a valued ally of the United States.

I thank you for your strong stand for freedom. I thank you for helping spread liberty into places like Iraq and Afghanistan, where people want to live a peaceful

and free life. I appreciate the sacrifices the people of this country have made to support the troops and their families. I firmly believe that the actions we're taking are laying the foundation of peace for generations to come. I think people will look back at this moment in history and say: Thank God there were people who still stood strong for liberty and freedom as the alternative to tyranny and oppression.

We discussed a lot of issues. I appreciated your leader's advice on Kosovo. It's important advice, and I took it seriously. Kosovo must be independent, and I thank them for their advice as to how to best achieve that.

I made it clear the visa policy needs to be changed. And I care deeply about the Bulgarian nurses. We're working on a strat-

egy to make sure that these nurses come home as quickly as possible.

We had a constructive, candid, important conversations today. Our friendship is strong, and we intend to keep it that way.

So I'd like to propose a toast to the President, his good wife, to the people of Bulgaria, and to the friendship between the United States and Bulgaria.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:36 p.m. in Sunny Hall at the National Museum of History. In his remarks, he referred to Zorka Petrova Parvanova, wife of President Parvanov; Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev of Bulgaria; and Georgi Georgiev Pirinski, chairman, Bulgarian National Assembly. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Parvanov.

## Remarks at the American University in Bulgaria in Sofia June 11, 2007

*The President.* Well, listen, thank you all for introducing yourselves. I want to thank you very much, Olga, for giving me a chance to visit with these students.

First of all, I'm looking forward to hearing about your stories and your dreams. There's no question that education is what's going to help change the world; it'll certainly change your personal lives. But it also has the opportunity to change regions in the world. And I am excited that all of you have had a chance to go to higher education and that you aspire beyond your current education to achieve new things, new dreams—Michigan State Law School—I mean, Michigan Law School—excuse me—or mathematics. I mean; it's uplifting for me to be with you.

America strongly supports education initiatives at home and abroad. I think the best thing we can do is to invite students to come to our country. You'll see what

America is really like when you come. But you don't have to, you know, just come to America to study. You can study all over the world, and then go back to your countries and become productive citizens and apply what you've learned and help your countries grow, because the potential in this part of the world is wide open. We kind of have to do a little political work in some places, but it's wide open. And we wish you all the very best. I'm honored to be with you.

Stanko, why don't you share some thoughts with us.

*Stanko Stankov.* Well, I have to—I mean, I agree with the point about education. There are many challenges here in the region, especially after Bulgaria now entered European Union. And this period of transition, I think, is going to be best dealt with by having a good education and having

competent people who can stand up to the challenge and just face it the proper way.

*The President.* So, Stanko, what was your major?

*Mr. Stankov.* My major was business administration.

*The President.* Oh, that's right. Yeah. And so what are you going to do?

*Mr. Stankov.* Oh, first I'm going to do some work here in Bulgaria, because I need some work experience before I apply to a grad school in the United States—that's where I hope to apply. And after I do this work for 2 or 3 years, I'm going to go probably to the States and study, do my masters there. And after that, well, we'll see.

*The President.* And have you found a job?

*Mr. Stankov.* Yes, I'm being interviewed still. And tomorrow I have a very important interview. [Laughter] My next job interview. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, if the interviewer is listening—[laughter]—Stanko is looking for a little work. [Laughter] It'll make your mother happy when you find a job, won't it?

*Mr. Stankov.* Yes, she will be happy.

*The President.* That's good. Well, thank you very much, Stanko. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. at the Elieff Center for Education and Culture. In his remarks, he referred to Olga Borissova, director, Centre for European Programmes, American University in Bulgaria. Participating in the event were Stanko Stankov, Katya Georgieva, Hristina Jordanova, Nita Gojani, and Filjor Broka, recent graduates, and Nemanja Gruicic, student, American University in Bulgaria; Dilyana Mincheva and Bilyana Hristova, students, University of Sofia; and Hawa Ansary and Stanislav Andreev, recent graduates, American College of Sofia.

## Remarks at the Victims of Communism Memorial Dedication June 12, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Dr. Edwards, thanks for your kind words. Congressman Lantos, no better friend to freedom, by the way; Congressman Rohrabacher, the same. Members of the Czech and Hungarian Parliaments; Ambassadors; distinguished guests; and more importantly, the survivors of Communist oppression: I'm honored to join you on this historic day.

And here in the company of men and women who resisted evil and helped bring down an empire, I proudly accept the Victims of Communism Memorial on behalf of the American people.

The 20th century will be remembered as the deadliest century in human history. And the record of this brutal era is commemorated in memorials across this city.

Yet until now, our Nation's Capital had no monument to the victims of imperial communism, an ideology that took the lives of an estimated 100 million innocent men, women, and children. So it's fitting that we gather to remember those who perished at communism's hands and dedicate this memorial that will enshrine their suffering and sacrifice in the conscience of the world.

Building this memorial took more than a decade of effort, and its presence in our Capital is a testament to the passion and determination of two distinguished Americans: Lev Dobriansky, whose daughter Paula is here—give your dad our best—and Dr. Lee Edwards. They faced setbacks and challenges along the way; yet they never gave up, because in their hearts, they

heard the voices of the fallen crying out, "Remember us."

These voices cry out to all, and they're legion. The sheer numbers of those killed in communism's name are staggering, so large that a precise count is impossible. According to the best scholarly estimate, communism took the lives of tens of millions of people in China and the Soviet Union and millions more in North Korea, Cambodia, Africa, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the globe.

Behind these numbers are human stories of individuals with families and dreams whose lives were cut short by men in pursuit of totalitarian power. Some of communism's victims are well-known. They include a Swedish diplomat named Raoul Wallenberg, who saved 100,000 Jews from the Nazis, only to be arrested on Stalin's orders and sent to Moscow's Lubyanka Prison, where he disappeared without a trace. They include a Polish priest named Father Popieluszko, who made his Warsaw church a sanctuary for the Solidarity underground, and was kidnaped and beaten and drowned in the Vistula by the secret police.

The sacrifices of these individuals haunt history, and behind them are millions more who were killed in anonymity by communism's brutal hand. They include innocent Ukrainians starved to death in Stalin's Great Famine or Russians killed in Stalin's purges, Lithuanians and Latvians and Estonians loaded onto cattle cars and deported to Arctic death camps of Soviet communism. They include Chinese killed in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, Cambodians slain in Pol Pot's Killing Fields, East Germans shot attempting to scale the Berlin Wall in order to make it to freedom, Poles massacred in the Katyn Forest, and Ethiopians slaughtered in the "Red Terror," Miskito Indians murdered by Nicaragua's Sandinista dictatorship, and Cuban *balseros* who drowned escaping tyranny. We'll never know the names of all who perished, but at this sacred place, communism's unknown victims will be con-

secrated to history and remembered forever.

We dedicate this memorial because we have an obligation to those who died to acknowledge their lives and honor their memory. The Czech writer Milan Kundera once described the struggle against communism as "the struggle of memory against forgetting." Communist regimes did not—did more than take their victims' lives, they sought to steal their humanity and erase their memory. With this memorial, we restore their humanity, and we reclaim their memory. With this memorial, we say of communism's innocent and anonymous victims: "These men and women lived, and they shall not be forgotten."

We dedicate this memorial because we have an obligation to future generations to record the crimes of the 20th century and ensure they're never repeated. In this hallowed place, we recall the great lessons of the cold war: that freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted, that evil is real and must be confronted, and that given the chance, men commanded by harsh and hateful ideologies will commit unspeakable crimes and take the lives of millions.

It's important that we recall these lessons, because the evil and hatred that inspired the death of tens of millions of people in the 20th century is still at work in the world. We saw its face on September the 11th, 2001. Like the Communists, the terrorists and radicals who attacked our Nation are followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom, crushes all dissent, has expansionist ambitions, and pursues totalitarian aims. Like the Communists, our new enemies believe the innocent can be murdered to serve a radical vision. Like the Communists, our new enemies are dismissive of free peoples, claiming that those of us who live in liberty are weak and lack the resolve to defend our free way of life. And like the Communists, the followers of violent Islamic radicalism are doomed to fail. By remaining steadfast in

freedom's cause, we will ensure that a future American President does not have to stand in a place like this and dedicate a memorial to the millions killed by the radicals and extremists of the 21st century.

We can have confidence in the power of freedom because we've seen freedom overcome tyranny and terror before. Dr. Edwards said President Reagan went to Berlin. He was clear in his statement. He said, "Tear down the wall," and 2 years later the wall fell. And millions across Central and Eastern Europe were liberated from unspeakable oppression. It's appropriate that on the anniversary of that speech, that we dedicate a monument that reflects our confidence in freedom's power.

The men and women who designed this memorial could have chosen an image of repression for this space, a replica of the wall that once divided Berlin, or the frozen barracks of the Gulag, or a killing field littered with skulls. Instead, they chose an image of hope, a woman holding a lamp of liberty. She reminds us of the victims of communism and also of the power that overcame communism.

Like our Statue of Liberty, she reminds us that the flame for freedom burns in

every human heart, and that it is a light that cannot be extinguished by the brutality of terrorists or tyrants. And she reminds us that when an ideology kills tens of millions of people and still ends up being vanquished, it is contending with a power greater than death. She reminds us that freedom is the gift of our Creator, freedom is the birthright of all humanity, and in the end, freedom will prevail.

I thank each of you who made this memorial possible for your service in freedom's cause. I thank you for your devotion to the memory of those who lost their lives to Communist terror. May the victims of communism rest in peace. May those who continue to suffer under communism find their freedom. And may the God who gave us liberty bless this great memorial and all who come to visit her.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lee Edwards, vice chairman, and Lev E. Dobriansky, chairman emeritus, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With the Republican Senate Policy Committee

*June 12, 2007*

I just had a good exchange with my fellow Republicans. We talked about a lot of issues. I briefed them on my trip to Europe. We talked about—they were very interested in the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo. They were interested in my conversations with Vladimir Putin on missile defense. We talked about the energy bill. We talked about the appropriations process. And we talked about immigration. Some Members in there believe that we need to move a comprehensive bill; some don't. I under-

stand that. This is a highly emotional issue, but those of us standing here believe now is the time to move a comprehensive bill that enforces our borders and has good workplace enforcement, that doesn't grant automatic citizenship, that addresses this problem in a comprehensive way.

I would hope that the Senate majority leader has that same sense of desire to move the product that I do—or the bill that I do and these Senators do, because now is the time to get it done. It's going



to take a lot of hard work, a lot of effort. We've got to convince the American people that this bill is the best way to enforce our border. I believe without the bill, that it's going to be harder to enforce the border. The status quo was unacceptable. And I want to thank those Senators on both sides of the aisle who understand the time is now to move a comprehensive piece of legislation. The White House will stay engaged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Satellite Remarks to the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting *June 13, 2007*

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome, Frank, and thanks for your kind introduction. I really appreciate you giving me a chance to speak to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, right there in my home State of Texas. I appreciate the fact that messengers from all over the Nation have gathered in San Antonio this week. You could have chosen a cooler time of the year to visit, but I'm sure you'll still experience our famous Texas hospitality.

I appreciate the fact that you're meeting to join in prayer and to seek a common direction for the ministry of Southern Baptist churches. I thank you for your Christian witness, I thank you for your defense of religious liberty, and I appreciate your many good works that make our Nation a stronger and more hopeful place. See, every day Southern Baptists are giving back to their communities and ministering to those in need. And you made our Nation stronger as a result.

You have contributed millions of dollars to fight world hunger and logged countless hours in disaster relief and rebuilding. You've provided training to lift people out of poverty and dependency, and you've spread the Gospel. You've loved your neighbors as yourselves. In other words,

you've made a great contribution to our country, and I appreciate that.

I also appreciate the fact that Southern Baptists are supporting our brave men and women in uniform and their families. I know you pray for their safety as they defend our people and extend the hope of freedom to the oppressed across the globe. I appreciate the fact you've sent care packages and tend to the spiritual needs as military chaplains or kneel in prayer. I thank you as you support those who volunteer to serve our Nation.

Just like our troops, you have the gratitude of the Commander in Chief as we do the hard work necessary to defend our country and, at the same time, lay the foundation of peace.

I appreciate the fact that Southern Baptists understand the importance of fair-minded and impartial judges to our democracy. I was proud to nominate John Roberts and Sam Alito to the Supreme Court. And I will continue to nominate good judges who will interpret the law and not legislate from the bench.

Southern Baptists have committed to building a culture of life, and my administration shares that great goal. Since taking office, I've signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act and the Unborn Victims of

Violence Act, also known as Lacy and Connor's Law. I've refused to fund programs overseas that promote or perform abortions. I used my first veto on a bill that would have compelled American taxpayers to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos. And I will veto any bill Congress sends me that violates the sanctity of human life.

I worked with Congress to pass the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act, and since I spoke to you last year, the Supreme Court upheld this vital law.

I believe building a culture of life in our country also means promoting adoption and teaching teen abstinence, funding crisis pregnancy programs, and supporting the work of faith-based groups. In defending the lives of the weakest and the most vulnerable members of our society, we reflect the compassion and humanity of America. And we will continue to work toward the day when every child is welcomed in life and protected in law.

I thank the Southern Baptists who are working to promote a culture of life abroad by helping lead the fight against malaria and HIV/AIDS. Southern Baptists run hospitals and provide medical care to many suffering from malaria and HIV/AIDS across Africa. In Uganda, Southern Baptists sponsor an abstinence program called True Love Waits. And thanks to efforts like yours, Uganda has made progress against HIV/AIDS. And now you're building on the success by expanding this important program to six more countries in Africa.

My administration shares your sense of urgency in the fight against these terrible diseases. And that's why we created a \$1.2 billion malaria initiative to provide protection to people in some of the most heavily affected countries in Africa. So far, we have helped more than 10 million Africans, and we expect to reach a total of 30 million people by the end of 2007.

We're also combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 2003, my administration launched a \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS

Relief. And thanks to the generosity of the American people and support in Congress, we have supported lifesaving treatment for 1.1 million people infected with HIV in some of the poorest nations on Earth.

This program makes a huge difference in saving lives. And so last month, I asked Congress to double our initial commitment and provide an additional \$30 billion for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care over the next 5 years. And the reason why is, is because I firmly believe, like Southern Baptists believe who are working to raise awareness about the suffering that takes place in the world, that to whom much is given, much is required. And by dealing with disease, infectious diseases, we can make the world a better place, and that helps us here at home.

I also believe it helps lift our soul and lifts our spirits when we help those who suffer among us. And that's why I strongly support what you're doing and helping to do in the Darfur region of Sudan. I appreciate the fact that my friend, Richard Land, is working tirelessly to help those suffering in that troubled nation.

For too long, the people of Darfur have suffered at the hands of a government that is complicit in the bombing, rape, and murder of innocent civilians. The world has a responsibility to end this genocide and to hold accountable those perpetuating the violence. And America has taken the lead. So 2 weeks ago, I announced new actions to address this persecution. The Department of Treasury is tightening existing economic sanctions against Sudan, and we're imposing additional ones. Secretary Rice is working with our allies to draft a new U.N. Security Council resolution that will seek to impose new sanctions, expand an arms embargo, and prohibit Sudan's Government from conducting offensive military flights over Darfur.

The people of Darfur are crying out for our help, and the Southern Baptists and

the United States will not turn away because we believe that what matters overseas matters here at home.

God has blessed our Nation with prosperity and great abundance. And I firmly believe, like you, that we should use our resources to help those that need here at home, and help those who need abroad.

And this is a central part of the work of the Southern Baptist Convention. You're rising to meet the challenges of broken souls in a broken world with compassion and courage. You're living out the call to spread the Gospel and proclaim the Kingdom of God. And I thank you for your

leadership, and I thank you for the prayers that you offer to Laura and me. And I thank you for your strong voice in the public square.

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:43 a.m. from the Map Room at the White House to the convention meeting in San Antonio, TX. In his remarks, he referred to Frank S. Page, president, Southern Baptist Convention; and Richard Land, president, Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

## Remarks Announcing the Appointment of Edward W. Gillespie as White House Counselor to the President

*June 13, 2007*

When Dan told me that he was going to leave the White House so he could spend more time with his three young children and his wife, I never thought I'd be able to find somebody that could possibly do as good a job as he has done. I'm fortunate that Ed Gillespie has agreed to join the administration. He is a seasoned hand who has got excellent judgment. He's a good strategic thinker that I know will do a fine job.

We're going to miss Dan. He's been a friend of mine for—gosh, since 1993, but I fully understand why a young dad needs to be with his family. And I admire the fact that he has set such an important priority. And I also—thank you for your service.

And I also thank Ed for agreeing to come over here to the White House. We've got a lot to do. We've got to continue laying the foundation for peace. We've got an immigration bill that will help enforce our borders. We've got an energy bill that we need to get out that will make us less dependent on foreign oil. And we've got to remind the Congress that they need to be fiscally wise with the people's money; that we can balance this budget of ours without raising taxes.

And so, Ed, I'm looking forward to working with you. I thank you for your service. And, Bartlett, good luck to you, brother. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on the Bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq *June 13, 2007*

I condemn in the strongest terms today's terrorist attack on the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra. This barbarous act was clearly aimed at inflaming sectarian tensions among the peoples of Iraq and defeating their aspirations for a secure, democratic, and prosperous country. I join Iraq's leaders in calling on all Iraqis to refrain from acts of vengeance and reject Al Qaida's scheme to sow hatred among the Iraqi people and to instead join together in fighting Al Qaida as the true enemy of a free and secure Iraq.

At the Prime Minister's request, the coalition has dispatched a rapid reaction force to Samarra to assist Iraqi forces in guarding the mosque and restoring calm and security

to the area. The United States also stands ready to help the Iraqi people rebuild and restore this holy shrine. I call upon the international community and Iraq's neighbors to do everything in their power to help Iraq's Government and people combat the terrorists, especially in stopping the flow of foreign terrorists into Iraq. Those responsible for this outrage must be found and brought to justice. The United States stands by the Iraqi people in this difficult moment and remains fully committed to helping all Iraqis realize their dreams of a peaceful future.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

## Statement on the Death of Parliament Member Walid Eido of Lebanon *June 13, 2007*

I strongly condemn today's assassination of Lebanese Member of Parliament Walid Eido, who was murdered along with his son, two bodyguards, and a number of others.

There has been a clear pattern of assassinations and attempted assassinations in Lebanon since October 2004. Those working for a sovereign and democratic Lebanon have always been the ones targeted. The victims have always been those who sought an end to Syrian President Asad's interference in Lebanon's internal affairs.

The United States will continue to stand up for Lebanon, its people, and its legitimate Government as they face these attacks. The special tribunal for Lebanon

must be allowed to do its work so that those behind the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and related crimes can be brought to justice. The assault on Lebanese state institutions by terrorists and armed extremists, cross-border arms trafficking, and efforts by the regimes in Damascus and Tehran to foment instability in Lebanon must stop now.

We ask for the international community to support the Lebanese Government as it investigates this latest assault on its democracy. The perpetrators of these political assassinations must be brought to justice, and we all have an obligation to help the Government of Lebanon identify, investigate, and prosecute these killers.

## Statement on the “Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy”

June 13, 2007

Shortly after the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech, I directed Secretary Michael Leavitt, Secretary Margaret Spellings, and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to examine the broad and complex issues raised by this tragedy. I asked them to determine how the Federal Government could best help to support State and local efforts to ensure that our communities, including college campuses, are safe. They responded quickly, traveling to a dozen States to hear from Governors, law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, educators, and other State and local officials.

They learned a great deal and today presented me with their key findings. I look forward to reviewing their recommendations in more detail, but a few points are

immediately clear: Information sharing among the health care, law enforcement, and education communities must improve; those groups must better understand the Federal laws related to information sharing; and accurate, complete information sharing between States and the Federal Government is essential in helping to keep guns out of the wrong hands and to punish those who break the law.

I thank Secretaries Leavitt and Spellings and Attorney General Gonzales for their fine work on this important report.

With the findings in this report in mind, I am closely following legislative efforts to strengthen the instant background check system. I look forward to working with Congress on this effort.

## Remarks at the President’s Dinner

June 13, 2007

Thank you all. It’s good to be with you. Thank you for your warm welcome; appreciate it. Thank you. Please be seated. I remember back in 1997, when Corker hosted a deal for me. I was Governor, and he looked at me, and he said, “I don’t think you’ll ever be President.” Of course, I looked at him and said, “I don’t think you’ll ever be Senator.” [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you, Bob. Thank you for your strong friendship, and thanks for running and winning in the great State of Tennessee.

I’m proud to be with you. We have a goal, and that is to retake the House, retake the Senate, and keep the White House in 2008. And I appreciate you joining us tonight to see that that goal becomes reality.

I’m sorry Laura is not here. She is a patient woman. She’s also a fabulous First Lady. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who’ve joined us tonight.

I want to thank my friend, Senator Mitch McConnell. The country will be better off with Mitch McConnell as leader of the United States Senate. And I thank John Boehner, the House Republican leader. And the country would be better off if he’s the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I thank John Ensign, Senator Ensign from Nevada, Tom Cole from Oklahoma. These are the chairmen of the NRSC and NRCC. Their job is to field the candidates that are going to enable us to achieve our goal. Your job has been to make sure they



got enough money to run. And I thank you for coming, and so do they.

I want to thank my friend, Congressman Roy Blunt, who is the cochairman of this dinner, and he's here tonight with his wife Abbey. I thank Congressman Joe Wilson from South Carolina; he is the other co-chairman. He's here with Roxanne. Thank you all for working hard to make sure this dinner is a tremendous success.

I appreciate the chairman of the Republican Party, the general chairman, Mel Martinez—Senator Mel Martinez from the State of California [Florida]\* and his wife Kitty. I thank Mike Duncan, chairman of the RNC. Their job is to make sure the Republican Party welcomes people from all walks of life who believe in less government, strong defense, and low taxes.

I thank you all for being up here tonight, and thanks for your leadership on this dinner. The only way to call this dinner is “an unqualified success.” I appreciate very much the entertainment that's been here. I thank all the Members of the United States Congress who have joined us and the United States Senate.

I want to talk about two subjects tonight. I want to talk about how we keep the peace and defend this country, and I want to talk about prosperity.

First, let me talk about the fact that this Nation is at war. I wish I could report to you we were not at war, but we are. And the most important job of this Government is to protect the United States from further attack.

My thinking about the world changed on September the 11th, 2001. After the enemy attacked us and killed nearly 3,000 innocent civilians, I vowed that for however long I was President, I would rally this Nation and use our resources to protect you. And that's exactly what we have done.

The danger has not passed. And it's—our job here in Washington, DC, is to always remember, always remember, the na-

ture of the enemy we face. These people are ideologically driven people. They have a vision as to how government should work. They don't believe in dissent. They don't believe in freedom of religion. They don't believe people should be able to express themselves in the public square. They have a dark vision for humanity. They have a desire to spread their ideology as far and wide as possible to reestablish what they call a caliphate. And they're willing to use murder as the tool to achieve their objective. You cannot reason with these people; you cannot negotiate with these people. The only way to protect America is, defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

And that's exactly the strategy we've been keeping on. We've reformed our intelligence services to make sure we can find the enemy before they strike. We believe we ought to deny safe haven so they can't plan and plot again. And we believe that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

This country of ours is now engaged in a global war against these extremists and radicals. It's a war that will define the 21st century. We're fighting them in Afghanistan, and we're fighting them in Iraq, and we're fighting them wherever we can find them.

I had a tough call to make, and that's what Presidents do; they make decisions. In Iraq, I saw a threat to the United States of America. After all, that country was run by an enemy of the United States; the dictator had used weapons of mass destruction; he had been paying families of suicide bombers; they had harbored terrorists. He was a threat.

The President has always got to try diplomacy before the use of military force. That's precisely what I did. I went to the United Nations, where we received a unanimous United Nations Security Council resolution that said clearly to the dictator in Iraq: Disarm or face serious consequences. The choice was his. He chose to ignore

---

\* White House correction.

the demands of the free world. I decided to remove Saddam Hussein, and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And now the task at hand is to help this young democracy stabilize so it can become an ally in the war on terror. And it's hard work, but I believe it's necessary work. I believe it is necessary to the security of the United States that we help the Iraqi Government succeed.

It is interesting that David Petraeus, our commander on the ground, has declared that Al Qaida is the number-one enemy to the people of Iraq. Well, Al Qaida also happens to be the number-one enemy to the people of the United States. And what does that tell you? It tells you that you've got to succeed.

So last fall I had a decision to make: Do we allow the sectarian violence that Al Qaida had started as a result of the bombing of religious sites to get out of control and perhaps spill out across the countryside and the region? Or do you do what's necessary to help give this Government a chance to succeed? After listening to the military commanders, I made a tough decision. And the decision was, not withdraw, but instead, reinforcements. And the reinforcements are headed in. As a matter of fact, I talked to General David Petraeus today. The final troops have just arrived: some progress and some setbacks.

But in the face of this horror on our TV screens, perpetuated by murderous ideologues who are willing to kill the innocent to achieve their objectives, I want you to remember that when given a chance, 12 million Iraqis voted for a free country. This Government of theirs has got to make more progress on benchmarks, but I believe it's in the interest of the United States to help them. Because I'm going to tell you what will happen if we don't. This enemy that attacked us on September the 11th will become emboldened. They create chaos in order to confuse the civilized world and to take advantage of security

vacuums. That chaos gets spread throughout Iraq and in the region, thereby emboldening countries like Iran. They could gain safe—new safe havens, for which they have announced they're intending to do, from which to attack America.

Fifty years from now, people will look back and say: "How come they couldn't see the impending threat? How come the United States of America forgot the lessons of September the 11th? Why weren't they willing to do the hard work necessary to help this young democracy survive?" I believe the work we're doing is necessary. I believe we will succeed. And I believe generations from now, Americans will realize the cause was just and necessary for our own security. [Applause] Thank you all.

We have done this kind of work before. We have been in ideological struggles. Our strategy is, in the short term, to take the fight to the enemy and defeat them where we find them. In the long term, the way to defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. And there's no more hopeful ideology than an ideology based upon freedom. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe there's an Almighty, and a great gift of the Almighty to each man and woman and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. And I think it's in the interests of the United States to spread freedom far and wide across the globe.

In the early years of my Presidency, one of my best friends in the diplomatic arena was Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I've now established a close working relationship with his successor, Prime Minister Abe. The reason I tell you this is because the lessons of two George Bushes, relative to the Japanese, gives me great hope in the ability for us to succeed in laying a foundation for peace.

You see, young Ensign Bush was called into action against the Japanese during World War II. They were the bitter enemy of the United States of America. We fought a bloody war with the Japanese, and yet, some 60 years later, his son sits at the

table talking about how we can—with the Japanese—talking about how we can spread democracy to achieve peace. We sit at the table talking about making sure that the leader of North Korea doesn't get a nuclear weapon. We talk about peace in the world.

Isn't it interesting? My dad fought the Japanese; I'm making peace with the Japanese. Something happened. What happened was, liberty took hold in Japan. Liberty has the capacity to convert enemies into allies. Liberty has the capacity to yield the peace we all want for generations of Americans to come.

And I believe if our candidates take the message of doing what is necessary to protect the American people and take the message, the hopeful message of helping others realize the blessings of liberty, that we will retake the House and retake the Senate and hold the White House in 2008.

Ours is a party that believes that we ought to trust individuals to make the proper decisions for their families. See, we trust you. The other bunch trusts government to make the decisions for you and your families. And there's no better way to determine that trust than looking at our fiscal policies here in Washington, DC.

It wasn't all that long ago that the country was in a recession. We had corporate scandals which affected our economy, and we had to recover from a September the 11th attack. And yet because the United States Congress worked closely with the President, we cut taxes on everybody who paid taxes. We're not one of these parties that says, we'll play favorites in the Tax Codes. We said, if you pay taxes, you ought to pay less taxes because we trust you with your money, and we also understand that if you have more money in your pocket to save, spend, or invest, the economy will grow.

And our plan worked. America has created more than 8 million jobs in the past 4 years. The unemployment rate is low. Inflation is low. Real wages are rising. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Our econ-

omy is strong, thanks to the leadership of the Republicans in the United States Congress.

And now the fundamental question is, are we going to keep taxes low? Well, if you look at the budget carefully that the Democrats proposed, they want to return to the days of spending a lot and taxing you to make sure that they can do so. Oh, they may try to run from that idea, but if you look at the budget they submitted, their blueprint for how we ought to go forward, you can't escape the fact that they're going to run up your taxes. And if our candidates remind the American voter that tax cuts have worked, that the economy is strong as a result of the tax cuts, and instead of raising taxes, we ought to make the tax cuts permanent, we will retake the House, retake the Senate, and hold the White House in 2008.

And here in Washington, you'll hear them say, no, you've got to balance the budget by raising taxes. That's not the way it works here. They'll raise your taxes, but they won't balance the budget. They'll raise the taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money.

Our candidates need to travel the country and remind them about our record when it comes to reducing the deficit. This year, Treasury recently reported that revenues are up 8 percent. Yet last year, as you might remember, we cut discretionary spending. In other words, we believe the best way to balance the budget is to keep the economy strong by keeping taxes low and by being wise about how we spend your money. The deficit has been reduced ahead of schedule, and I believe that by working together with the Congress, we can totally eliminate the deficit within 5 years.

I met with the leadership of the Congress today. We had a good discussion about spending, and I told them I submitted a top line for the budget that I believe is necessary so we can be fiscally sound here in the United States. And if the Democrats want to test us, that's why

they give the President the veto. I'm looking forward to vetoing excessive spending, and I'm looking forward to having the United States Congress support my veto.

My point to you is: We got a solid record when it comes to protecting the United States of America, and we got a solid record when it comes to growing this economy. And in most elections, you can win elections based upon strong national defense and good economic policy. And that's precisely what we're going to bring to the voters in 2008.

We also bring one other thing to the voters: We understand that many of our Nation's problems cannot be solved by government but can be solved by loving citizens who have heard the call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. We believe strongly in the power of individuals to help improve our society

one heart, one soul at a time. We believe strongly that we ought not fear faith in our society, but we ought to welcome faith-based organizations into solving some of the difficult problems our society faces.

We believe in human life and human dignity. We believe to whom much is given, much is required. We believe in principles, not polls or focus groups. We believe in doing what's right for America. We believe that the best days lay ahead for our country. And I believe that we're going to succeed in 2008, and I want to thank you for your support.

May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

## Memorandum on Maritime Security (Piracy) Policy June 13, 2007

*Memorandum for the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Director of National Intelligence, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Counsel to the President, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Director, National Counterterrorism Center*

*Subject: Maritime Security (Piracy) Policy*

The attached Policy for the Repression of Piracy and Other Criminal Acts of Vio-

lence at Sea (Piracy Policy) is approved for immediate implementation, consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations. The policy shall be appended to the National Strategy for Maritime Security as Annex B.

This policy responds to the emergence of high-risk maritime areas that threaten U.S. interests. Recent instances of piracy have highlighted the need for this policy in order to coordinate U.S. Government response and to promote international solutions. This policy advances our commitment to cooperate with other states, regional and international organizations, and the maritime industry in order to counter this threat. The United States has long been a leader in the protection of navigational rights and freedoms. Our objectives consistently have been to promote and facilitate peaceful international uses of the oceans.

We recognize that all nations have an interest and responsibility in protecting those rights and freedoms.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum and its attached annex were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 14.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Leaders *June 14, 2007*

It's been my honor to receive General Dempsey and his wife here to the Oval Office to thank both of them for their service to the country. General Dempsey has just come out of Iraq, where he is working with the Iraqi troops to prepare for—to prepare them for the day when they will be responsible for the security of their country. He explained to me the progress that has been made over the years that he has been there. Obviously, we have still more work to do.

But I—my main purpose of inviting the general here is to hear his summary, but to thank him. It's an extraordinary country where people volunteer to go into combat zones to protect the security of the United States of America. No more important mis-

sion for our military than Iraq and Afghanistan.

And General Dempsey and his family have been very much involved in this war on terror. And we appreciate you and thank you and wish you all the best in your next assignment.

Thanks for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Vice President Dick Cheney; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, former commander, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq, and his wife Deanie.

## Remarks to the Associated Builders and Contractors *June 14, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you. Thanks for coming. I'm proud to be with you, glad to be back with the Associated Builders and Contractors. I appreciate your organization. I didn't realize you were founded in 1950, about the same time a piano nearly fell through the roof at the White House—[laughter]—thereby causing Harry Truman to decide to renovate it. And for that, Laura and I are very grateful. [Laughter]

I am grateful for your organization as well. I thank you for being builders, doers,

and dreamers. I thank you for being people who are willing to take a risk to help build our Nation and, at the same time, employ people. I want to talk to you today about how to keep the entrepreneurial spirit strong, how to keep this economy growing, and our need to protect the American people from harm. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and do so.

David Meyer, thank you, and I thank your board for inviting me. Joining us today is one of my finest Secretaries, Secretary



Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of the Department of Commerce. I appreciate you coming, Carlos, and thank you for being here. Carlos was born in Cuba. His folks decided that it would be best that he and they come to a free society. He rose to become the CEO of a major U.S. corporation, and now he sits in the Cabinet of the United States of America. That's what the American Dream is all about, and it's in this Nation's interest to preserve dreams.

I want to thank Congressman Todd Platts from Pennsylvania for joining us. Todd—there you are. How you doing, Todd? Thanks for being here, honored you're here. His mother is a manufacturer. She manufactures peanut fudge, and Platts always brings me some of it. *[Laughter]* I can't ride enough mountain bikes to—*[laughter]*. Give her my best.

Thanks for letting me come by. I love entrepreneurs, and I like to be with them. Entrepreneurs are folks that really work hard. Nothing more exciting than having your own business. I'm sure some of you probably wondered growing up whether it'd be possible, whether you'd be able to have the ingenuity and the capacity to say, "This is my business." But you've obviously overcome the difficult hurdles that face small-business owners and business owners, and you're succeeding. And I'm grateful. The role of government is to make your jobs easier, not harder. It makes sense to encourage entrepreneurship.

And that begins with tax policy. I believe if you have more money in your pocket, you're more likely to buy a piece of equipment or hire a new worker. I think the best way to overcome economic difficulties that we've had in the past is to cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. That requires fundamental trust, for those of us in government, in your capacity to spend your money better than the government can spend it. But that's what I believe.

And I also believe that with more money in circulation in private hands, it encourages small-business growth and activity and

commerce. And that's why we cut taxes not only on people with children and people who are married, but we cut taxes on small businesses. As a matter of fact, I thought it was fair to cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes, not to say, "Okay, well, this group pays, and you get a tax cut, but this group pays, and you don't get a tax cut." That's not good tax policy, as far as I'm concerned.

We put the—cut taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. I say, "on the road to extinction," it's not totally extinct. And I would hope that you would prioritize getting rid of the death tax as part of your legislative agendas for not only this year but next year and the years to come, to make sure that we get rid of the death tax once and for all. It would be good for our farmers and small-business owners. I don't think you ought to be taxed twice: once when you're living and once when you die. *[Laughter]*

There is a lot of political debate in Washington about tax cuts, if you can imagine. Some would rather have your money to increase the size of government. Others, like me, say: "Well, we got plenty of money. You ought to have more money." I just want to point out the facts. Since we enacted major tax relief in 2003, in the face of recession and corporate scandals and attacks, our economy has added more than 8 million new jobs in 45 months of uninterrupted job growth. Unemployment is low. Inflation is down. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are growing. This economy is good, and the way to keep it good and to keep it strong is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

You'll hear people say, "No, we can't do that because we must balance the budget." Now really, I've been around here long enough to know how it works in Washington, and that is—they'll say, "Well, we're going to raise your taxes. Don't worry, we're just only going to tax the rich." Well,

first of all, it doesn't work that way. You can't raise enough money on the so-called rich in order to whet the appetite of some of the spenders here. [Laughter]

And secondly, the money is not going to go to balance the budget. The money inevitably goes to new programs, expanded government. The best way to balance the budget, in my judgment, is to keep taxes low, so the economy grows, and be wise about how we spend your money. And our strategy is working. This just isn't theory; it's actually working. This year, the Treasury Department reported that Federal revenues through May are up 8 percent over the same period last year. In other words, a revenue stream is growing because of economic activity. And because we worked with the Congress last year to hold down spending, the budget deficit this year is about a third lower than it was at this time last year.

And if we continue to be wise about how we spend the money and keep the economic vitality alive, we can balance the budget by 2012. Now this is going to take discipline here in Washington, DC. Sometimes this city may be short of fiscal discipline, but that's why they give the President the veto. And I'm looking forward to working with the Congress to make sure that we're wise about how we spend your money.

A couple of other issues I want to talk briefly about. Look, I understand the health care issues you face. Health care needs to be affordable and available, no question. But we've got to make sure we do it without asking the Federal Government to run the health care program. We want decisions made by providers and patients.

I heard the word Dave said about regulation and redtape. I understand your concerns. I also understand your concerns about these junk lawsuits. The country needs to make sure we put an end to junk lawsuits that threaten job providers and job creators such as yourself.

You know, I just returned this week from Poland, Gdansk, Poland. We had a great trip, by the way. And it was really fantastic to represent the United States of America overseas. We're such a beacon of hope and a beacon of liberty. And anyway, we just came—and that's a city, by the way, where trade union activists once risked and gave their lives for the right to elect their government freely under a secret ballot. [Laughter]

And for the last 60 years in our country, secret ballots have allowed workers to vote their conscience on whether to form a union or remain unaffiliated. The House has passed, as you well know, and the Senate is considering what they call "card check legislation." It simply means that workers would be denied the right to have a secret ballot. The legislation would expose workers to intimidation. It violates the principle of our democracy. And if it ever makes it to my desk, I'm going to veto it.

Supporting free enterprise also means building an immigration system that upholds our laws and keeps this economy strong. You have made comprehensive immigration reform one of your top legislative priorities, and I thank you for your commitment on this vital issue. And it is a vital issue. We have worked—Carlos Gutierrez and Michael Chertoff, two members of my Cabinet, have worked very closely with others in my administration, with Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate to produce a bipartisan immigration bill. And it took a lot of work. It took many months of intense negotiations. And it represents the best hope for lasting reform.

I was disappointed last week when the bill was temporarily withdrawn by the Senate majority leader. Leaders of both parties since then have expressed their commitment to resolving the issues that led to the setback and bring the bill back to the floor. And I appreciate that commitment, and I urge them to do so as quickly as possible so Congress can pass and I can

sign, this year, comprehensive immigration reform.

The need for reform is urgent. Our immigration system has been broken for many years. Most Americans agree that the 1986 immigration law failed; it didn't work. It failed because it did not secure our border. It failed because it did not create a reliable system for employers to verify the legal status of their workers. And it encouraged more people to come to America illegally. It didn't work, and it needs to be fixed. When you find something that doesn't work, you have a responsibility to fix it.

The number of illegal immigrants in our country has continued to grow, and illegal immigration is now supported by criminal enterprises. In other words, there are people who are preying on these folks that are coming to do work that Americans aren't doing. You've got a whole system of *coyotes*; those are smugglers, human smugglers, taking advantage of a broken system. You've got document forgers, people wanting to work and they know they've got to have some papers, and there are people, a whole industry of people, providing them with false documents. People are being exploited as a result of a broken system, and this isn't right. We can do better.

I understand Americans are skeptical about immigration reform. There's a lot of people saying: "Well, there's just no possible way that they can achieve important objectives; after all, they tried in '86, and it failed." People are—got a lot of emotions on this issue. You probably hear it at the coffee shops, talking about the issue. People are very emotional about immigration reform, and people have got different perspectives on a course of action. Most say—many say the most important issue is to secure the border. Others say an important part of immigration reform is to find the workers they need to help a growing economy. Still others say that it's important to resolve the status of 12 million people already here illegally and help immigrants as-

similate into our society. There's varieties of opinions about this subject.

I believe that we must address all these concerns in order to have an effective system, and that's why I strongly support comprehensive immigration reform. And I appreciate you understanding that in order to have a system that works, all the issues must be addressed.

By moving forward with the bill in the Senate, we will make our border more secure. In other words, if you're worried about border security, you ought to be supporting this bill. For decades, we have not been in complete control of the border. I was honored to be the Governor of Texas. I know something about a large border with Mexico—[laughter]—and we weren't in control of that border. A lot of people then say, "Well, if you hadn't been in control, do you have the capacity to secure the border?" You'll hear a lot of people here say, "Well, since you didn't do it in the past, you can't do it in the future." In other words, people are worried about that issue.

The first step to comprehensive reform must be to enforce immigration laws at the border and at worksites across the country. The administration—our administration has taken significant steps, by the way, to increase border security and worksite enforcement. Since I've took office, we've more than doubled funding for border security. I mean, there's a focused effort, by the way, to do what many Americans want us to do, which is to secure that border. We've expanded the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to about 13,000. We've set our Nation on the course to double the size of Border Patrol during my Presidency. In other words, we're going to add another 5,000 agents.

I was in Artesia, New Mexico, to a border training center. I watched these good folks prepare for this very important job. We've increased the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents—I'm sure you understand what an ICE agent is—from about 8,000 in 2002 to more

than 11,000. In other words, on the enforcement side, we've made some serious efforts to do what the American people expect us to do.

There used to be a problem with catch-and-release. Our Border Patrol agents would find somebody trying to sneak into our country illegally. They would say: "We caught you; now report back to the local immigration court so you can have your hearing," because there was no place to hold these good people—or these people. And guess what would happen? They'd head off into society and say, "See you later," and never return for the court date. So we worked with Congress and expanded the number of beds on our border, and we've effectively ended catch-and-release.

I want to tell you a statistic that may surprise you. Last year, we apprehended and sent home more than about 1.1 million people entering our country illegally. Now think about that. In 1 year alone, our Border Patrol agents and law enforcement agents found 1.1 million people coming into our country illegally and sent them home. They're working hard down there, and they're making progress. People are doing the jobs we expect them to do, and now we're going to build on this progress.

So this bill sets clear benchmarks for border security that must be met before other elements of this legislation are triggered. We make a priority of securing the border. These benchmarks include further increasing Border Patrol agents, building miles of fencing, and modernizing the border. You can't fence the whole border, but you can use fencing in a way to help known—to help stop people at known crossing points. It's a smart part of making sure the border is secure, along with other ways to modernize the border—berms and electronics and UAVs. We're going to improve our surveillance capability; in other words, we're modernizing the border. It hasn't been that way. And we're making progress to modernize that border.

It also includes benchmarks for giving honest employers the tools to verify that they're hiring legal workers. Most people want to comply with the law. I know you do. Yet it's awfully hard for you to be a document verifier. That's not what you—[applause]. It's a burden to place on small-business owners, to be—say, "Okay, you've got to make sure that the documents that look real are real." These document forgers are good. They know what they're doing. They're preying on innocent people who want to simply find work to put food on the table back at home.

And so the bill we're talking about says, okay, enough is enough when it comes to document forgery. We'll create a tamper-resistant identity card for foreign workers and a mandatory electronic system for verifying employment eligibility. This will make sure that you're complying with the law, that you don't have to guess, that you don't hope you're dealing with some forged document. It will make it easier for you to do your—run your businesses, and at the same time, it will make it easier for the government to punish those who hire illegal immigrants—knowingly hire illegal immigrants. In other words, it gives us a chance to enforce the law, and that's what the American people want.

It's important for the people to know that their government is serious about meeting these benchmarks. One common concern is whether the government will provide the resources to meet the goals in the bill. People say: "It's fine to talk about it. Are you actually going to do something?" To answer these concerns, I support an amendment that will provide \$4.4 billion in immediate additional funding for securing our borders and enforcing our laws at the worksite. This funding will come from the fines and penalties that we collect from those who have come to our country illegally.

By matching our benchmarks with these critical funds, we're going to show the American people that the promises in this

bill will be kept. And so I call on the Senators to pass this amendment and to show the American people that we're going to do our jobs of securing this border once and for all.

But by moving forward with this bill, we'll also help meet the needs of a growing economy. When the economy grows, people are looking for workers. That's Economics 1. [*Laughter*] You're probably some who are looking for workers. As you get expanded work orders, you're wondering whether you can find the workers to meet the needs. That's what happens when the economy grows—you need workers to make the economy grow.

The reality is, in America, that the construction industry and other sectors depend on foreign workers to fill jobs Americans are not doing. That's the reality of the world we live in. So once our border security and worksite enforcement measure is in place, this bill will create a new temporary-worker program. The program will establish a lawful and orderly process for foreign workers to come to America on a temporary basis. This will help reduce the number of people trying to sneak across our border. If you're truly interested in border security, it makes sense to give people a legal way to come to do work Americans aren't doing, on a temporary basis.

See, people are sneaking in because they want to work. It makes sense to me to say: "Instead of sneaking in, here's a temporary-worker card that's tamper-proof, that you can go fill jobs that Americans aren't doing. Therefore, you don't sneak across." Such a system will take pressure off the border and let our Border Patrol agents focus on drug runners or gun runners or terrorists. I strongly believe that it's in our economic interest and in our security interest to have a temporary-worker program.

This legislation will also create a merit-based point system for admitting new immigrants to our country. The system will reward new applicants based upon skills and education so we can ensure that Amer-

ica continues to have the world's most talented workforce. It's a reform of an immigration system that hasn't worked. The bill is a practical way to address problems that have sprung up as a result of an immigration system that hasn't worked. By moving forward, this bill will resolve the status of those who are here illegally—already here illegally.

Look, we need to do this without animosity and without amnesty. I know there are some people who, I guess, believe that we could just kick them out of the country. That's just totally impractical; it won't work. We need a practical solution to a problem that has arisen as a result of a bill that didn't work, the 1986 immigration bill.

Amnesty is forgiveness with no penalty for people who have broken our laws to get here. In contrast, this bill requires illegal workers to pay a fine, to register with the government, to undergo background checks, to pay their back taxes, to hold down a steady job, and to learn English in a set period of time.

At the end of 8 years, if they want to apply for a green card—in other words, get in line for citizenship—after 8 years, they'll have to return to their home country so they can apply from there, pay an additional fine. In short, they will prove themselves worthy of a great land.

The legislation will also help newcomers to our country assimilate into our society. One of the great beauties of America has been, people can come to this country with a dream and become Americans; that's assimilate.

Carlos Gutierrez's story is a great story. Mel Martinez's parents put him on an airplane from Cuba to Florida because a tyrant emerged on that island. He was in my Cabinet. I was at the Coast Guard Academy the other day; the number-one graduate at the Coast Guard Academy talked about his migrant worker grandfather who came to America with a dream. And now the grandson stands in front of the President talking about the beauties of



America. You know, Americans must be confident in our ability to assimilate newcomers. We have done so in the past, and we will do so in the future. It's a—people newly arrived with dreams lift our soul; they invigorate our society; they work hard to become Americans. And it's important for us to help them assimilate.

And the key to that, the key to unlocking the full promise of America, is the ability to read, write, and speak English. And so the bill affirms that English is the language of our land. And the bill will expand opportunities to help new immigrants learn our language and the shared ideals that make us all Americans.

We have an historic window of opportunity to act now. Now is the time to get it done. We've got to summon the political courage to move forward on comprehensive reform. Doing nothing is not a solution. If we fail to act, the problems of 1986 will continue. The pressures on our border will not be alleviated. Employers will be left without a reliable system for verifying the legal status of their workers. Jobs will go unfulfilled. Hard-working immigrants will remain in the shadows of our society. And our Nation will continue to have a broken immigration system.

The American people expect people in Washington, DC, to solve problems. I believe we can express our feelings, disagree on certain elements of the legislation, and still come together on a solution. I'm confident that we can pass a bill into law this year, and it will show the American people that we can prove we're serious about confronting the great issues of our time.

Now is the time to set aside all the political wrangling that tends to dominate the scene here in Washington, DC, and do hard work and pass a comprehensive immigration bill. And I'm counting on your help to get it done. *[Applause]* Thank you all.

As we work on this legislation at home, we're meeting important responsibilities abroad. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw that problems originating in a failed

and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our cities. Nine/Eleven was a turning point for our Nation. We learned that our Nation's security depends on fighting our enemies overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. And we learned that to secure our country, we must advance the cause of freedom as the great alternative to tyranny and terror.

We're in an ideological conflict with ambitious men who have a different view of government than we do. They don't believe in dissent. They don't believe in freedom to worship as one sees fit. They want to extend their power and reach throughout the Middle East. They want to reestablish a caliphate. And they murder to achieve their objectives. You can't talk reason to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. We must stay on the offense and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

We went into Afghanistan and helped remove an oppressive government that harbored the terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks. Today, because we acted, the terrorist camps in Afghanistan have been shut down. Al Qaida lost its safe haven. Twenty-five million people have been liberated. The Afghan people have elected a government that is fighting terrorists instead of harboring them. It's in our Nation's security interests; it's in our national interest to stand with that young democracy in Afghanistan and give their people a chance to live in liberty.

In Iraq, we removed a cruel dictator who was an enemy of the United States of America, had used—who had used weapons of mass destruction, who was paying the families of suicide bombers, who had invaded his neighbors, who was given a chance to disclose or disarm by the U.N. Security Council not once, but numerous times. He made the wrong choice. I made the choice to uphold what the free world

said. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power, and so are the Iraqis.

And now we're undertaking the difficult and dangerous work of helping Iraq establish a functioning democracy that can protect our people and be an ally in this struggle against radicals and extremists who use murder to achieve an ideological objective. And the stakes are high, and it's tough work.

In December 2005, if you can remember that far back—[laughter]—nearly 12 million Iraqis went to the polls. I was pleased but not surprised. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe people want to be free. And here, after years of tyranny, when given a chance, 12 million people went to the polls. And by going to the polls, they chose a new government under the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world.

A thinking enemy watched all this. And in 2006, Al Qaida—the folks who orchestrated the attack on the United States of America on September the 11th, 2001—and other Sunni extremists ramped up their attacks, which led to a tragic escalation of sectarian violence. In the face of the violence, I had a choice to make: to withdraw our troops, or to send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the violence.

Had I been polled during that period of time, I'd have said I was—I didn't approve of what was happening in Iraq. I'd have been one of the "you-can-put-me-down-as-not-approving." The sectarian violence was getting more severe, and I had a choice. It's what Presidents do; they make decisions. And that's what you do; you make decisions. I made a decision. I decided to send more troops with a new mission to help the Iraqi Government secure the population and get control of Baghdad. I put our troops under a new commander, General David Petraeus, who wrote the Army's new manual on counterinsurgency warfare.

It is too early to judge the results of this new strategy. General Petraeus, recently put it this way: "We haven't even started the full surge yet." He just got his troops on the ground. Only at the end of this week will the last of the five reinforcement brigades become fully operational.

Under our new strategy, American and Iraqi forces are now living side by side in Baghdad neighborhoods. As Iraqis see forces patrolling their streets, they're gaining the trust, and they're getting new cooperation from the residents.

Now, just as an example of what I'm talking about: Iraqi and coalition forces have captured more weapon caches since the beginning of the year than they did all of last year. Why? Because people are beginning to trust that the security situation will improve; they're willing to step forward. Most people want to live in peace. Iraqi mothers want their children to grow up in a peaceful world, just like our mothers do. There's something universal about motherhood, isn't there? They want something better for their children, and they don't like the violence, and they're expecting their Government to help them. And that's what we're doing: We're helping to provide security.

We're also seeing gains from our new strategy in Anbar Province. Anbar is a large Sunni area west of Baghdad that has been a hotbed for insurgents and Al Qaida. This is where Al Qaida said they were going to establish a new safe haven. They have made it clear they want safe havens. Why? Because they want to attack again, they want to spread their ideology. This is what the enemy has said. And I take the words of the enemy very seriously, and so should the American people.

With the help of tribal sheikhs, American and Iraqi forces have cleared and held terrorist strongholds in Ramadi and Fallujah. The population is tired of Al Qaida. They're tired of murder. And we're striking powerful blows against Al Qaida in Anbar, and that helps our security here at home.

The summer is going to be a critical period for our new strategy. I've cautioned that the enemies of free Iraq will—particularly Al Qaida and illegal militias—are going to continue their campaigns of terror and intimidation to stop the progress of a free society. We can expect heavy fighting in the coming weeks. We can expect more casualties, both American and Iraqi casualties.

Just yesterday two minarets of the Golden Mosque of Samarra were blown up in an attack that had all the hallmarks of Al Qaida. The mosque is one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam. The same mosque that was blown up last year—the Golden Dome was blown up, and that caused the sectarian violence to get out of hand, which caused me to make a decision to send more troops in, as opposed to withdrawing them.

You see, these killers hope that their attacks, like this one, will create enough confusion and chaos that we will abandon this young democracy. They have objectives; they have goals; they want to drive us out. They thrive on chaos. Why? Because it enables them to develop safe haven. If they ever gain safe haven, the United States becomes even more vulnerable to attack. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, what happens overseas matters to the security of the United States of America. It is better to defeat them overseas than face them here on our soil again.

The act of cruelty that took place yesterday and has taken place by these car bombs that destroy innocent life reveals the terrorists for what they are: the enemy of every Iraqi who seeks to live in peace. That's what they are; they're the enemy of people who want to live in peace.

I call on Iraqis to reject this provocation. America will continue to stand behind the Iraqi people as they fight these extremists and terrorists, people who want to destroy both our countries. With our help, we expect the Iraqi Government to pass laws that help the people of that troubled land rec-

oncile their differences so that the people who voted for democracy can raise their families in a secure environment. We all have obligations to make sure that this young democracy survives. That's what the Iraqi people expect our Government to do, and that's what the American people expect us to tell the Iraqi Government to do.

Obviously, this is more than a military mission; there must be a political track at the same time. This is a difficult fight, and the temptation is to look for an easy way out. Some in Washington who—want to declare defeat before our troops even had the chance to make it work. The consequences of failure would be grave.

If we withdraw before the Iraqi Government can defend itself, we would leave a dangerous security vacuum, which extremist forces like Al Qaida would compete to fill. Sectarian violence would multiply on a horrific scale. Fighting could engulf the entire region in chaos. The extremists who emerge victorious in this struggle could use Iraq as a base to launch new attacks against America. Ultimately, our troops might have to return to Iraq in order to protect ourselves, and confront an entrenched enemy that is even more dangerous. The stakes are high.

We will not abdicate our responsibility and leave this problem to future generations. Now is the time to confront the danger. Now is the time to do the hard work necessary for this democracy to survive. Now is the time to stand with the Iraqi people, not only for their security but for our own. And that is why we will complete the mission.

For all the talk about consequences of failure, we also need to remember the consequences of success in Iraq. Success will give us a new ally in the war on terror. This is a global war that we're fighting against ideologues who use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. It's important for us to support forms of government that defeat an ideology of hate. And the best form of government that defeats

ideology of hate is one of hope, and that's liberty. And it's worked throughout the history of the United States of America and the world, for that matter. We have seen freedom's power to transform societies before.

My dad, like many of your relatives, defended our Nation in a bloody war against the Japanese and the Germans. I doubt right after World War II somebody would have predicted that one of George W. Bush's—well, they wouldn't have predicted I'd have been President anyway, but—[laughter]—particularly my friends in Midland, Texas. [Laughter] But I doubt somebody would have said a future President would be sitting down at a table with the Japanese, keeping the peace. After a bloody war, with the sworn enemy being the Japanese and the Germans, I doubt anybody would have said—had the confidence necessary to say that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies into allies. But that's what happened.

I went to the G-8, and Angela Merkel, who is a really fine leader for Germany, was at the table. And Shinzo Abe from Japan was at the table. We're talking about peace. We're talking about dealing with the conditions that cause radicalism to prevail, dealing with forms of government that frustrate people so much that 19 kids get on

an airplane and kill nearly 3,000 Americans. But we've got to be confident as we look at the future. Liberty has transformed enemies to allies. Liberty has got the capacity to defeat an ideology based upon hate. Liberty has got the ability to bring light into societies.

We've done this kind of hard work before. And it's in our interests to secure a young generation of Americans against the threats of the 21st century, to do this work again. I'm optimistic about our future. I believe the United States can achieve anything she sets her mind to. And so I come to you today to talk about making this economy stronger, to dealing with problems, and to how the United States intends to handle the biggest issue facing us, and that's to make sure we protect the American people. The challenges are great, but this country can handle any challenge that comes our way.

Proud to be with you. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. at the Capital Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to David R. Meyer, chairman, Associated Builders and Contractors National Executive Committee; President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba; and Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG.

## Statement on the Death of Ruth Bell Graham

June 14, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Ruth Bell Graham, a remarkable woman of faith whose life was defined by her belief in a personal, loving, and gracious God. She was an encouraging friend, accomplished poet, and devoted mother of 5 and grandmother of 19.

Ruth's marriage to her husband Billy was a true and loving partnership. As the wife of the world's most beloved evangelist, she inspired people around the world with her humor, intelligence, elegance, and kindness. Laura and I offer our prayers and condolences to Billy and the Graham family.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Belarus

June 14, 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 this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus are to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2007.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national se-

curity and foreign policy of the United States. These actions include undermining democratic processes or institutions; committing human rights abuses related to political repression, including detentions and disappearances; and engaging in public corruption, including by diverting or misusing Belarusian public assets or by misusing public authority. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons with respect to Belarus.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
June 14, 2007.

NOTE: The related notice of June 14 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks at the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast

June 15, 2007

*Gracias. Sientese, por favor. Buenos dias. Si.* I thank my friend Luis. This isn't the first time he's introduced me. I'm proud to be back. I thank you for the chance to come to the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast. Appreciate the opportunity to be with Hispanic American pastors and priests and community leaders and faith-based activists from all over the United States. I thank you for coming, and thanks for having me come. I appreciate your leadership, I appreciate your compassion, and I thank you for your abiding faith in the power of prayer.

I'm pleased that two Senators who have got *corazones grandes*—[laughter]—on the immigration bill are with us today, Senator Ted Kennedy and Senator Mel Martinez. Thank you all for coming. *Y tambien*, Congresswoman Grace Napolitano *y* Luis Fortuno, thank you all for coming; proud you're here.

I thank the veterans and members of the military who are here today. I thank the pastors and community leaders.

At this breakfast, we set aside our politics and come together in prayer. That's what we're doing. When we pray, we acknowledge our total dependence on Almighty



God, we put our future in His hands, and we find that prayer lifts our spirits and changes our lives.

This morning we have many things to pray for. We pray for our families and our loved ones and our friends. We pray for the strength and safety of our Nation. We pray for wisdom and grace in times of trial. And we pray to give thanks for the many blessings that God has bestowed upon America.

Among those blessings are millions of talented men and women of Hispanic origin who call this country home. Our Nation is more vibrant because of the contributions made by Hispanic Americans in all sectors of our society, from the arts to business to religion to education. Our Nation is more hopeful because of the Hispanic Americans who serve in the armies of compassion, who are surrounding neighbors in need who hurt with love; people who are helping to change America one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time.

Many of you at this breakfast devote your lives to serving others. By doing so you're answering a timeless call: to love your neighbor as yourself. You really represent the true strength of America, and I thank you for being of service to our country.

This prayer breakfast has come a long way since it started 5 years ago. We could have held it in a little tiny closet. And now, as Luis tells me, it's oversubscribed the minute it gets announced. It's a good sign for our country, isn't it? People want to come together in prayer.

Instead of a single morning meeting, you have now come to Washington for a 3-day conference. And I appreciate the chance—you've had a chance to go to Congress and discuss your concerns with Members of Congress. I appreciate your support for policies that expand home ownership. We want more Americans saying: "Welcome to my home. Come and see my piece of property." I appreciate the fact that you're promoting small businesses. We want more Americans realizing the dream

of owning their own business. And, by the way, the Latino small-business community is strong, and we intend to keep it that way.

I appreciate your working to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. I appreciate you working hard to make sure every child gets a good education. Thank you for your concern for our country. You're demonstrating *el Sueno Americano es para todos*.

And I thank you for making comprehensive immigration reform your top priority. I share that priority. These Senators share that priority. I appreciate the fact that you understand that this debate can be emotional, and it's complex. I appreciate the fact that you understand that Members need to hear from you about where you think this country ought to go when it comes to immigration reform. There's a lot of emotion on this issue, and it makes sense to have people from around the country come and sit down with Members of Congress to talk rationally about the issue.

Our responsibilities are straightforward. We've got to enforce the border, a basic duty of a sovereign nation. We've got to create a lawful way for foreign workers to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. Our economy depends on them. And we must resolve the status of illegal immigrants already in our country without amnesty and without animosity, because that is the only practical way to fix the problem that has been decades in the making. We must help new immigrants assimilate. That's what has always made our Nation strong. People in America must have confidence in this country to help people assimilate.

Mel Martinez's parents put him on an airplane because they didn't want him raised in a tyrannical society on the island of Cuba, and here he now sits as a Member of the United States Senate. I was deeply touched at the Coast Guard Academy, when I was sitting there as the Commander in Chief of a bunch of kids who just got bars on their shoulders, and the head of the class got up to speak, and he talked

about his migrant grandfather. This Hispanic American started his speech to his classmates—because I was there, there was a lot of cameras, maybe the country—talking about his migrant grandfather. Isn't it a fabulous country where a migrant grandfather can come and have a dream and work hard, and there's his grandson talking about the promise of America in front of the President of the United States and his classmates? That's the beauty of America.

We must meet our moral obligation to treat newcomers with decency and show compassion to the vulnerable and exploited, because we're called to answer both the demands of justice and the call for mercy.

Most Americans agree on these principles. And now it's time for our elected leaders in Congress to act. You don't have to worry about these two Senators. They're acting; they're in the lead. Each day our Nation fails to act, the problem only grows worse. I will continue to work closely with members of both parties to get past our differences and pass a bill I can sign this year.

One of the reasons that America leads the world is that we've always welcomed people who are determined to embrace our

democracy and stand for freedom. We see that determination every day in the hundreds of thousands of Hispanic Americans who wear the uniform of the United States military.

Today we're joined by a group of Hispanic American soldiers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I thank these brave men for stepping forward to protect our freedom. I join all of you in praying for their full recovery. And I'm honored to be their Commander in Chief.

Our Nation is blessed to call these men fellow Americans. We thank God for sending us such brave and selfless people. We ask that He give His—give us the wisdom and grace to be worthy of the sacrifices they make and the ideals of liberty they defend.

Thank you very much for letting me come by again. *Y tambien, que Dios los bendiga.* Amen. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 a.m. at the JW Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Luis Cortes, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Esperanza USA; and Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG.

## Remarks on Arrival in Wichita, Kansas June 15, 2007

Thank you all for coming out to say hello. Thank you for making this a really comfortable airplane. [*Laughter*] I can't tell you what an honor it is to fly overseas in Air Force One and have that big bird park, have people around the world see the great majesty of our country reflected in this airplane.

And I know many of you are working hard to outfit the—its companion. I appreciate your hard work. I will assure you one thing: I will ride that airplane with great

pride. I mean, there's nothing better than representing the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

I appreciate your hard work. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I'd like to kind of work along here and make sure I don't lose my touch and shake a few hands. I'm honored to be here with Senator Pat Roberts and Vicki Tiaht. They're strong supporters of the programs here, strong supporters of Boeing.

I appreciate you coming out to say hello. And I ask for God's blessings on your families and on our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at McConnell Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Vicki Tiahrt, wife of Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Kansas.

## Remarks at the Boys & Girls Club of South Central Kansas—21st Street Club in Wichita

June 15, 2007

*The President.* I have come to this fantastic facility to, first of all, thank the people that have supported the programs that exist here. I like the idea of mentors reaching out to children to set good examples and to encourage them to achieve big goals in life. And that's what happens here in this Boys and Girls Club in Wichita. This is a place where dreams are fostered and skills are given so that people can realize their dreams.

This is a community-based program. It gets some help from the government, but it gets a lot of help from the local community. And I think it's very important for the people of Wichita to support program such as this. After all, we can change our country one heart and one soul at a time. So I'm really pleased to be here. It's a beautiful facility full of beautiful people.

And so thank you for giving me a chance to come by and say hello. Yes, you won an award didn't you?

*Ciera Ivy.* Yes.

*The President.* What award did you win?

*Ms. Ivy.* Youth of the Month.

*The President.* Youth of the Month. That's good. Congratulations to you.

*Ms. Ivy.* Thank you.

*The President.* I want to thank the counselors who are here and all the adults that are working with the boys and girls.

Anyway, nice to see you all. Thanks for coming by. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

June 15, 2007

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world.

This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and Kosovo.

### *THE WAR ON TERROR*

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001,

and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European (KFOR), and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the U.S. right to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 25,945, of which approximately 14,340 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized the ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently, for a 12-month period from October 13, 2006, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1707 of September 12, 2006. The mission of the ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows reconstruction and the reestablishment of Afghan authorities. Currently, all 26 NATO nations contribute to the ISAF. Twelve non-NATO contrib-

uting countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to the ISAF.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, the Security Council, again noting the Iraqi government's request to retain the presence of the MNF, extended the MNF mandate for a period ending on December 31, 2006. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, the Security Council extended the MNF mandate until December 31, 2007. Under Resolutions 1546, 1637, and 1723, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. These contributions have included assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces and institutions as the Iraqi people drafted and approved a constitution and established a constitutionally elected government. The U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 153,553 military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped and combat-support forces to

assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region, and U.S. forces conducted air and sea-launched strikes against al-Qaida targets in Somalia.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

#### *NATO-LED KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR)*

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999.

The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and Serbia (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international police, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment that facilitates the work of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, there are 24 NATO nations contributing to KFOR. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is about 1,584 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 10 percent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 15,498 personnel.

The U.S. forces have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment

remains the primary military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels; provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence.

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which includes the President, Prime Minister, multiple ministries, and the Kosovo Assembly. The UNMIK retains ultimate authority in some sensitive areas such as police, justice, and ethnic-minority affairs.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO has adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The UNMIK international police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have full responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as needed.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to



these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

## The President's Radio Address *June 16, 2007*

Good morning. This week, Congress began to debate its annual spending bills. The American people expect us to spend their tax dollars wisely, or not at all, and to pursue progrowth economic policies that will allow us to reduce the deficit while keeping our economy strong.

Since my administration's tax relief was implemented 4 years ago, our economy has added more than 8 million new jobs, and we've experienced 45 months of uninterrupted job growth. With more Americans working and more businesses thriving, our economy has produced record tax revenues. The Treasury Department recently reported that this year's Federal revenues are up 8 percent over last year. As a result, our Nation's budget deficit is about one-third lower than it was at this time last year.

In addition to pursuing progrowth tax relief, my administration is working to reduce the Federal deficit through strict fiscal discipline. Over the past 3 years, we have met the urgent needs of our Nation while holding the growth of annual domestic spending close to 1 percent, well below the rate of inflation. I've also proposed policies that would slow the unsustainable growth of our most serious long-term fiscal challenge: entitlement spending. By keeping taxes low and restraining Federal spending, we can meet my plan to have a balanced budget by 2012.

The Democrats in Congress are trying to take us in a different direction. They've passed a budget that would mean higher taxes for American families and job cre-

ators, ignore the need for entitlement reform, and pile on hundreds of billions of dollars in new Government spending over the next 5 years. This tax-and-spend approach puts our economic growth and deficit reduction at risk.

For months, I've warned the Democrats in Congress that I will not accept an irresponsible tax-and-spend budget. I put Democratic leaders on notice that I will veto bills with excessive levels of spending. And I am not alone in my opposition. In the House, 147 Republicans have pledged to support fiscal discipline by opposing excessive spending. These 147 Members are more than one-third needed to sustain my veto of any bills that spend too much.

Another key area of difference between my administration and the Democratic leadership in Congress is my support for meaningful earmark reform. Earmarks are spending provisions that are slipped into bills by individual Members of Congress, often at the last hour and without discussion or debate. It's not surprising that this leads to unnecessary Federal spending. And the problem is growing. Over the last decade, the number of earmarks has more than tripled.

In January, I proposed reforms that would make the earmark process more transparent, end the practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language that is never included in legislation, and cut the number and cost of earmarks by at least half. My administration has also developed the Government's first public database of earmarks, and we've posted them on a web

site: [earmarks.omb.gov](http://earmarks.omb.gov). On this web site, we will also be releasing information on new earmarks, because this administration wants you to see where your tax dollars are being spent.

After I announced my earmark reforms in January, the House passed a rule that called for full disclosure of earmarks. But in the past few weeks, Democratic House leaders announced that they were abandoning this commitment. Instead of full disclosure, they decided they would not make public any earmarks until after Members had already voted on the spending bills. This change would have allowed a small group of lawmakers and their unelected staff to meet behind closed doors to decide how and where to spend your tax dollars. I'm pleased to report that earlier this week, a group of House Republicans stopped this plan and extracted a commitment from House Democrats to list all earmarks in advance and give lawmakers a chance to strike them. The American

people need to hold House Democrats accountable for keeping that commitment.

In the weeks ahead, my administration will continue pushing for earmark reform and holding the line on Federal spending. The American people do not want to return to the days of tax-and-spend policies. They expect accountability and fiscal discipline in Washington, DC. And I will use my veto to stop tax increases and runaway spending that threaten the strength of our economy and the prosperity of our people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:15 a.m. on June 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 15, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Honoring NCAA Championship Teams

June 18, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the South Lawn. This is an historic day. After all, this is the largest gathering that we've had for champions day, and we're glad to welcome the champs here to the South Lawn. I appreciate being with good athletes, good students, and good leaders, and that's what it takes to become a champion.

I appreciate the fact that you've endured tough practices, that you've set big goals, and you worked hard to achieve them. And so we congratulate your coaches, we congratulate your families, but most importantly, we congratulate you. We honor America's champs.

The Secretary of the Treasury is with us, Secretary Paulson. Thank you for com-

ing, sir. I appreciate the Members of the United States Congress that have joined us—and the United States Senate. Now, you don't need to do the gator thing. [Laughter]

The teams here today span 21 different campuses in 14 different States from California all the way over to Florida. You represent eight different athletic conferences: the Big Ten to the Pac-10 to the West Coast Conference and to the Ivy League. There's Tigers and Badgers, Huskers and Anteaters. [Laughter] Go Anteaters. [Laughter] Fight Anteaters.

You've distinguished yourselves on fields and fairways, tracks and tennis courts, rivers and rinks, pommel horses and pools, bowling alleys, mountains, and basketball arenas.

You have one thing in common: You have achieved the great title, “champion,” and nobody can take that away from you.

We have a number of first-time champs here today. The Auburn women’s outdoor track and field team is here. I think that would go “War Eagle.”

*Audience members.* War Eagle!

*The President.* There you go. Don’t get carried away here; it’s a little—[laughter]—it’s a little hot. [Laughter]

Speaking about the Anteaters, UC Irvine men volleyball team is with us. Congratulations. The Gauchos, yes, UC Santa Barbara men’s soccer team; Georgia Tech women’s tennis team is the first-time champ; Pepperdine men’s tennis team is with us. Vanderbilt women’s bowling team is with us today. There you go—Wisconsin men’s indoor track and field.

Some of the teams here have been waiting a long time to reclaim a championship. Dartmouth men’s and women’s skiing team—they won their first title 30 years ago, and now they’re here at the White House. Congratulations.

Michigan State men’s ice hockey team, they won their first hockey crown more than 20 years ago, and they’re back. Congratulations to you.

We’ve got some repeat champs here. It’s hard enough to win; it’s really hard to repeat. Auburn women’s swimming team, back to back—ready? Okay. War Eagle—

*Audience members.* War Eagle!

*The President.* Cal women’s crew.

A feat that’s really hard to do is win back-to-back NCAA basketball titles. And we’re proud to welcome the Florida men’s basketball team here.

Not to provoke a rivalry, however, but the Florida State men’s outdoor track and field team is with us. Maryland women’s field hockey team, repeat champs. Wisconsin women’s ice hockey team—the repeat champs.

We’ve got teams here that have won three championships in a row—that would be called a three-peat—Georgia women’s

gymnastics, Northwestern women’s lacrosse. I might as well go on the record, all right; I was disappointed in the footwear. [Laughter] It’s just too conventional, especially on a hot day. And the Stanford women’s tennis team. A three-peat champ is UCLA women’s water polo. And by the way, their title was UCLA’s 100th overall national championship. Congratulations to UCLA. Five-peat, Auburn’s men’s swimming team.

*Audience members.* War Eagle!

*The President.* Some of the teams are adding new chapters to their schools’ record books. Cal men’s water polo, they won their 12th water polo championship, which is an NCAA record. The Colorado men’s cross country team, the Buffaloes won their second title in 3 years. And congratulations; welcome back. The North Carolina women’s soccer team, 18th championship in the 25 year history of the tournament. Georgia men’s tennis, they went undefeated; they claimed their fifth NCAA tennis title. Nebraska women’s volleyball, the Huskers were ranked number one the entire season and won their third NCAA championship. Penn State men’s and women’s fencing—they won their 10th national championship, more than any other fencing team in the Nation. Penn State men’s gymnastics won their 12th national championship. Stanford men’s golf, wire-to-wire victory to earn their eighth NCAA golf title.

So I’m sitting back there with the captains, I said, “Do you want the 1-hour speech or the 5-minute speech?” They said, “You been outside lately?” I said, “Yes, barely.” I said, “How about the 2-minute speech?” [Laughter] So I want to conclude this ceremony by thanking all the people that are here. I appreciate the fact that you’re champions on the field and champions off the field.

You know, I asked some of the seniors what they’re going to do, and I remember one girl told me she’s going to be Teach for America. That means being a champ off the field. It means giving back something to society. I appreciate the fact that

the Pepperdine men's tennis team held a free clinic for children in Washington, DC, just yesterday.

In other words, you can win on the athletic field, and you can win in the classroom, but you can also contribute to our country by helping somebody in need, by using your championship status to help heal a broken heart or to help somebody live a better life.

And so to the champs: I'm glad you're here. For those of you who follow Presidential politics, you know I'll be around 1 more year. I'm looking forward to having you come back. In the meantime, I ask for God's blessings on you, your family, and our country. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters June 19, 2007

*President Bush.* Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for coming. It's a—I've been looking forward to this visit. Last time we were together, we had a long and serious discussion about what we can do together to keep the peace.

This visit comes obviously during a period of great concern for the world about what's taking place in Gaza, and so it's a timely visit. I'm looking forward to our discussions about how we can promote a common vision, a vision that speaks to the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and a vision that speaks to the security of Israel.

I'm looking forward to sharing with the Prime Minister the results of a phone call I had yesterday with President Abbas. He is the President of all the Palestinians. He has spoken out for moderation. He is a voice that is a reasonable voice amongst the extremists in your neighborhood.

You also come at an important moment, because there is yet again another moment for the world to see the great challenges we face in the 21st century. We face extremists and radicals who use violence and murder as a tool to achieve objectives. And it's a chance, Mr. Prime Minister, for us to work on our bilateral relations, but also work on a common strategy to fight off

those extremists and to promote a alternative ideology based upon human liberty and the human condition and freedom.

And it's a great challenge. It's exciting to be in office during this period. It can be difficult for those of us who have been given the great honor of serving our countries, but it's an exciting moment. And I'm looking forward to working with a strong leader, a man committed to the security and prosperity of his country and, at the same time, committed to try to work the conditions necessary for peace.

And so I'm glad to welcome a friend back at the Oval Office, and proud you're back.

*Prime Minister Olmert.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am honored and delighted, after half a year almost, to be again a guest of yours, Mr. President, in the White House, and to discuss with you some of the kind of issues.

As you have said already, this is a very special time. Things happen lately very dramatically. I'm sure that many people in the world were astounded by the brutality and the cruelty and the viciousness of the Hamas murderers that killed so many Palestinians in such a way. We who live in the Middle East—[inaudible]—some of us

surprised, but not less outraged by these events.

And I gladly share with you, Mr. President, the vision that, even under such circumstances, what we ought to do is to try and find opportunities for the future that align the situation. And I'm absolutely determined that there is an opportunity. And like you, I want to strengthen the moderates and cooperate with President Abu Mazen, who is President of all Palestinians, it is the only person who was widely elected in a democratic manner by all of the Palestinian people. And I am going to make every possible effort to cooperate with him and to move forward to see how to—can be—work jointly in order to provide the Palestinians with a real, genuine chance for a state of their own, fulfilling your vision, Mr. President, which I share, of a two-state solution and, at the same time, making sure that there is security for the people of Israel. And the people of Israel deserve security both in the south and in the north and in the east side of our country.

I'm sure that we will find some time, also, to discuss other measures, such as the danger of Iran and the threats that come from the President of Iran, who talks time and again about the liquidation of the State of Israel, something that is totally intolerable and unacceptable. And we have to continue the measures taken in order to stop the Iranian efforts to establish non-conventional weapons.

And again, I thank you for your friendship and for the power that you manifest and your dedication to the principles that you believe in. And I am proud to follow the same route to fight for the principles and to carry on. Thank you.

*President Bush.* We'll answer a couple of questions, starting with Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

#### *Israeli-Palestinian Relations/Situation in the Middle East*

*Q.* Thank you, sir. Will you try to persuade, during the session with the Prime

Minister, to reenter peace talks with Mr. Abbas?

And to the Prime Minister: What do you think of the offer? And do you think it's possible to have peace with just half the Palestinian people?

*Prime Minister Olmert.* I didn't hear the first part of the question.

*President Bush.* Will I try to persuade you to enter talks.

*Prime Minister Olmert.* Yes.

*President Bush.* First of all, we share a common vision of two states living side by side in peace. And the reason why, at least, I think that's important—one, I think it's important for the moderate people, the ordinary Palestinians to have something to be for. I also think it's in Israel's interest to have a state. It's a demographic pressure that ultimately is going to make it very difficult for Israel to maintain its Jewishness as a state.

So there's a practical reason as well as a moral reason for there to be discussions about a way forward to achieve a two-state solution. And the Prime Minister has said that he wants—you can ask him if he's going to talk to Abbas. I'm not going to put words in his mouth.

*Q.* I did.

*President Bush.* But what I'm trying to say, Jennifer, is that we share a common way forward. And our hope is, is that others in the region understand that this way forward leads to peace. People other than President Abbas and the Palestinians, we would hope that the Arab world supports such a concept. Inherent in that is Israel's right to exist. There needs to be solid recognition of this state's right to live in peace.

At the same time, we want to have a vision for the Palestinians to see that there's a better tomorrow for them. These folks have been denied for a long period of time the right to a normal life, starting with leadership that failed them. And our hope is that President Abbas and that Prime Minister Fayyad, who is a good fellow, will be strengthened to the point where they



can lead the Palestinians in a different direction, with a different hope.

The Prime Minister has spoken to me and I have spoken to him about our desire to help suffering Palestinians. Nobody likes suffering on their border; nobody likes to see suffering in the world. And so we'll talk about that. We'll also talk about the broader war against extremists and radicals.

It's interesting that extremists attack democracies around the Middle East, whether it be the Iraq democracy, the Lebanese democracy, or a potential Palestinian democracy. And what that should say clearly to people all around the world is that we are involved with an ideological conflict that is a monumental conflict. And those of us that believe in liberty and human rights and human decency need to be bound together in common cause to fight off these extremists and to defeat them.

You can only defeat them so much militarily. We have to also defeat them with a better idea. It's a better idea that's being practiced by our friend Israel. It's called democracy. And that's the fundamental challenge facing this century: Will we have the courage and the resolve necessary to help democracy defeat this ideology? And I will tell the Prime Minister, once again, I'm deeply committed to this cause, whether it be in Iraq or Lebanon or the Palestinian Territory or anywhere else in the Middle East and around the world.

*President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority*

Q. Will you enter into talks with Mr. Abbas?

*Prime Minister Olmert.* Well, naturally, I think at this particular point, I'm sure the President will not have hard work to convince me, because I proposed to meet with President Abbas—in fact, I was—initiated the idea that we will meet on a regular basis, biweekly, to discuss the matters. And I proposed that I even come to Jericho, something that no Prime Minister before me did.

The President was having serious difficulties, some of which we have witnessed lately. And that's perhaps the reason why he had to cancel some of the meetings. But there's no question that I want to talk to the President of the Palestinian community, Mr. Abbas. I will be talking to him. The teams of both sides meet regularly every week and discuss on the matters.

And the idea that I have is to talk with him of the current issues that can help upgrade the quality of life of the people and provide them better security in the West Bank and to share with him the efforts to calm the terror, this is something that he is absolutely committed to doing. We have to do it, and this is not something that the Palestinians can escape. They will help fight terror in a most effective way—something that they haven't done, unfortunately, up until now. But this is something that I am sure he understands is a prerequisite for any major development in the future.

But of course, we also have to talk about a groundwork that needs to be done in order to allow us rapidly to talk about the creation of a Palestinian state. This is the main vision of my friend, President Bush. This is the vision that we share. This is the ultimate goal, to create the Palestinian state. We have to prepare the groundwork that will allow—soon, I hope—to be able to start serious negotiations about the creation of a Palestinian state.

In order to achieve peace, we have to fight terror; we have to increase security; we have to upgrade the quality of life for the Palestinians. And, of course, the Palestinians have to establish a much more credible and serious administration that will be able to take care of their daily needs in an appropriate manner.

*Israel-Syria Relations*

Q. Thank you.

[At this point, a reporter asked a question in Hebrew, and no translation was provided.]

Q. Mr. President, the Prime Minister of—

*President Bush.* What did you just ask him?

Q. I asked him what Israel—

*President Bush.* —that's unfair. [Laughter]

Q. I asked him what Israel will do with the refugees coming from Gaza.

*The President.* Yes. Okay.

Q. Will you deliver to the murderers' guns, or will they be taken to a refuge in the West Bank?

And I would like to ask you: The Prime Minister of Israel calls for negotiation with no precondition with Syria; so does President Asad of Syria, and he asks for U.S. mediation. Will you do it?

*President Bush.* They can handle their own negotiations with Syria. If the Prime Minister wants to negotiate with Syria, he doesn't need me to mediate.

#### *Situation in the Middle East*

Q. Do you think it's a good idea?

*President Bush.* It's up to the Prime Minister. I haven't had a chance to talk to him about that. I don't know if you're putting words in his mouth or not. But I'm looking forward to having a discussion about Iran and Syria and the neighborhood. But this man is plenty capable of conducting his own negotiations without mediation.

*Prime Minister Olmert.* Well, first of all, answer your question, right? We have been very, very attentive to the needs of the—humanitarian needs of Gaza, and we will continue to provide everything that is necessary in order to meet these humanitarian needs. Israel will not be indifferent to the human suffering in Gaza. Israel will be different from the Palestinians themselves because the reality is that all this suffering is caused by Palestinians against their own people. What the Hamas was doing in Gaza

is absolutely atrocious and intolerable. And I'm sure that many who had some hopes that maybe Hamas can be more reasonable and more restrained—I think—lost these hopes because of what they have been doing to their own people: killing innocent civilians, pulling out from hospital beds Fatah people that were wounded and dropped them off the fifth floor to kill them in the street, and terrible other things.

We will not be indifferent. We already are taking care of many of the Palestinians in Gaza during the last few days, and we will continue to deal with it as it comes. Of course, they are not interested in staying in Israel. They want to be amongst Palestinians, and they will be treated in this manner.

#### *Israel-Syria Relations*

Q. So you will let them go?

*Prime Minister Olmert.* So, as I said, we will check every single case, and we'll see how we can help them. And I'm sure that we will help them.

As for Syria, I'm afraid that you may have not have understood correctly what the Syrian leader said. The Syrian leader said that he is against any preconditions from the Israeli side, but he's certainly for preconditions from the Syrian side. One of the preconditions is that he wants President Bush to work more than he does already in regional issues and to be the mediator. And the President said correctly, this is not the—I think—the job for the President of the United States. He's got many other things to do. And I don't think that if someone wants to speak directly that he needs the involvement of America in order to allow these negotiations to take place.

And I am not certain that the understanding of the President of Syria can lay the foundations for immediate discussions between Syria and Israel.

*President Bush.* Matt [Matt Spetalnick, Reuters].

*Situation in the Middle East/Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, with Hamas's takeover of Gaza, aren't you effectively accepting a split between the two main Palestinian Territories? And what—how big of a blow is this to your vision of achieving agreement before the end of your term for a Palestinian state and Israel living side by side in peace?

*President Bush.* First of all, we recognize the President of all the Palestinian people, and that's President Abu Mazen. He was elected; he's the President. Secondly, we recognize that it was Hamas that attacked the unity Government. They made a choice of violence. It was their decision that has caused there to be this current situation in the Middle East, about which we'll be spending some time discussing.

Matt, the—what you're seeing now in this part of the 21st century is going to be played out over time. This is an ideological struggle. You—we're looking at the difference between a group of people that want to represent the Palestinians who believe in peace, that want a better way for their people, that believe in democracy; they need help to build the institutions necessary for democracy to flourish, and they need help to build security forces so that they can end up enforcing what most of the people want, which is to live in peace. And that's versus a group of radicals and extremists who are willing to use violence, unspeakable violence sometimes, to achieve a political objective.

And the challenge is for those of us who believe there's a—democracy can help yield the peace, is to continue to move forward. And that's what we'll be discussing about today: how to do so. The Prime Minister said he's willing to have discussions with the forces of moderation in the Palestinian Territory, laying the groundwork for serious discussions. I thought that's—that is a statement that shows that the Prime Minister is willing to move with a—to promote an alternative vision.

You know, the world is going to be confronted with these choices: Are you willing to accept the fact that extremism is around and is willing to promote violence, or should we resist that? Should we not combine forces and efforts to promote alternatives to this vision? That's precisely what we're doing in Iraq. We strongly believe it's in the world's interest to support this young democracy. The—Al Qaida, the people that killed nearly 3,000 of our people here in the United States, are conducting major car bombs and acts of unspeakable violence in Iraq, trying to drive us out because they want to impose their vision on the Iraqi people.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, I'm committed to helping the Iraqis succeed with a democracy. It's in the interest of the Middle East that this democracy succeed, as an alternative, because if we were to fail, then all of a sudden, these extremists would have safe haven. Extremists in the Middle East would be emboldened by the failure of those of us who live a nice, comfortable existence not to help those who are struggling for freedom.

And so it's the great challenge of our time, Matt. And there will be forward movement, and there will be setbacks. The fundamental question facing those of us who have offices is, do we have the determination and the will and the vision to present an alternative to these people? And I believe we do, and I believe that's the calling of our time.

And so that's why I'm excited to be talking about it with a man who shares the vision that there is a better way than to accommodate and accept extremism and radicalism.

*Iran*

Q. Mr. President—question. Regarding the ongoing attempts by Iran to acquire nuclear capability of atom bomb: Would you—are you willing to say at this time that a military action against Iran is no longer an option in light of the situation?

*President Bush.* I will tell you this, that my position hasn't changed, and that is, all options are on the table. I would hope that we could solve this diplomatically. It's—and that's why the United States—first of all, we take the threat very seriously. And I fully understand the concerns of any Israeli when they hear the voice of the man in Iran saying, on the one hand, we want to acquire the technologies and know-how to build a—enrich uranium, which could then be converted into a nuclear weapon, and, on the other hand, we want to destroy Israel. Look, if I were an Israeli citizen, I would view that as a serious threat to my security. And as a strong ally of Israel, I view that as a serious threat to the security—I—not only the security of Israel but the security of the Middle East.

That's why we are constantly working to remind our European friends, as well as Russia and other members of the U.N., we have an obligation to see if we can't work together to solve this issue diplomatically. That means to provide consequences to the Iranian Government if they continue to pursue a nuclear weapon, such as financial sanctions or economic sanctions. We want there to be a choice. We want people to see there's—you know, isolation—there's got a consequence to it, that there's a price that's paid for this kind of intransigence and these threatening tones.

And it's difficult work to keep the nations bound together to help deal with this issue

diplomatically, but we have done a pretty good job so far. Now, whether or not they abandon their nuclear weapons program, we'll see. But at least we've got unanimity so far, speaking—at the U.N. Security Council—speaking pretty clearly that there will be consequences. And there are being—consequences; there's been some economic consequences beginning to affect the economy.

Look, the Iranian people don't need to live under this kind of conditions. These are proud people with a great tradition. Their Government can do better for them. And threatening the world has caused there to be isolation. And these good folks could have leadership that enables them to have a better economy and a better way of life, an economy and a way of life that really does—enriches their families, that gives them a better chance to succeed. But, no, this group of people have made a different alternative, and now our job is to make sure that we continue to keep the pressure on.

Listen, thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. Prime Minister Olmert referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

## Statement on Assistance to Israel *June 19, 2007*

I am strongly committed to Israel's security and viability as a Jewish state and to the maintenance of its qualitative military edge. During our meeting today, I told Prime Minister Olmert that I am committed to reaching a new 10-year agreement that will give Israel the increased as-

sistance it requires to meet the new threats and challenges it faces. The work on this new agreement was launched during the Prime Minister's previous visit. I will send Under Secretary of State Nick Burns and an interagency team to Israel in July to

lead discussions aimed at concluding an agreement soon.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

## Remarks on the Nomination of Congressman James A. Nussle To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget

June 19, 2007

*The President.* Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House. I am here to say goodbye to a good friend and introduce the newest nominee to my Cabinet. Recently Rob Portman came and told me that after 14 years of public service in Washington, he's ready to head home to be with Jane and the family. I've known him for many years. There's no finer man in public service than Rob Portman. He's been a trusted adviser, and Laura and I am going to miss him.

Fortunately, we found a good man to succeed him. Today I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Jim Nussle to serve as Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

I'm proud to welcome Jim's wife Karen, his mom and dad, Lori and Mark, and his mother-in-law Eva Mae. Any man who invites his mother-in-law to a—[laughter]—has got to have good judgment. [Laughter] We're going to ask a lot of Jim, and I thank you all for supporting him in this.

The job of OMB Director is one of the most important in our Federal Government. The Director has a central responsibility for implementing the full range of my administration's agenda, from defense programs that will keep the American people safe to energy initiatives that will break our dependence on foreign oil to tax policies that keep our economy growing and creating jobs.

In all these areas, the OMB Director works to ensure that the American people get good value for every tax dollar they send to Washington. Jim Nussle is the right man to take on these challenges. For 16

years, Jim represented the people of northeast Iowa in the United States Congress. As a Member of Congress, Jim was a strong advocate for fiscal discipline and a champion of tax cuts that allowed the American people to keep more of what they earn. In 2001, Jim became chairman of the House Budget Committee. As a leader in Congress, Jim showed he can work with Members of both sides of the aisle to get positive things done for America. Jim's name and knowledge command respect on Capitol Hill. And as OMB Director, he will use his expertise about the budget process to ensure that the taxpayers' money is spent with respect and with restraint.

In his new post, Jim will continue the important work carried out by Rob Portman. Over the past 2 years, Rob has served my administration in two important jobs. As the United States Trade Representative, Rob negotiated several new trade agreements and reenergized the Doha talks at the World Trade Organization.

And as OMB Director, he helped me achieve our goal of cutting the Federal deficit in half and doing it 3 years ahead of schedule. He's helped me put forward a plan to balance the budget by 2012 by restraining Federal spending and keeping our taxes low. He's put Democratic leaders in Congress on notice that I will veto bills with excessive levels of spending. He has led my administration's efforts to curb the use of congressional earmarks and implement reforms that will make the earmark process more transparent.



I thank Rob for his service and good advice and, most of all, his friendship. I want to tell his wife Jane, that after 14 years of commuting to Washington, he's going to be back home in Ohio, especially on the weekends.

Rob is a tough act to follow, but that's why I picked Jim Nussle. He's a man of integrity, a man of vision, a man well qualified to hold this job. I ask the Senate to act quickly on his nomination. When confirmed, he'll make an outstanding OMB Director.

Congratulations to you.

[At this point, Director-designate Nussle made brief remarks]

*The President.* Good job. Well done.

[Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman made brief remarks]

*The President.* Good job. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director-designate Nussle and Director Portman.

## Statement on the Deaths of Firefighters in Charleston, South Carolina June 19, 2007

Laura and I mourn the devastating loss of some of America's bravest. Our prayers are with the families and friends of nine firefighters from Charleston, South Carolina, who selflessly gave their own lives to protect their community. These firefighters

were true heroes who demonstrated great skill and courage. Their unwavering commitment to their neighbors and to the city of Charleston is an inspiration to all Americans.

## Remarks at the Congressional Picnic June 19, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. Laura and I welcome you to the South Lawn. This is an opportunity to thank the Members of Congress and their families for serving the United States.

First, I want to recognize the Speaker. Madam Speaker, thank you for joining us. It means a lot that you've come. I appreciate the leadership of the House and the Senate who've joined us. For all the wives and husbands, thank you for standing by your spouse. It's not easy to be in public office. It's a lot easier, though, when you have somebody who loves you to help you do your job. And so Laura and I want to thank you all, in particular. We're proud

to be serving with you. Occasionally, we might have our differences, but one thing we all agree on is, we represent the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

I want to thank our chef, Paul Prudhomme, from New Orleans, Louisiana—one of the great chefs in America. Thanks for coming, Paul. I thank Tony Snow and his bunch of, well, mediocre musicians—[laughter]—no, great musicians. Beats Workin', thanks for coming. Kermit, come up here. Kermit, we're proud to have you.

*Kermit Ruffins.* Well, thanks for having us.

*The President.* Kermit Ruffins and the Barbecue Swingers, right out of New Orleans, Louisiana. Yes, sir.

*Mr. Ruffins.* Thank you. Thanks for having us. We're glad to be here. Thank you, sir.

*The President.* Proud you're here. Thanks for coming.

You all enjoy yourself. Make sure you pick up all the trash after it's over. [*Laughter*]

God bless you, and may God bless America. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons-Usable Fissile Material in the Russian Federation June 19, 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the accumulation of a large volume of weapons-usable fissile material in the territory of the Russian Federation is to continue beyond June 21, 2007.

It remains a major national security goal of the United States to ensure that fissile material removed from Russian nuclear weapons pursuant to various arms control and disarmament agreements is dedicated to peaceful uses, subject to transparency measures, and protected from diversion to

activities of proliferation concern. The accumulation of a large volume of weapons-usable fissile material in the territory of the Russian Federation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to the accumulation of a large volume of weapons-usable fissile material in the territory of the Russian Federation and maintain in force these emergency authorities to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
June 19, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20. The related notice of June 19 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks on Returning Without Approval to the Senate the “Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007”

*June 20, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome. I'm glad you're here. America is a nation that leads the world in science and technology. Our innovative spirit is making possible incredible advances in medicine that could save lives and cure diseases. America is also a nation founded on the principle that all human life is sacred, and our conscience calls us to pursue the possibilities of science in a manner that respects human dignity and upholds our moral values.

I appreciate the fact that we're joined by a lot of folks who share the deep desire to advance science and, at the same time, uphold our moral values. I appreciate the fact that Mike Leavitt is here, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress and Senate who have joined us. I thank you for taking your time to be here on this important announcement today.

I'm joined on stage by two good docs, really smart, capable people: Dr. Bill Hurlbut, professor of Stanford University Medical Center; Dr. Don Landry, professor at Columbia University Department of Medicine—actually, he's the chairman of the department. The reason they're here is, these are brilliant biologists who are seeking new ways to develop stem cell lines without violating human life. And these are smart folks, and I cannot thank them enough for coming to the Oval Office to share with me their wisdom and their vision.

I'm also up here with Carol Franz. She has whipped cancer twice by using adult stem cells; in other words, adult stem cells have saved her life. She's a determined woman who believes strongly that there are different alternatives available to use stem cells other than that—those which are cre-

ated as the result of destruction of human life.

And finally, I'm up here with the McNamara family; Kaitlyne is with us. I'm going to talk about her in a second.

I do want to thank the other stem cell patients and researchers and advocates who are here with us today. If you're not in any of those categories, you're welcome too. *[Laughter]*

In 2001, I announced a policy to advance stem cell research in a way that is ambitious, ethical, and effective. I became the first President to make Federal funds available for embryonic stem cell research, and my policy did this in ways that would not encourage the destruction of embryos. Since then, my administration has made more than \$130 million available for research on stem cell lines derived from embryos that had already been destroyed. We've provided more than \$3 billion for research on all forms of stem cells, including those from adult and other nonembryonic sources. This careful approach is producing results. It has contributed to proven therapeutic treatments in thousands of patients with many different diseases. It's opening the prospect of new discoveries that could transform lives.

Congress has sent me a bill that would overturn this policy. If this legislation became law, it would compel American taxpayers—for the first time in our history—to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos. I made it clear to Congress and to the American people that I will not allow our Nation to cross this moral line. Last year, Congress passed a similar bill. I kept my promise by vetoing it. And today I'm keeping my word again: I am vetoing the bill that Congress has sent.

Destroying human life in the hopes of saving human life is not ethical, and it is

not the only option before us. We're already seeing remarkable advances in the science and therapeutic uses of stem cells drawn from adults and children and the blood from umbilical cords, with no harm to the donor. Researchers value embryonic stem cells because they are pluripotent, which means that they have the potential to develop into nearly all the cell types and tissues in the body. Researchers are now developing promising new techniques that offer the potential to produce pluripotent stem cells without having to destroy human life.

For example, several new studies released earlier this month showed the potential of reprogramming adult cells, such as skin cells, to make them function like embryonic stem cells. It's exciting new research taking place in the United States of America. Scientists from all over the country hailed this as an important breakthrough. And I'm pleased to report to you that my administration and the NIH helped fund this exciting work. The taxpayers' dollars are going to new kinds of therapies, new kinds of science, new kinds of work that do not cross a moral and ethical line.

A few months earlier, scientists discovered that cells extracted from amniotic fluid and placentas could also provide stem cells that seem to do what embryonic cells can. Still other researchers are investigating how to combine reprogramming and other innovative techniques to produce stem cells with the abilities of embryonic stem cells, without creating or destroying embryos. It's a lot of interesting work going on that's ethical and moral. Scientists are exploring ways to collect stem cells in the same manner that doctors now rescue organs from patients who have died.

With us today are patients who are benefiting from ethical stem cell research, including Kaitlyne McNamara. Kaitlyne was born with spina bifida, a disease that damaged her bladder. None of the treatments her doctor tried had worked; she was in danger of kidney failure. Then her doctors

took a piece of her bladder, isolated the healthy stem cells, and used them to grow a new bladder in a laboratory, which they then transplanted into her. And here she stands, healthy. Scientific advances like this one are important and should give us hope that there's a better way forward than scientific advances that require the destruction of a human life.

The researchers pursuing these kinds of ethically responsible advances deserve our support, and there is legislation in Congress to give them that support. Recently, the United States Senate passed a bill sponsored by Norm Coleman and others that would authorize additional Federal funding for alternative stem cell research. The bill was approved with the backing of 70 United States Senators. The House leaders need to pass similar legislation that would authorize additional funds for ethical stem cell research. That would be an important advancement. It would be an important statement, because we can't lose the opportunity to conduct research that would give hope to those suffering from terrible diseases and help this country move beyond the controversies over embryo destruction.

We have a good chance to put aside all the politics and focus on a good piece of legislation that advances science and doesn't cross an ethical line. Norm, I want to thank you and Johnny Isakson for sponsoring that piece of legislation.

In the meantime, my administration is taking immediate action to increase our support for researchers in their vital work. Earlier today, I issued an Executive order to strengthen our Nation's commitment to research on pluripotent stem cells. This order takes a number of important steps. The order directs the Department of Health and Human Services and the NIH to ensure that any human pluripotent stem cell lines produced in ways that do not create, destroy, or harm human embryos will be eligible for Federal funding.

The order expands the NIH Embryonic Stem Cell registry to include all types of

ethically produced human pluripotent stem cells. The order renames the registry—calls it this, the Pluripotent Stem Cell Registry—so it reflects what stem cells can do, instead of where they come from. The order invites scientists to work with the NIH so we can add new, ethically derived stem cell lines to the list of those eligible for Federal funding. I direct Secretary Leavitt to conduct an assessment of what resources will be necessary to support this important new research.

This science, that does not cross ethical lines, requires money. I believe it is a good use of taxpayers' money to spend money on this kind of science and research. And Michael is going to expedite it, that's what that means; it's a fancy paragraph for saying he's going to get it done. [*Laughter*]

With these steps, we'll encourage scientists to expand the frontiers of stem cell research. We want to encourage science. We want to say, we stand on your side in an ethically responsible way. Scientists have recently shown they have the ingenuity and skill to pursue the potential bene-

fits of pluripotent stem cell research. Here's two of them right here. That's why they're standing here; they have showed what's possible. I have confidence in their abilities to continue to develop new techniques. With our expanded support of non-destructive research methods, we'll make it more likely that these exciting advances continue to unfold.

Technical innovation in this difficult area is opening up new possibilities for progress without conflict or ethical controversy. So I invite policymakers and scientists to come together to speed our Nation toward the destination we all seek, where medical problems can be solved without compromising either the high aims of science or the sanctity of human life.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:39 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to S. 5, S. 30, and Executive Order 13435.

## Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007" *June 20, 2007*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 5, the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007."

Once again, the Congress has sent me legislation that would compel American taxpayers, for the first time in our history, to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos.

In 2001, I announced a policy to advance stem cell research in a way that is ambitious, ethical, and effective. I became the first President to make Federal funds available for embryonic stem cell research, and my policy did this in ways that would not

encourage the destruction of embryos. Since then, my Administration has made more than \$130 million available for research on stem cell lines derived from embryos that had already been destroyed. We have also provided more than \$3 billion for research on all forms of stem cells, including those from adult and other non-embryonic sources.

This careful approach is producing results. It has contributed to proven therapeutic treatments in thousands of patients with many different diseases. And it is opening the prospect of new discoveries that could transform lives. Researchers are



now developing promising new techniques that offer the potential to produce pluripotent stem cells, without having to destroy human life—for example, by re-programming adult cells to make them function like stem cells.

Technical innovation in this difficult area is opening up new possibilities for progress without conflict or ethical controversy. Researchers pursuing these kinds of ethically responsible advances deserve support, and there is legislation in the Congress to give them that support. Bills supporting alternative research methods achieved majority support last year in both the House and the Senate. Earlier this spring another bill supporting alternative research won overwhelming majority support in the Senate, and I call on House leaders to pass similar legislation that would authorize additional funds for ethical stem cell research. We

cannot lose the opportunity to conduct research that would give hope to those suffering from terrible diseases and help move our Nation beyond the controversies over embryo destruction. I invite policymakers and scientists to come together to solve medical problems without compromising either the high aims of science or the sanctity of human life.

S. 5, like the bill I vetoed last year, would overturn today's carefully balanced policy on stem cell research. Compelling American taxpayers to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos would be a grave mistake. I will not allow our Nation to cross this moral line. For that reason, I must veto this bill.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
June 20, 2007.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With the House Republican Conference and an Exchange With Reporters

June 20, 2007

*The President.* I want to thank Congressmen Boehner, Blunt, and the other leaders of the House of Representatives for coming today. We just had a discussion about how we will work together to make sure that when we spend the taxpayers' money, we do so in a way that is fiscally sound and keeps our economy growing. I have submitted a budget to the Congress that sets priorities; no greater priority, by the way, than defending this homeland against attack. It's a budget that keeps taxes low so the economy continues to grow. And it's a budget that will balance—be in balance in 5 years.

Now, there's an alternative budget that has been presented in the Congress by the Democrats, which will increase spending by a significant amount, in our view, and will require tax raises in order to meet that

spending. We don't think that's right for the country. We don't think that's a good way to keep the economy strong. And we think we ought to be trusting taxpayers with their own money, so they can make choices with their money.

And so, to this end, the Members of Congress delivered me a letter—147 signatures on it—that said they will support me on any veto of a bill that is—exceeds the spending limits that we collectively think is necessary for the good of the country.

And I want to thank the Members for coming. I assured them that I'm going to work with them to represent the taxpayers and the working people of the United States, represent the small-business owners that are working hard to realize their dreams and increase their payrolls. And we will be effective by working together.

And I thank these leaders for coming down and spending time with us to talk about this important strategy. Of course, we talk all the time because we've got a common goal, which is to keep the economy strong and the Nation safe. And I appreciate you working with us to achieve that objective.

Thank you. Thank you.

*Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City*

*Q.* What do you think about Bloomberg?

*The President.* That's a fine news organization, but who do you work—no. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:24 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Joint Statement on the Conference on the Caribbean *June 20, 2007*

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the United States of America and of the Caribbean Community Nations of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, meeting in Washington D.C. on June 20, 2007, reaffirm our unequivocal commitment to a secure and prosperous region and future for the benefit of all of our citizens.

2. Recalling our shared history of democracy, respect for human rights, social justice, and cultural and ethnic diversity, we highlight the value of our enduring friendship and recommit ourselves to enhancing our partnership to reinforce the development aspirations that guide our mutual priorities.

3. We pledge to continue promoting the consolidation of democratic norms, values, and institutions throughout the hemisphere and to enhance accountability and respect for individual rights.

4. We agree to take steps to expand economic opportunities for our people, to address the threats of terrorism and crime, and to provide the benefits of democracy to all members of our societies, recognizing that democracy will best flourish if our soci-

eties are stable and our economies are prosperous.

5. We recognize the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy as a critical element of the growth and development strategy of the Caribbean Community.

6. We are determined to strengthen our existing trade arrangements. We acknowledge President Bush's announcement to work with Congress to extend and update the Caribbean Basin Trade Promotion Act and the 1991 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. We further commit to the harmonization of customs procedures consistent with global standards and the advancement of technical trade cooperation.

7. We reiterate our support for Caribbean efforts to expand the services sector, and encourage a focus on the international financial services sector to facilitate a competitive means of economic diversification while remaining committed to the maintenance of appropriate regulatory and supervisory practices, consistent with the highest international standards.

8. Cognizant of the spread of HIV and AIDS and the impact on the economic and social development of our people, we pledge to deepen our cooperation in health

and welcome the initiative to continue PEPFAR in the Caribbean.

9. Cognizant that more than 95 percent of CARICOM's energy needs are derived from fossil fuels, we pledge to increase cooperation in this area to achieve sustainable, secure, and affordable access to energy for all our citizens.

10. We agree to increase cooperation efforts in the field of education and workplace training. We commit to strengthen teacher training by expanding the Caribbean Centers for Excellence. We also commit to strengthen human capacity in the Caribbean to meet the demands of a 21st century employment environment through partnering with academic institutions and non-governmental groups as well as through skills training for youth via the Entra-21 program.

11. We declare our intention to negotiate an agreement on cooperation in Science and Technology including Information Communication Technologies.

12. We recommit to our ongoing efforts of cooperation in the area of disaster preparedness, mitigation, and recovery.

13. We acknowledge the multidimensional nature of the security threats and challenges faced by our countries and pledge to continue to work together in the fight against terrorism, trafficking in persons, drugs and small arms, and transnational crime.

14. We also acknowledge the successful security partnership developed to secure the CARICOM Region during its hosting

of the Cricket World Cup 2007. To this end, we agree to continue strengthening the Region's security infrastructure.

15. We recognize the need to work more closely on immigration security issues in a manner respectful of national laws and government services capacity and sensitive to the effects of human displacement. We will jointly work toward the expansion of the pilot reintegration program for deportees in Haiti to include other CARICOM member states. We will develop new ways to facilitate, coordinate, and communicate between our immigration services.

16. We are heartened by the substantial progress in Haiti made by the Government of President Preval, with the support of international partners. We recognize that Haiti will continue to require substantial regional and international support in the implementation of a consistent and long-term strategy of institution and capacity building, and pledge to work together with the three branches of the Haitian Government.

17. On the occasion of Caribbean-American Heritage Month, we pay tribute to the generations of Caribbean-Americans who have helped shape the spirit and character of the United States of America and who continue to contribute to the growth and development of the Caribbean.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Remarks on Energy in Athens, Alabama *June 21, 2007*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Thanks for coming by to say hello. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind introduction, and thanks for the invitation to tour this impressive facility. The restart of

Browns Ferry Unit Number 1 represents the first nuclear reactor to come on line in the United States in more than a decade. This is a demonstration that one is capable of doing a job on time and on budget.

And I congratulate you all for your hard work, and thank you for the contribution you're making to the United States of America.

I'm going to talk a little bit about nuclear power today, and it's—no better place to do it here—than with a group of folks who understand the great benefits of nuclear power to our country. I believe that it is essential that we have a comprehensive energy policy to be able to deal with the challenges we're going to face in the 21st century, whether that be energy independence or economic security or good environmental policy. And at the core of such policy must be electricity generated from nuclear power.

I'm also here to nudge Congress along. They're working on a bill—[*laughter*]*—that I hope that they can get to my desk, that is a good bill, a balanced bill, a reasonable approach to making sure we continue to be wise about how we use energy in the United States.*

I do want to thank Bill for his leadership, and I thank the members of the board of the TVA. I thank Tom Kilgore for taking time to visit today. He's led me on a tour with R.G. Jones. Some of you may have heard of R.G. R.G. and I discovered we're both 60. [*Laughter*] We were born in 1946, which is a fine year to be born, at least as far as R.G. and I are concerned. [*Laughter*] I reminded him, 60 is not as old as it used to sound—till I climbed up all those stairs to get to the control room. [*Laughter*] I also want to thank Brian O'Grady, the vice president here.

We put a good man who understands nuclear power as the head of the Energy Department—Sam Bodman. And he's with us today. Mr. Secretary, thank you for traveling with us; appreciate you coming. Also with us is Dr. Dale Klein, Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. It's an important position. It's a position that's going to expedite the regulations so we can get more plants up and running. And I'll talk a little bit about his intentions

and our intentions to help increase nuclear power here in the United States.

I'm traveling with a fine United States Senator in Jeff Sessions, as well as the Congressman from this district, a man awfully proud of the work you do here, and that's Bud Cramer. Finally, we let a fellow from Mobile tag along with us, Congressman Jo Bonner. Appreciate you coming, Congressman.

I thank all the employees who work at this plant. Thanks for what you're doing. Thanks for being skillful. Thanks for working hard. And thanks for helping the country.

The world is seeing the promise and potential of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. I emphasize that word, "peaceful use," because one of my predecessors, Dwight David Eisenhower, in 1953, called on the world's scientists and engineers to find a way to produce peaceful power from atomic energy that would serve the needs, rather than the fears, of mankind. And that's exactly what we're doing here. You're serving the needs, rather than the fears, of mankind. You're helping implement the vision of President Dwight David Eisenhower.

Nuclear power is America's third leading source of electricity. It provides nearly 20 percent of our country's electricity. I don't know if a lot of our citizens understand that, but nuclear power is a key component of economic vitality because it provides 20 percent of the electricity.

Interestingly enough, nuclear power provides 78 percent of electricity for France; provides 50 percent for Sweden; 30 percent for the entire European Union. China has nine nuclear reactors in operation and has ambitious plans to build many more over the next two decades.

Nuclear power is prevalent, and it's recognized as a necessary power source, not only here in the United States but around the world. Nuclear power is clean; it's clean, domestic energy. It's—there is a lot of discussion about the environment, as

there should be. We certainly want to leave the environment better for the next generation that comes along. There's a lot of discussion about greenhouse gases, which I believe is a serious problem.

And therefore, I remind those who share my concern about greenhouse gases that nuclear energy produces no greenhouse gases. If you are interested in cleaning up the air, then you ought to be an advocate for nuclear power. Without nuclear power here in the United States, there would be nearly 700 million additional tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere every year. There is no single solution to climate change, but there can be no solution without nuclear power.

Nuclear power is safe. The nuclear sector is one of the safest industries in the United States. Advances in science and engineering and plant design have made nuclear plants even safer than the last generation of plants. In other words, technology has advanced; knowledge has advanced; engineering has advanced. This is a safe plant, and the people in the United States must understand that.

They've also got to understand that NRC inspectors are stationed full time at these plants to provide daily inspections, and I appreciate the NRC inspectors who are with us today. In other words, we go extra steps to be able to say to the American people: This is a safe place to work, and it's a safe facility to have in the area of the country in which you live.

Nuclear power is affordable, and it is reliable. Once a nuclear plant is constructed, fuel and operating costs are low. The cost of electricity from a nuclear powerplant is stable; it is predictable. The cost of electricity from a plant like this doesn't fluctuate the way plants fired by natural gas can fluctuate. The flow of power is not intermittent like the wind; in other words, this is a reliable source of low-cost energy.

We need nuclear power to play a greater role in our future. That's what I want to

share with you and the American people as we talk about a comprehensive energy strategy, a comprehensive energy plan: Nuclear power has got to be a really important part of our future.

Nuclear power is the only large-scale, emissions-free power source that is currently able to meet the growing need for electricity. As our economy grows, with additional demands for power and electricity, nuclear power can handle those needs.

In order to keep pace with our nuclear energy needs, experts believe it will be necessary to build an average of three new plants per year starting in 2015. In other words, it's one thing to talk about nuclear power; it's another thing to have—understand the strategy necessary.

So we are going to need three plants starting in 2015. And as we tackle climate change, it may be necessary to have even more plants. Here's the problem: Our country has not ordered a new nuclear powerplant since the 1970s, partially as a result of constant litigation and overly complex regulations. So we're working to overcome those obstacles. I appreciate the fact that the TVA is making decisions to move forward nuclear power. It's time for our country to start building nuclear powerplants again. This is what I want to share with you.

One thing to restart one—and I congratulate you—it's another thing to build the new ones. And that's what we ought to have happen if we're interested in a comprehensive, sound, wise energy policy that is environmentally friendly. The Federal Government is helping to expand the safe use of nuclear power in some important ways.

First, we've set up what's called the Nuclear Power 2010 initiative. We launched the nuclear power initiative, which is a partnership between industry and the U.S. Government to reduce regulatory and other barriers to the development of new nuclear powerplants. That's why we set it up. We



want to start building plants, and we recognize that there have been some regulatory burdens that prevent the construction of new plants, or at least discourage the construction of new plants.

The 2008 budget I submitted would double the requested funding for this initiative to \$114 million; in other words, it takes money to get this initiative moving. And we're asking Congress to spend money on it in order to help us put in a comprehensive energy strategy. It makes sense. It's just a commonsense strategy.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is working to improve and streamline the regulatory process to help accelerate the construction of nuclear plants. Under the old system, the permitting process was slow. Some of the older hands here might remember that. It was cumbersome because it limited builders to completing only one step at a time before moving on. You could only do one thing, and then there would be regulatory deals and then another thing. And it just took a long time. And when something takes a long time to build, that discourages capital and discourages people from moving forward—plus you could get sued all the time. That would discourage people as well.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is implementing a more efficient review process that allows builders to complete several steps at a time without compromising safety. They took a good look at the problems. They said, we need more nuclear power, and so we're going to streamline the process. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission now expects 20 applications for combined construction and operating licenses for up to 30 new reactors. In other words, we're beginning to have—to make some progress. Things are beginning to change. Attitudes are changing, and so is the regulatory process, which has enabled me to tell you, we've got 20 applications for nearly—for up to 30 new reactors. That is good news for the American consumer.

And we think that we ought to be—America ought to—should be able to start construction on additional nuclear plants by the end of this decade. That's not all that far away. That's why I've got the Chairman of the NRC here; I want him to hear what I just said. *[Laughter]* He's doing some good work. He's got more work to do.

I signed an energy bill in 2005 that included important incentives to support the development of nuclear power, including Federal risk insurance for builders of new nuclear plants, loan guarantee eligibility, and production tax credits. In other words, to get this industry started, put some incentives out there for people that would be spending the money to get the plants going.

We're working to settle the issue of storage for nuclear waste. That's an issue. More than 55,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste are stored at a hundred sites in 39 States. I've submitted a budget of \$495 million to continue progress on licensing Yucca Mountain as a repository for spent fuel.

There's also another idea that I want you to—I know you know about it, but I want Americans and Congress to consider: We ought to do something about reprocessing. We ought to bring that technology to bear; we ought to bring new technologies to bear to help us all deal with the spent fuel. So we proposed the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership to work with nations with advanced civilian nuclear energy programs, such as France, Japan, China, and Russia. And the reason why we proposed this partnership is, we want to use technologies, new technologies—develop and use technologies that effectively and safely recycle spent nuclear fuel.

Reprocessing spent uranium fuel for use in advanced reactors will allow us to extract more energy and has the potential to reduce storage requirements for nuclear waste by up to 90 percent. I am confident that we can have the technological breakthroughs necessary to deal with the fuel. Congress needs to spend the money in

order to do the research. And when we do, we will be able to answer a lot of the charges of our critics that say, "What are you going to do with the fuel?"

Well, here's a good answer: Recycle it, reburn it, and reduce the amount of the problem. And that's what the United States needs to be doing.

Nuclear power is part of a broader strategy. I want to spend a little time on the broader strategy before we all pass out in here. [*Laughter*] There's enough hot air in the room as there is. [*Laughter*]

We're too dependent on oil. And you know, in 1985, about 27 percent of our oil came from other countries; today, about 60 percent does. And that's a dependency that creates economic and national security problems for us.

On the national security side, our dependence on oil leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes and terrorists. If you can blow up oil facilities overseas, it will affect the price of oil here at home. When you're dependent on something and somebody disrupts the supply on which you're dependent, it will affect you. It affects international politics, to a certain extent, to be dependent on oil.

When the price of oil goes up for whatever reason overseas, it affects the price of gasoline here in northern Alabama. So there is an economic issue for being dependent on oil. And of course, when oil is burned as a fuel, it affects the environment. So we've got to change our dependency.

One way to do so is to spend some of your money on new technologies that will change how we live in positive ways. So we spent \$12 billion since I've been the President to develop cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable energy sources. I think that's a wise use of your money, to encourage research and development on new ways to drive your cars, for example.

One such example is that we're spending your money on is for clean coal technologies. We've got to do something to

make sure that when we have electricity generated by coal, that we can say to future generations of Americans, "We're going to protect the environment as well." We've got a lot of coal. If you want to be less dependent on foreign sources of oil, you ought to use the energy sources you've got here at home. Not all electricity is going to be generated as a result of nuclear power. We're going to be burning coal, and so we are spending a lot of money. And I believe that we'll have the emission-free coal plants that will capture and remove virtually all air pollutants and greenhouse gases from burning coal. That's what the experts tell me.

So some of your money—some of your hard-earned money is going to encourage that kind of research. I think it's worth it. And I know it's necessary if we want to be less dependent on oil and be good about how we deal with the environment.

And we're also spending money and—to help others research wind and solar power. That's a nice alternative. It's certainly not going to—wind power is not going to be nearly as effective and efficient as nuclear power, but it can be a part of the mix.

If you want to affect dependency on oil, then we've got to figure out how to use—put different power sources in our cars. Gasoline is oil. So when you say, "I'm using gasoline," you really are using oil. Because that's how—that's where gasoline comes from. And so one idea that we're working on is to encourage ethanol, which works. See, you be driving your automobile based upon something a farmer grows here in northern Alabama, as opposed to something as a result of buying from overseas. Makes sense to me.

If you've got your farmer growing something that powers your automobile, I think it puts us in a much better position economically, from a national security perspective. And we're spending a fair amount of your money to make sure that we can use something other than corn from which to

make ethanol. If you're a hog farmer, you're getting tired of seeing the corn prices go up. If you're a corn farmer, it's a nice feeling to see the prices go up. [Laughter]

But we believe we can come up with technologies that will enable us to use wood chips to make ethanol that you can put in your automobiles to help us become less dependent on oil—or switchgrasses. That would be nice for some of the people from my State. Switchgrass grows in a nice, dry environment. And I understand you're dry here, by the way. The Senator and the Congressmen are working hard on me about the drought that you've got here. [Laughter] But some parts of our country need to—got dry country, and they can grow some switchgrass.

The whole idea is to come up with different ways to power our automobiles. And along those lines, I think it's not going to be long before you're going to be able to drive an automobile with new battery technologies that you can just plug in your garage. And your automobile won't look like a golf cart; it will be a normal size pickup truck. [Laughter]

So I laid out a goal that said, we're going to reduce our gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years as a part of our energy diversification strategy. And I think we can achieve that. I also know we need to change our fuel economy standards, just like we did for trucks, and I want to work with Congress to do that as well.

In other words, it's part of a comprehensive strategy. I call it the 20–10 goal. And I commend Congress for pursuing the framework for the 20–10 proposal. It's a promising start. However, the—as this bill's getting written, it's being frustrated by special interests and, of course, all the politics that takes place in Washington, DC.

The current plan being debated in the Senate falls far short of the ambitious goal I laid out. But it's a realistic goal. It's a necessary goal if we want to become less dependent on oil from overseas. The Sen-

ate's proposed fuel mandate, for example, calls for just a 10-percent reduction in gasoline usage by 2017. We can do much better than that, we really can. We've got to be optimistic about what America can do when we put our mind to doing something.

And so I urge the Congress to be realistic about the bills they're talking about and get it done. Get it to my desk so that we can all say, "We've done a good job of representing the people."

By the way, as we talk about these new technologies, we're still going to need oil and gas. And we can explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways. I strongly believe that we ought to open up more Outer Continental Shelf area as well as ANWR in Alaska. You know, there's a big debate about whether or not you can drill and find oil and gas that's good for you without ruining the environment. I'm telling you we can; technologies have changed.

By the way, when they're debating the bill up there, they've also got to fill up—add to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. If you're worried about a terrorist attack which could affect the price of oil, we ought to have oil in the ground that we can use to protect the American consumer. And they need to expand the Petroleum Reserve against natural disasters—protection against natural disasters as well as a potential attack.

By the way, the Supreme Court—I don't know if you follow the Supreme Court at all, but they've ruled that the EPA must take action under the Clean Air Act regarding greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. That's what the Court said. And when the Court says something, then the executive branch of Government says: "Okay, you said it; now we'll listen. We'll do what you asked us to do."

And so I directed the EPA and the Department of Transportation, Energy, and Agriculture to take the first steps toward regulations that would cut gasoline consumption and greenhouse gases using the

plan I just described to you. So Congress can pass the law, which I hope they do, but if they don't, we're moving forward because the Supreme Court told us to move forward. And either way, in either case, we're going to become less dependent on oil, and that's good for the United States of America.

So I appreciate you letting me come by and talk a little energy. You live it; I'm talking it. [Laughter] I thank you for what you're doing for the country. I thank you for your hard work. I thank you for your

skill. I thank you for your prayers. I thank you for being good Americans.

And may God bless you, and may God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:38 p.m. at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. In his remarks, he referred to William B. Sansom, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Tennessee Valley Authority; and R.G. Jones, general manager, and Brian O'Grady, vice president, Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant.

### Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Jefferson B. Sessions III in Mobile, Alabama June 21, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here in Mobile. It's an exciting place, isn't it?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* Yes. So I'm flying in with Jeff and Congressman Jo Bonner, who, by the way, is doing a fantastic job for you; couldn't wait to show me the new building. He said: "I understand that Laura loves to come to Mobile. We'll just rent you a place in it." [Laughter]

I'm excited for you to be living in such a vibrant part of our country. For those of you who are creating jobs and helping this part of the world grow: Thank you for doing what you're doing. And Laura and I are great—really grateful to be with you. She loves coming down here. She loves coming to see the Fooses. She's making new friends coming down here. And one of these days, I'm going to come down here and get some fishing in. But in the meantime, I've got a job to do. [Laughter]

So we're proud to be with you. I'm really happy to be here with Jeff Sessions. He's a unique fellow, he's smart, he's capable, he's down-to-earth, what you see is what

you get. He has done a fabulous job representing Alabama, and he deserves to be reelected.

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* And I want to thank you for helping him. You know, when you get out there as a candidate, sometimes you wonder whether or not anybody is going to be for you. Well, it's easy for me to see, Jeff, that in this room, there's a lot of people for you. And I thank you for your time to help him, and I thank you for your hard-earned money, to make it clear to the people of Alabama that this guy is the right man to represent you in the United States Senate for 6 more years.

I'll never forget coming down here for Hurricane Ivan. As you know—and probably some of you got hit hard by it. One of the things that struck me about Senator Sessions during that time was his great compassion for all the people of Alabama. I—as sure as my memory serves me correctly, he said: "When you get back up there and start writing these emergency declarations, make sure you don't forget the people from the rural part of my State. It's so easy to remember the people living

in the big cities. But, Mr. President, there's a lot of good folks from Alabama that are in rural Alabama, and I want you to remember them when it came time for the emergency."

See, Jeff Sessions is a big thinker. He just doesn't get caught up in one aspect of Alabama society. He is—he thinks clearly and compassionately for all people of this State. And so, Jeff, I'm proud of what you told me then. I think I listened to you very carefully and wrote those emergency declarations just like the way you told me to. *[Laughter]*

He's a strong ally on a lot of fronts. We occasionally have our differences. *[Laughter]* I mean, take the immigration bill, for example. *[Laughter]* We both agree we've got a problem. *[Laughter]* And the fundamental question is, how best to fix it?

I remember—and I'm going to share this with Sessions—I remember a political buddy of mine in Texas. He said, if we agreed 100 percent of the time, one of us wouldn't be necessary. *[Laughter]* Well, he's necessary in the United States Senate, and I'm proud you're here to back him. And thanks for coming.

I married well, and so did Sessions. *[Laughter]* And we're proud to be here with Mary and the family. I don't know if you know this or not, but Abbie Sessions is here. That's Jeff's mom, 94 years young. And Ms. Sessions, thanks for coming—as well as his aunt Mary Powe. She's only 88. *[Laughter]* We're glad you all are here. Thanks for raising a good boy, Ms. Sessions. And I'm sure, Jeff, your mother is like mine—she's constantly telling you what to do. *[Laughter]* And I hope you're listening. *[Laughter]*

I'm also proud to be here—I mentioned Jo came down with us and Janee came here as well—the Bonners. Listen, this guy cares a lot about the people of Mobile. He is constantly talking about what needs to happen down here. You know, "We've got to get this plan; we've got to do this,

Mr. President. Remember the people down here." He's really making you a fine hand, and it would be really wise to make sure you send him back to the United States Congress as well.

Alabama Treasurer Kay Ivey is with us. Kay, thank you for joining us; proud you're here. She's from Sessions's hometown. What's the name of it again?

*Sen. Sessions.* Camden.

*The President.* Camden. Yeah, Camden. There she is back there. Thanks for coming.

And how many people in your high school class?

*Sen. Sessions.* Thirty.

*The President.* Thirty people in the high school—he finished in the top 30 in the—*[laughter]*. Better than I did. *[Laughter]*

We appreciate the fact that Mike Duncan, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, has come today. Michael, thanks for coming down with us, appreciate your being here. Edgar Welden, national committeeman from Alabama, and his wife Louise—appreciate you being here, Edgar. Thanks for serving.

I thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people, Jeffrey, who are going to put up your signs, knock on the doors, make the phone calls necessary to do what's right for the country and for this State: and that's to put you back in the United States Senate.

I want to talk about two issues that matter in politics, and it matters for this country: That would be peace and prosperity. This is a nation at war. I wish I could report to you that it wasn't the case, but it is a nation at war. And we better have people in the United States Senate who understand that—and Jeffrey understands that—because when you understand that, then you understand the most important priority for your Government is to protect you. It's the single most important task that we have in Washington, DC, is to do that which is necessary to protect the American people from an attack.



And the first thing in order to understand the nature of this war, you must understand the nature of the enemy. We are facing ideologues, people who have a vision about how they want the world to look. These are people that do not believe in the same freedoms we believe in.

One of the great freedoms of America is the ability of the people—ability for people to worship the way they so choose. These people believe that if you don't worship the way they choose, they'll put you in harm's way. They can't stand freedom. They can't stand the idea of people being able to express their opinions in the public square. They have a vision, and that is to spread their ideology as far as they possibly can. They want to reestablish what's called the caliphate, and they use murder as a tool to achieve their objectives.

These people are dangerous; they're lethal. You can't make any—can't talk common sense to them. The only way to protect the American people is to stay on the offense and defeat them overseas so we don't have to face them here.

And that is the great challenge facing the United States of America. The fundamental question is, will we have people in the United States Senate who understand that we're in a global war against ideologues that murder the innocent to achieve their objectives? The question is, will we have people who understand that their objective is to create as much chaos and havoc and cause us to retreat from the world? That's the challenge.

We face threats from around the world. And that's why I call it a global war on terror. And some of the lessons of September the 11th must never be forgotten. One lesson, of course, is the nature of these people. Another lesson is that when we see threats, we must take them seriously. Third lesson is, is that we must do everything we can to deny safe haven from which these killers could plot and plan attacks on the United States of America. And that's

precisely the strategy that you're seeing unfold.

In Afghanistan, the enemy had achieved safe haven. We gave them ample time to kick the enemy out of the country. They chose not to, and we liberated 25 million people as we took the action necessary to protect the American people.

In Iraq, I saw a threat to the United States of America; the world saw the same threat. We went to the United Nations, as you might remember, and said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." Saddam Hussein had the choice to make. He defied the world once again, and the United States, with a strong coalition, freed the world of the dangers of Saddam Hussein, freed the Iraqi people. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

Jeff Sessions understands that. He understands that the United States of America must defend ourselves. And he also understands that when we find the enemy overseas, we must deal with them there; otherwise, we'll have to face them here. And in Iraq—this is a tough fight in Iraq; it really is. It's the kind of battle that has got the capability of shaking the will of the American people. We're a compassionate people. We care deeply about human rights and human dignity. And when we see innocent people lose their life, it makes a lot of people wonder whether or not it's worth it, whether or not we can succeed.

I do want to remind you, however, that after living under a brutal tyrant, when given a chance, 12 million Iraqis went to the polls. They said: "Let us be free. We want to exercise our right as free individuals." It seems like an eternity ago—didn't it?—when that vote took place. But in the march of history, it wasn't all that long. People do want to live in a free society. Mothers in the Muslim world want to raise their children in peace, just like mothers in Mobile, Alabama, want to raise their

children in peace. There's something universal about the desire to live in a peaceful setting, in a peaceful society. So it shouldn't surprise you, as this young democracy begins to emerge, that the enemies of freedom have taken actions necessary to stop the progress.

The—most of the suicide bombings and the most horrific of bombings are perpetuated on the Iraqi people by Al Qaida. Al Qaida is the same bunch that attacked us on September the 11th and killed nearly 3,000 people. And what's that should tell the American people—it should tell the American people that we ought to take the words of Al Qaida seriously when they say, "We're going to drive you out of Iraq so we can have a safe haven from which to plot and plan attacks on America." The fight for freedom in Iraq is the fight for the security of the United States of America, and we must prevail.

The President makes decisions. And I made the decision to send more troops into Baghdad and Iraq as opposed to pulling out, and I want to share with you why. I saw the sectarian violence that was beginning to rage. Remember in 2005, we had the elections. The Government was elected under the most modern Constitution written in the Middle East. The enemy sees the progress; they bombed the mosques; it caused the sectarian violence to begin to spill out. And I was deeply concerned about whether or not that violence would spill out of the capital into the country and into the region. And remember, Al Qaida and the extremists love chaos. They're looking for power vacuums into which they can move their ideology as well as their strategies.

I listened very carefully to Senators like Jeff Sessions and Senators who didn't agree with what Jeff and I believed was necessary. I listened to our military. That's what you want your President doing. And, by the way, you want your Senators supporting the United States military, which Jeff Sessions really does.

So I made the decision to name a new commander as well as send troops into Baghdad, all aiming to give this young democracy a chance to survive the relentless attacks from the extremists and radicals who want to prevent their emergence. I knew this; I knew that if we were to retreat from Iraq, unlike other wars we have fought, the enemy would follow us here. It's one of the primary lessons of the world in which we live.

And we're making some progress in Iraq. It's a tough fight. David Petraeus just finally got all the troops he's asked for, this past week. And now we're routing out the enemy along with the Iraqis.

Now, I talked to Prime Minister Maliki last week and made it very clear to him that people all around the United States hope they succeed. But we understand that they are going to have to do some hard work, that they've got to do the political work necessary, that they've got to show those moms that a peaceful world will come. And they'll do the political work necessary to get it done.

But I felt it was necessary to give them some space to get that job done. And so we're going to—and I want to thank Jeff Sessions. You know, it's not necessarily a popular thing to stand up and say, "I support the troops, and I support the reinforcements, and I support David Petraeus." It may not be popular in certain circles, but it certainly brings confidence to the United States military to hear United States Senators speak with strength and conviction about the job these kids are doing.

It's tough work, but it's necessary work. If we were to leave before the job is done, if we were to allow this young democracy to be overwhelmed by the extremists and the radicals, people in the Middle East would say, "What's the word of the United States worth?" There would be people who want to live in a peaceful world wondering about the great nation of the United States. Al Qaida would be emboldened. It would make it easier to recruit. It would cause

people who might be trying to choose how to—what kind of life they would want to slip into the this—into the company of these radicals and killers. People would look back 50 years from now, I'm confident, and say: "What happened to them in the year 2007? How come they couldn't see the impending danger? How come they couldn't see the threats that would evolve by enabling radicals to be able to emerge? How come they didn't deal with Iran as a perpetuator of radical Shiism that would be in competition with radical Sunniism, all of which would endanger the United States of America?"

Well, I'm going to tell you something. I see the danger; I see the threat. And I can't wait to continue to lead the United States forward to make sure we secure this country for the long time. In the long run, the only way to defeat this ideology of hatred is with an ideology of hope. And that's an ideology based upon freedom.

I will tell you what I believe. I believe there is an Almighty, and I believe a great gift of the Almighty to each man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. That's what I believe. And I believe it's in the interests of the United States of America to promote freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to the ideology that inspired 19 kids to come and kill nearly 3,000 of our citizens. And that's the real challenge of the 21st century.

It's the great challenge we face. And the great challenge is to defeat this ideology with something better. And we've done it in the past. This isn't the first time the United States of America has had to defend ourselves against ideologues. This is—I know there's—some of you had relatives who fought in the Pacific in World War II. I did. I find it one of the great ironies of history that one of my great friends during my Presidency was the Prime Minister of Japan. Isn't that interesting? My dad was a Navy fighter pilot who fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of our country. Thousands of people died. And

yet, some 60 years later, his son sits at the table talking about the peace with the former enemy: Koizumi, and now Prime Minister Abe.

It startles me every time I think about it, but it gives me great faith in understanding the power of liberty to transform the world in which we live, to make it peaceful for generations to come. It gives me great faith to know that liberty had the capacity to transform an enemy into an ally. Liberty has got the ability to lift people's hopes, to bring light into society. Liberty has got the capacity to lay that foundation of peace for generations to come.

This is the challenge we face in the 21st century. I am proud to be standing with a man who understands the challenges and will do everything in his power to help us accomplish our mission, and that's Jeff Sessions.

I want to talk about one other issue, and that's, how do we make sure this economy stays strong? They're telling me the unemployment rate here in Alabama is 3 percent. Something's working. *[Laughter]*

The economy is strong around the United States. We created more than 8 million new jobs in—over the past 4 years. When I say "we," that's not government. Those are small-business owners, entrepreneurs, dreamers, doers, risk takers. The economic history, the recent economic history, however, of the country hasn't been all that pleasant. You might remember, shortly after I got sworn in as President of the United States, we went into a recession, and then we had a terrorist attack on our country. We had some corporate scandals we had to deal with, which created uncertainty. The economic outlook, not all that long ago, wasn't all that bright; it wasn't all that cheery.

We came together with Members of the United States Senate like Jeff Sessions. We said, what do we need to do? How do we need to make sure our economy grows? And we put forth an inherent part of our

philosophy which says this: You can spend your money better than the government can. And the best way to create economic vitality and economic growth is to cut the taxes on the people who work.

And this is a big issue for the American people. Taxes has always been a big issue, and it will always be a big issue because it is a fundamental debate about the proper role of government. It's a fundamental debate about understanding how new jobs are created. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. When you cut the taxes on people, on the individual taxes, you are really cutting the taxes on small businesses because most small businesses are limited partnerships or sole proprietorships or subchapter S's. When you cut the taxes on people who are working, it gives them hope and inspiration. It puts that proper balance between government and you.

Jeff Sessions understands that. I understand it. The best way to keep this economy growing is to make sure the Democrats don't run up your taxes. And they want to. [*Laughter*] All you've got to do is look at that budget they just submitted—a lot of new spending. You know, you'll hear them say, "Oh, we're just going to raise the taxes on the rich." Well, first of all, you can't raise enough money on the rich to whet their appetite. And secondly, they're going to say: "We're going to raise your taxes; don't worry about it—just to balance the budget." That's not the way it works in Washington. They will raise your taxes so they can spend new money on new programs.

Make no mistake about it, this is a fundamental divide between our two parties. If you want somebody in the United States Senate who will keep your taxes low, who understands the proper balance between government and entrepreneurship, it is Senator Jeff Sessions.

Some of you are probably concerned about the budget. You should be. But you ought to be pleased with how progrowth

economic policies have affected the budget. You see, it's interesting. When you keep taxes low, it causes the economy to grow. And when the economy grows, it causes there to be more tax revenues into the Treasury. And if you're wise about spending the money like we have been over the past 5 years, not overspending, setting priorities—by the way, we're going to make sure our troops get all they need. We'll make sure our veterans are fully supported when they take the uniform off. But we've got to set priorities in Washington.

If you're wise about spending the money, it's amazing what happens to the deficit. I said, "We're going to cut the deficit in half in 5 years." It turns out, we cut the deficit in half 3 years earlier. I then submitted a budget that said, we're going to balance the budget in 5 years. Our deficit relative to GDP is low. In other words, what's happening is, progrowth economic policies are creating plenty of revenues. And now the task is to make sure that we keep your spending down to a reasonable level, and that's why they got the President the veto.

And one thing is, you can count on Sessions, see. That's the thing about it. He understands that we've got to keep taxes low. He understands that you've got to make the tough decision when it comes to spending money. And he understands we better support our troops. I'm proud to be up here with him. I can't think of a better United States Senator than Jeff Sessions. You're lucky to have him in Alabama. He's lucky to have you as friends.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom on a Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty  
*June 21, 2007*

President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have today signed a Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty which will further strengthen and deepen the effort between our respective defense establishments to achieve fully interoperable forces, and to leverage the strength of our defense industries in direct support of our armed forces.

At a time when American and British forces continue to work closely together on operations overseas, the President and the Prime Minister share the view that we need to do all that we can to enhance our ability to cooperate by reducing the barriers to exchange of defense goods, services, and information between the United States and the United Kingdom.

This further cooperation will benefit the operational defense capabilities of the United States and the United Kingdom by improving the interoperability of equipment and systems between our armed forces. Our armed forces must have the most effective means possible to fight not only in traditional battlefield situations, but also

when they face asymmetric threats such as IEDs. By removing barriers to communication and collaboration between, and among, our armed forces and our defense industries, we will provide our forces with the most effective means possible to counter these threats.

In addition, these new arrangements will help maintain the strength of our respective defense industries. By enhancing the ability of our defense industries to take advantage of the rich and deep technical experience in the United States and in the United Kingdom, we will continue to develop and field the most effective military capabilities possible.

Together, both governments will also aim to finalize implementing arrangements by the end of the year and to complete steps necessary under their respective domestic laws to implement the treaty.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Belgium-United States Taxation Convention  
*June 21, 2007*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, and accompanying Protocol, signed on November 27, 2006, at Brussels (the "proposed Treaty"). The proposed Treaty

will replace the existing income tax treaty between the two countries that was concluded in 1970 and amended by protocol in 1987. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the proposed Treaty.

The proposed Treaty eliminates the withholding tax on certain cross-border dividend payments, including dividend payments to pension funds. The proposed Treaty also



provides for mandatory arbitration of certain cases brought before the competent authorities. This provision is only the second of its kind in a proposed U.S. tax treaty. In addition, the proposed Treaty includes provisions, consistent with current U.S. tax-treaty policy, that are designed to prevent so-called treaty shopping.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
June 21, 2007.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Nguyen Minh Triet of Vietnam

*June 22, 2007*

*President Bush.* Mr. President, thank you for coming. Laura and I remember very fondly our trip to your beautiful country. And I remember so very well the warm reception that we received from your Government and the people of Vietnam.

I explained to the President, we want to have good relations with Vietnam. And we've got good economic relations. We signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. And I was impressed by the growing Vietnamese economy.

I also made it very clear that in order for relations to grow deeper that it's important for our friends to have a strong commitment to human rights and freedom and democracy. I explained my strong belief that societies are enriched when people are allowed to express themselves freely or worship freely.

I thanked the President for his continued cooperation on the issue of POWs and MIAs. I saw firsthand that cooperation when I was in Vietnam. We are now extending our search to missing remains in some of the coastal regions of Vietnam.

I also told the President that Congress recently passed appropriations measures to help with dioxin, or Agent Orange. And it's helped the people of his country. And, as well, we're firmly committed to helping Vietnam in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

And so we welcome you, Mr. President. And thank you for the frank and candid discussion.

*President Triet.* Upon the kind invitation extended to me by President Bush, I have decided to make this official visit to the United States. And I would like to thank Mr. President for your warm and kind hospitality. And also to you I would like to extend my thanks to the American people for their warm hospitality.

Over the last couple of days, I have had the fortunate opportunity to meet with a large number of American people and American businesses. And everywhere I went and anywhere I met, I always—I was always extended good hospitality and cooperation.

It's very impressive that yesterday I had a chance to visit a farmer who raised grapes. And the life is very happy, and they have a warmth of feelings toward Vietnam. And the owner had to hug me several times, hesitating to say good bye to us, and that demonstrates the desire for friendship between our two peoples.

And the—President Bush and I have had productive and constructive discussions. And both sides agree that our bilateral relationship has continued to develop. Especially since Mr. President's last visit to Vietnam, our relations have witnessed a new, fine development. On the economic front,

our cooperation has been intensified. In addition to that, our cooperation has also intensified in other areas such as humanitarian cooperation, science, technology, education, and training.

And I sincerely thank the U.S. Government and people for your aid to HIV and AIDS patients. And we highly appreciate the Congress appropriations of—for dioxin and Agent Orange victims. And I believe that the increased and good relationship between our two country would benefit not only our two countries but also constitute a constructive factor for safeguarding peace and stability in our region.

And we have also discussed on specific measures of how to advance further our relations in a wide range of areas, be it political, economic, trade, investment, education, or training, humanitarian, et cetera. And in short, our relations are broadened, deepened on a sustainable and effective—in a sustainable and effective manner. And as Mr. President has mentioned, both sides have just signed a Trade Investment Framework Agreement, TIFA, and many other high-value economic agreements and contracts.

And Mr. President and I also had direct and open exchange of views on a matter that we remain different, especially on matters related to religion and human rights. And our approach is that we would increase our dialog in order to have a better under-

standing of each other. And we are also determined not to let those differences afflict our overall, larger interest.

And I also would like to take this opportunity to send a message to American people, particularly the good feelings from Vietnamese people to American people. I would like to tell you that Vietnam nowadays is a stable, peaceful, and friendly country. And Vietnamese people want to have a good consolidarity and friendship with American people. And so if both peoples—both want peace, friendship, and solidarity, then we should join hands and march toward the future.

And on this occasion, I also would like to extend my warmest greetings to my fellow man living in the United States. And Vietnamese Americans are part and parcel of the Vietnamese nation. And it is my desire to see them succeed, and hope they will continue to serve as a bridge of friendship between our two countries.

And so, once again, I would like to thank Mr. President and the U.S. Government and American people for your warm hospitality.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Triet spoke in Vietnamese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks at a Reception for Black Music Month June 22, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Rachel, thank you. Thanks for coming, thanks for the introduction, and thanks for representing the United States. Proud to have you here.

I want to welcome you all right here to the people's house. I'm pleased you could join us for this annual celebration

of Black Music Month. This is an event I've always looked forward to. It's a chance to listen to some good music—[laughter]—and to be with some good friends. It's an opportunity for us to thank artists whose work inspire our country. And so thanks for coming. I hope you enjoy the day as much as I do.

I appreciate the fact that Alphonso is with us, Alphonso Jackson and Marcia. He's the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Dr. Dorothy Height is with us. I'm proud you're here, Dr. Height. Thanks for joining us. My friend Bob Johnson has joined us. He knows a little something about black entertainment. [Laughter] Thanks for coming. Roslyn Brock, vice chairman of the NAACP—I'm proud you're here, Roslyn. Thank you for coming. Thanks for joining us. Dyana Williams, president of the International Association of African American Music Foundation—she knows something about music. [Laughter] I appreciate Kevin Liles, executive vice president of the Warner Music Company. Thank you for coming—and Jonathan Platt, senior vice president of EMI Music Publishing and Virgin Records. Appreciate you all being here. Thanks for coming.

Most of all, thank you all. Thanks for taking time out of your day to come. One of the best things about living here is that some of the best musicians come to play. [Laughter] It's amazing what kind of talent you can draw here at the White House. [Laughter]

And over the years, American Presidents have seen some fantastic African American musicians here on the White House stage. President Chester Arthur—you might remember Chester—[laughter]—he welcomed the first black choir to perform at the White House, the Jubilee Singers from Fisk University. President Benjamin Harrison hosted one of the first black soloists to play at the White House, Sissieretta Jones, who was the daughter of a slave. President William Howard Taft invited Joseph Douglass—grandson of Frederick Douglass—to perform here. Franklin Roosevelt hosted the great Marian Anderson, when she performed “Ave Maria” for the King and Queen of England. President Ronald Reagan hosted Mikhail Gorbachev and invited the legendary Pearl Bailey to entertain. And he—when he introduced

her, he just simply said—simply, “our Pearl”—“welcome, our Pearl.” [Laughter] I hope the translator got that right. [Laughter]

And Laura and I had some incredible entertainers and Americans sing for us and our friends. We've had Eartha Kitt, Patti Austin, B.B. King, Irwin Mayfield, Aaron Neville, just to give you a taste of what happens here at the White House. Each of the performers has inspired people across the world with their talents, and each performer has brought great pride to the United States. It's really a great country that can produce a diverse group of musicians that can serve as ambassadors about what's right about America.

And we're proud to welcome some new musicians here to the White House today. We're just keeping in a long trend of Presidents who have welcomed some of our great musicians here to the White House. So as we honor Black Music Month, it makes sense to bring some talent here to entertain us.

Karina Pasion grew up in New York City. She's the child of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. Her parents are both teachers in the New York Public School System, and early on, it became clear that Karina had an incredible gift for music. At age 3—that's the definition of “early on”—[laughter]—she was singing and studying piano. By age 12, she was performing at the Coliseum in Rome before a television audience of more than a half-million people, alongside Alicia Keys and Stevie Wonder and Andrea Bocelli. Today, she's 15 years old. She's already recorded her first album.

And despite her young age, she tackles very mature issues with her music. She sings about hunger and disease in Africa and the genocide in Darfur. And we appreciate that clarity; appreciate her bringing these issues to focus to help more people understand that the world's got to do something about it now, before it's too late. I will tell you, the—America is in the lead

when it comes to HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa; we're on the lead when it comes to feeding the hungry; we're on the lead when it comes to eradicating malaria. And that's where we need to be, and that's where we will stay. And I appreciate very much Karina bringing this issue to focus. We're proud that you're here, and we're proud that you brought your big heart to this stage.

We're also going to welcome Kem Owens, who learned to love music growing up in Detroit listening to R&B greats. He listened to them on his mom and dad's radio. He taught himself to play piano at the home of his Baptist minister-grandfather. But as a teenager, this good man lost his way. He became addicted to drugs and alcohol, and, eventually, he became homeless. Today he finds a home, a warm home to welcome him. He was sleeping on the ground near a building on the Detroit River, and he said this: God found him and inspired him to set his life straight. With the help of the Almighty, he overcame his addictions and he rediscovered his passion for music. In 2001, he used a credit card to finance the production of an independent CD he called "Kemistry." Get it—Kem Owens? *[Laughter]* Kemistry? *[Laughter]*

The disc sold 10,000 copies in 5 months. It caught the attention of music executives in New York who signed Kem to a major label deal. He has gone on to become one of America's most popular R&B singers. But he knows the audience he's truly playing for. He says, quote, "I want my life to be one that God will be pleased with. I'm by no means a saint." I know what you're saying, Kem. *[Laughter]* But he went on to say: "My eye is on the prize. He's not done with me yet." We're proud to welcome such a man to the White House today.

And finally, Tourie and Damien Escobar discovered their love for the violin in the third grade, and soon found themselves studying classical music at New York's finest conservatories. But they grew up in a tough neighborhood, and soon Tourie and Damien had dropped their music, dropped out of school, and fallen in with a bad crowd. Yet their mother and aunt never gave up hope. And with their encouragement and prayers, these two brothers returned to the music they loved.

They formed a group called Nuttin' But Stringz, performing a new music fusion that bridges classical, R&B, and rap. I'm looking forward to it. *[Laughter]* They started by playing on subways and went on to win amateur music contests at the Apollo Theater. And last month, they released their first album. Here's what Tourie says: "The passion for music and the violin saved my life." And today that passion has brought these talented musicians right here to the White House.

All these artists represent the best of our country. They represent hope and hard work. We're looking forward to hearing them perform. They're going to be in a long list of performers who have come here to be able to entertain the country, to lend their musical talents to this, the people's house.

I appreciate them coming to help us celebrate Black Music Month. I appreciate you all joining to help celebrate Black Music Month. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Miss USA 2007 Rachel Smith; civil rights leader Dorothy I. Height; and Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman, The RLJ Companies.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans

June 22, 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 this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication stating that the Western Balkans emergency is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2007. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on June 23, 2006, 71 *FR* 36183.

The crisis constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, in Kosovo, that led to the declaration of a national emergency on June 26, 2001, in Executive Order 13219 and to amendment of that order in Executive Order 13304 of May 28, 2003, has not been resolved. The acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in Executive Order 13219, as amended, are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to the Western Balkans and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,  
June 22, 2007.

NOTE: The related notice of June 22 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Radio Address

June 23, 2007

Good morning. This week, Senate leaders introduced revised legislation on comprehensive immigration reform. I thank leaders from both parties for their bipartisan effort to fix our immigration system so it can meet the needs of our Nation in the 21st century.

As the Senate takes up this critical bill, I understand that many Americans have concerns about immigration reform, especially about the Federal Government's ability to secure the border. So this bill puts

the enforcement tools in place first. And it means more Border Patrol agents, more fencing, more infrared cameras, and other technologies at the border. It also requires an employee-verification system based on government-issued, tamper-proof identification cards that will help employers ensure that the workers they hire are legal.

Only after these enforcement tools are in place will certain other parts of the bill go into effect. To make sure the government keeps its enforcement commitment,



the bill includes \$4.4 billion in immediate additional funding for these border security and worksite enforcement efforts.

The bill also addresses other problems with immigration enforcement. Right now our laws are ineffective and insufficient. For example, crossing the border illegally carries weak penalties. In addition, participation in illegal gangs is not enough to bar admission into our country. And when we cannot get other countries to accept the return of their citizens who are dangerous criminals, in most cases, our Government can only detain these aliens for 6 months before releasing them into society.

This is unacceptable. The bill before the Senate addresses these problems. Under this bill, those caught crossing illegally will be permanently barred from returning to the United States on a work or tourist visa. Under this bill, anyone known to have taken part in illegal gang activity can be denied admission to our country. And under this bill, we will be able to detain aliens who are dangerous criminals until another country accepts their return.

These enforcement measures are a good start. Yet even with all these steps, we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border. Hundreds of thousands of people come here illegally because our current work visa program does not match the needs of a growing and dynamic economy. To discourage people from crossing our border illegally, this bill creates an orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country legally to work on a temporary basis.

With this program in place, employers will have a practical system to fill jobs Americans are not doing and foreign workers will have a legal way to apply for them. As a result, they won't have to try to sneak in. And that will leave border agents free to chase down drug dealers, human traffickers, and terrorists.

Once the border security and worksite enforcement benchmarks are met, the bill will resolve the status of 12 million people who are now in our country illegally. Under this bill, these workers will be given an opportunity to get right with the law. This is not amnesty. There will be penalties for those who come out of the shadows. If they pass a strict background check, pay a fine, hold a job, maintain a clean criminal record, and eventually learn English, they will qualify for and maintain a Z visa. If they want to get a green card, they have to do all these things plus pay an additional fine, go to the back of the line, and return to their country to apply from there.

This bill provides an historic opportunity to uphold America's tradition of welcoming and assimilating immigrants and honoring our heritage as a nation built on the rule of law. We have an obligation to solve problems that have been piling up for decades. The status quo is unacceptable. We must summon the political courage to move forward with a comprehensive reform bill. By acting now, we can ensure that our laws are respected, that the needs of our economy are met, and that our Nation treats newcomers with dignity and helps them assimilate.

I urge members of both parties to support comprehensive immigration reform. By working together, we can pass this good bill and build an immigration system worthy of our great Nation.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on June 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Toomas Ilves of Estonia June 25, 2007

*President Bush.* We'll make those statements only today.

Mr. President, welcome. It is a high honor to welcome President Ilves to the Oval Office. He is the President of a country which has emerged from some really dark days. And having been in Estonia, I can report to my fellow citizens that people now see the light of day; they see a better future because of the form of government has changed. President Ilves is a very strong advocate for democracy and the marketplace, and as a result, his country is thriving and doing well. And so we welcome you.

I thank you very much for your voice, heard very clearly, for those who suffer under tyrannical societies, and that is, is that freedom is a precious gift to all and that democracy and societies based upon liberty are the best way to not only enable people to realize their talents but to lay the foundation for peace. And along these lines, Estonia has been a very strong friend to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. These young democracies are fighting off extremists.

I was—briefed the President today about my conversation with the Prime Minister of Iraq, as well as our conversations with David Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. Today, once again, we saw the brutality that extremists can inflict upon societies when a suicider killed innocent people who were working toward reconciliation. All the more reason, Mr. President, for us to remain firm and strong as we stand for this young democracy—these young democracies.

The people of Estonia paid a high price. You lost—I know you lost two soldiers in Afghanistan recently, and our thoughts and prayers go to the families and the people of Estonia. We thank you for your sacrifice and just want you to know that we're com-

mitted to working hard to make sure that we succeed, and we succeed for the sake of peace for generations to come.

We talked about a lot of other interesting subjects as well. Of course, the President pushed me very hard on visas. I readily concede there's an inconsistency in our policy where the people of Estonia are treated differently from other people inside Europe, even though the people of Estonia are making great sacrifices for the cause of democracy and liberty alongside with U.S. forces. And to this end, Mr. President, I will continue to pursue with Congress a modernization of the visa program. I thank you for bringing it up, and frankly, I don't blame you for bringing it up.

We also talked about an interesting subject, and one that I can learn a lot about, and that is the cyber attacks that make us all vulnerable. Estonia recently went through a wave of cyber attacks. And this President, one, understands the issue well, two, has got some ideas, including a NATO center of excellence in Estonia to deal with this issue. And I want to—really want to thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your clear understanding of the dangers that that imposes not only on your country, but mine and others as well.

And—but I'm dealing with a man who is a clear thinker. He speaks with moral authority and moral clarity, and he's a voice for reason and hope around the world. And we're proud to welcome you here to the Oval Office.

*President Ilves.* Thank you very much, President Bush. It is great to be back here, to be in the United States, a strong ally of my country, a country that has been with Estonians throughout the cold war, supporting Estonia's desires for democracy and for independence. And even in the darkest of times and since the reestablishment of our independence, has been with

us all along as a very strong partner, strong supporter of our membership in NATO. A country that, whenever things have been tough for us, has stood with us, and it's one reason why Estonia is a strong ally of the United States.

I'm grateful for President Bush's position, which I did push him hard on, on the visa issue. It is something of concern in Estonia, but I think all the other new members of NATO, the ones who are—who have been very good allies in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and our people don't always understand why it is that those people—that—those countries that have been the strongest supporters of the United States find it often the most difficult to come for vacation. But that—I think that is an issue which is more in the hands of Congress, and we hope that Congress will resolve this.

We did, in fact, suffer a series of attacks on our computer infrastructure. It is a serious issue if your most important computer systems go down in a country like mine, where 97 percent of bank transactions are done on the Internet. When you are a highly Internetted country like we are, then these kinds of attacks can do very serious

damage. And I do think it's the wave of the future; not that it's a good wave, but it is something that we have to deal with more and more.

We know that the United States and Israel and Denmark have come under cyber attack before, and I think that it's an issue that will require much more attention in the future. And I'm very happy that two countries that are very vast in terms of information technology can work together on these issues.

So I think that—well, it's a—for me, it's been—it's a very good visit. And I know that President Bush has a busy schedule, but I do hope that when his term in office is up, that you will come to my ranch, which is a lot smaller than yours. [*Laughter*]

*President Bush.* Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker.

## Remarks to the 2007 Presidential Scholars

June 25, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. It's a neat occasion to be able to welcome the 2007 Presidential Scholars. We're glad you're here. I congratulate you on the fine honor, and, of course, we wish you all the very best.

The Presidential Scholars program started in 1964. I was a senior in high school; I didn't make it. [*Laughter*] I know all of you worked hard to reach this day. Your families are proud of your effort, and we welcome your family members here. Your teachers are proud of your effort, and we

welcome your teachers. And our entire Nation is proud to call you Presidential Scholar.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She would have loved to have welcomed you. She is off to Africa. And she's there to make sure that the people on that continent understand that ours is a Nation with a good heart. After all, we're leading the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria on that continent. And so she is spreading the good will of the American taxpayer by representing our country. In my judgment,

there's no finer representative than Laura Bush.

Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. We're proud you're here—the Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. I thank the Members of Congress who have joined us: Senator Lieberman, Congressman Buck McKeon, Congressman Dale Kildee, and Congressman Mike Castle. I'm honored you took time, and so are the Presidential Scholars; they're proud you're here.

I want to thank the members of the Presidential Scholars commission for picking such a fine group of people, and the Presidential Scholars probably want to thank you as well for—[*laughter*]. This is a program that honors high school seniors for exceptional academic and artistic achievements. Past winners have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize, succeed at the highest levels of business, work here at the White House.

This afternoon we honor a new class of promising young men and women. Your fellow scholars have pursued groundbreaking research, written scholarly papers, and performed at Carnegie Hall. Many of you have also reached out to those in need and have given your time for causes greater than any individual need, and, for that, we thank you.

Caterina Yuan shared her passion for service with her classmates at Palo Alto High School in California. She's run food drives, raised thousands of dollars for humanitarian efforts in Africa, and helped organize a schoolwide day of service. She's a scholar, but she's also a humanitarian.

Erin Jaeger, from Keene, New Hampshire, helped bring hope and comfort to those living in poverty and hardship. She made three trips to El Salvador to build houses and visit orphanages.

Charlie Bridge from Belmont, Massachusetts, has given back to his community through teaching. He's tutored disadvantaged middle school students, and he plans to continue this important work this summer.

One person not here today is Max Weaver. He's busy preparing for an engagement at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. In a few days, he's going to begin an intensive basic training regime that cadets like to call "the Beast." We wish him luck, and we thank him and all the other brave men and women who have volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces.

The reason I bring these examples up is that no matter what you do later in life, I can encourage you to use your talents to help other people. The true strength of America is the fact that we've got people of good heart and good soul reaching out to people in need. And I thank you for being leaders and setting a good example.

As we celebrate your accomplishments, we also need to honor those who helped you reach this day. You know, I always say that the first teacher of a child is a mom or a dad. For the moms and dads here, congratulations on doing your job. And I thank the teachers who are here as well. There's no more noble a profession than being a teacher. And I suspect the reason we're honoring Presidential Scholars—or these Presidential Scholars—is because you and their parents set high standards, set a high bar of expectations.

You know, part of the problem we've had in our school system is, for too often and too long that bar wasn't set high enough; that we had too many students who were victims of low expectations. I used to call it "the soft bigotry of low expectations." Schools just shuffled kids from grade to grade, as if the child couldn't learn to read and write and add and subtract. We never measured; we never had any idea how the child was doing until it was too late. And that was unsatisfactory for the United States of America; it's unsatisfactory for the President; it's unsatisfactory for the future.

And that's why when we came to Washington, we worked with Democrats and Republicans to pass what's called the No

Child Left Behind Act. The philosophy behind the law is straightforward. It says the Federal Government should expect results in return for the money it spends. That's not too much to ask, I don't think. If you believe a child can learn to read, then you ought to expect a child to read; that's what you ought to expect. And the only way to determine that is to measure.

And I'm sure some of your classmates would say you don't like to take a test. Well, I didn't either. [Laughter] But that's too bad because the only way to determine whether a child is reading at grade level is to have accountability in our school systems. And that's the basic strategy of No Child Left Behind. It says, here's some money. We expect you to teach. We want to measure to determine if you are teaching. We look forward to patting you on the back, but if you're not teaching a child the basics, then we expect you to change, before it is too late.

Measuring results helps teachers spot problems. In other words, you can't solve a problem until you diagnose it. It gives teachers tools and schools tools, the key tool necessary to determine whether or not a curriculum needs to change or whether or not a child needs to get special attention.

Measuring results gives parents key information about how their child's school is doing. You know, it's amazing how many parents will say, "The school my child goes to is doing just fine." That's what everybody hopes, and that's what everybody assumes, until scores get posted. It's amazing what happens when you hold people to account. It certainly gets a parent's attention when they find out that their child's school isn't doing as good as the neighborhood's school is, for example, or school next door.

No Child Left Behind is working; in other words, we're making good progress. During the most recent 5-year period on record, 9-year-olds made more progress in reading than in the previous 28 years combined. You can't say that unless you measure. You can't stand up in front of the

taxpayers and say, your money is being well spent because we're measuring—we know; we're measuring. Before, it was just—you were just guessing. Now, thanks to No Child Left Behind, there is accountability that's important to be able to report progress to the American people.

Speaking about progress, the nonpartisan Center on Education Policy found that many States have seen reading and math test scores increase since we've passed No Child Left Behind. The study found that minority and low-income students are making some of the biggest gains. And that's positive and important news for the American people.

We had an achievement gap in our country, and it's not right to have an achievement gap in America. And this achievement gap is becoming closed, thanks to hard work by teachers, but also thanks to the fact that we're measuring and correcting problems early, before they're too late.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working, and Congress needs to reauthorize this good piece of legislation. Reauthorizing No Child is one of the top priorities of my administration, and I know it's a top priority of Members of Congress. Buck McKeon is going to be handling the reauthorization on the Republican side in the House of Representatives, and he is determined to work with people in both sides of the aisle, Dale, to help to get this job done. We made a historic commitment, and I believe we have a moral obligation to keep it.

Our ability to compete in the 21st century depends upon educating children just like the ones standing behind me. Whether we like it or not, we're in a global world. And if the world needs engineers and/or scientists, and those scientists are being educated in China and India and not being educated in the United States, the jobs of the 21st century are likely to go there. And so we better make sure that we have a strategy aimed at making sure that we have high expectations and good results for every



child in the United States, if we expect to remain competitive.

Presidential Scholars, you leave your high school with confidence in your ability, and you've got a great foundation for success. We want to make sure that same confidence is instilled in every single child that's getting out of high school. And so what can we do? First, we can make sure No Child Left Behind gets reauthorized. You cannot compete in a global world unless you're certain that we're achieving certain standards. We want every child reading at grade level by the third grade. And the only way you know whether that's the case is, you measure.

And by the way, inherent in No Child Left Behind is a novel idea that said, if a child needs extra help, there's going to be money available to help that child. That's how you make sure that you use the accountability system to achieve results, achieve expectations.

But we need to do more. Our high schools need to have accountability. We want to make sure that same rigor that we've applied in the elementary and middle schools are applied to our high schools. If we want to be competitive, the high school diploma has to mean something. We want to make sure that we expand Advance Placement. I bet most kids here took AP courses, and AP is a great way to raise standards and raise expectations. And we've got to help teachers learn how to teach AP courses as part of our strategy.

We want to make sure that we have a rigorous course of study available for all our kids. We want to make sure we strengthen math and science. And that's why I proposed a program to encourage 30,000 math and science professionals to become part-time teachers. I remember we went to a school in Maryland, Margaret, and there was two guys there that were making science look cool. I can't do that. Most parents aren't able to do that. [*Laughter*] But it's amazing what a scientist can do.

And why do we need that? Why do we need 30,000 math and science professionals to go into classrooms to stimulate interest? Because we can't be a competitive nation without more scientists and more mathematicians. Because in order for us to make sure the best jobs here are in America requires us having mathematicians and scientists and engineers and physicists. And the best way to stimulate that interest is from people who actually know what they're talking about.

We want to make sure that we work with Congress to have extra funding for underperforming schools. I told you if you measure, we got extra money for the children; we also got extra money for underperforming schools. And those schools need flexibility. In other words, we've got to have—trust local folks to make the right decisions for local schools. So Margaret is going to work with the school districts and with the Congress to make sure they've got flexibility to use the resources where they're most needed, to tailor reforms to the specific needs of individual schools.

In other words, people say: "Well, you can't be for No Child Left Behind; it's the Federal Government telling you what to do." Quite the opposite. The Federal Government has said, "We believe in local control of schools; you reform them; you fix them." We're just going to insist that you measure, in return for the billions we spend on your behalf.

Now, I proposed an interesting idea that I hope Congress passes, and that is creating a teacher incentive fund of nearly \$200 million for the next year as the beginning—as a downpayment to encourage teachers to teach in districts where they need a little extra help; reward teachers who will go into these school districts that need high expectations. We need people to walk in and say, the status quo is unacceptable; people who are going to show that educational entrepreneurship necessary to make sure every single child gets a good education.

And I hope Congress works on that with us.

When schools fail to make progress, No Child Left Behind needs to give parents different options. In other words, you cannot tolerate a system where a child is stuck in a school which will not teach and will not change. There has to be a consequence. We've got remedies in the bill that say, we're going to help schools affect their programs, but, ultimately, a parent must be given the ability to transfer their child out to another public school or free tutoring for their children. In other words, there has to be a consequence in order to make sure that there's effectiveness when it comes to reform—schools that need to be reformed. I strongly believe that parents are the frontlines of the decisionmaking and should be empowered—empowered through information and empowered through different options available through the public school system.

We did something else interesting, and I look forward to working with Congress on this—and I must confess, it's slightly controversial—and that is, is that we promoted the first federally funded opportunity scholarship program here in Washington, DC. It basically said to low-income parents that, here's some money to help you send your child to a private school or a parochial school, your choice. In other words, it said, if you're tired of being in a system that simply hasn't met expectations, that there ought to be something different, and that I believe that—I think it's the role of government to help low-income parents have different options.

The program is working. It's over-subscribed. I mean, there are thousands of families that have been helped through this Washington, DC, program, which ought to say to policymakers, there's a huge demand for something better. People are sick of mediocrity in the status quo. Obviously, it hasn't happened with these kids, for which we're grateful. But there's still too many schools that just aren't meeting expecta-

tions. And so I look forward to working to see if we can't expand this kind of program.

The reason I've asked to speak to you is because I want people to understand how important this No Child Left Behind Act is to America and its future. And we will talk about ways to make the law better. I know some Members and Senators have got concerns about the law, and we're more than willing to talk about flexibility. But there is no compromise when it comes to setting high standards and measurement. You cannot compromise away the principle of saying, we expect good results, and we're going to measure to determine whether or not we've achieved those results. And when you've achieved the results that we, a society, expect, we'll give you the big embrace. But if not, for the sake of the country, for the sake of kids who deserve better, we expect you to change. That's what we're going to say, loud and clear and often. And it's working; the program is working.

I want to thank Margaret for working hard with Members of Congress. She's engaged, as you know—she's probably wearing you out, Buck—[laughter]—and Dale. But that's good. She's up there working. Laura is all involved too. She's met with a lot of Members of Congress, and she'll stay involved, as will I. This is a very important piece of legislation. We want every child in America to be a Presidential Scholar. We want every child in this country to realize the great potential of America by starting them off with a good, sound education that lets them realize their dreams.

Ours is a fabulous country. We've got kids standing up here who not only are scholars but have volunteered to help a neighbor in need. We've got people who're volunteering to help protect this country. And the thing we've got to do as policymakers is to make sure that we continue to advance America by giving people the tools necessary to realize the great promise of America.

Thanks for coming. God bless you all, and God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

## Statement on the Approval of Robert B. Zoellick as President of the World Bank

*June 25, 2007*

I welcome the action by the Executive Board of the World Bank to unanimously approve Robert Zoellick as President of the World Bank. Bob Zoellick is a dynamic leader who is deeply committed to the mission of the World Bank in helping struggling nations to defeat poverty, grow their

economies, strengthen transparency and accountability in governance, and offer their people the prospect of a better life. The United States looks forward to continuing our close partnership with the World Bank to achieve these shared goals.

## Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

*June 25, 2007*

Today's Supreme Court decision marks a substantial victory for efforts by Americans to more effectively aid our neighbors in need of help. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative can remain focused on strengthening America's armies of compassion and expanding their good works. Similar efforts by Governors and mayors in States and cities all across the country can also continue to advance.

From the first days of my administration, we've championed the idea that those in need are better served when government draws on the strengths of every willing community partner—secular and faith-based, large and small. My administration has eliminated regulatory and policy barriers in the Federal Agencies, delivered

training and development to more than 50,000 social service entrepreneurs, and competitively awarded tens of thousands of Federal grants to faith-based and community organizations for service to others at home and abroad. These efforts fortify America's safety net and expand our Nation's supply of compassion.

This ruling is a win for the thousands of community and faith-based nonprofits all across the country that have partnered with government at all levels to serve their neighbors. Most importantly, it is a win for the many whose lives have been lifted by the caring touch and compassionate hearts of these organizations.

## Remarks During a Briefing on Immigration Reform June 26, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Thanks for working on an immigration bill that's important for this country. I appreciate your efforts, and I appreciate your time.

I do want to thank Secretary Gutierrez and Secretary Chertoff for their hard work. One of the things I told Members of the Senate was that the administration is going to be involved in crafting a comprehensive bill that's good for the country. And I said, we're going to be more than just giving speeches or using the microphone to proclaim the need for a comprehensive bill. I would send two members plus our staff up to—two members of my Cabinet plus our staff up to work the—to work with the Senators.

And you guys have done a really good job. Thank you for your time. Thanks for your understanding of the complex, carefully crafted piece of legislation that is moving through the Senate. And I—you've done exactly what I asked you to do; that's why you're in the Cabinet. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you all helping work this bill through the Senate.

The first thing that we've got to recognize in the country is that the system isn't working. The immigration system needs reform. The status quo is unacceptable. Most Americans understand that. They say, "Well, we attempted to reform the system in 1986, and the reform didn't work." Our view is, if the status quo is unacceptable, we need to replace it with something that is acceptable, and have been working toward that end with both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate. The reason on the Senate, of course, is that we'll be moving our attention to the House when the Senate passes a comprehensive piece of legislation.

The—I view this as an historic opportunity for Congress to act, for Congress

to replace a system that is not working with one that we believe will work a lot better. In other words, this is a moment for people who have been elected to come together, focus on a problem, and show the American people that we can work together to fix the problem. If you dislike the status quo on immigration, then you ought to be supporting a comprehensive approach to making sure the system works.

And it's a practical approach. The Senate has worked very hard to craft a comprehensive bill. In a good piece of legislation like this—in a difficult piece of legislation like this, you—one side doesn't get everything they want. It's a careful compromise, and many of you have been involved with that compromise.

The problem that this bill recognizes—the bill recognizes that we got to address the problem in a comprehensive fashion. There are people who say, "Well, we've got to do more to protect our border." And they're right, we do have to do more to protect our border. And that's why this bill has a lot of border security measures that will help continue the strategy that we have been implementing over the past year. As a matter of fact, there's a \$4.4 billion direct deposit on enforcement measures. But it's important for our fellow citizens to understand that in order to enforce the border, there has to be a way for people to come to our country on a temporary basis to do work Americans aren't doing. Otherwise, they will continue to try to sneak in across the border.

And therefore, a second aspect of the comprehensive bill is one that addresses the economic needs of our country, and that is a temporary-worker program that will match foreign workers with jobs Americans aren't doing—and notice I say, "temporary-worker program." There are a lot of employers here in this country that worry

about having a workforce that will be able to meet the demands and needs of a growing economy.

There are people who live in our neighborhood and around the world who are desperate to provide food for their families and recognize there are available jobs. And they will do anything to come to our country to work because they want to fight off the poverty and starvation that has affected their loved ones.

It's a powerful incentive to be a mom or a dad to make sure your children don't suffer. That's an incentive. That's an incentive for people here in America; it also happens to be an incentive for people around the world. And therefore, people will be willing to go to extra lengths to avoid border security. They'll be willing to be crammed in the bottom of 18-wheelers. They fall prey to these *coyotes* who smuggle human beings to achieve profit.

When I say the system hadn't worked, the system hadn't worked to enforce our borders like we want. But the system was—also fostered illegal operations that prey upon the human being, and it's not in this Nation's interest that that continue to happen.

And finally, this bill goes to the heart of our values. We have proven that our Nation is capable of assimilating people. And I'm confident that we can continue to be a nation that assimilates. The bill recognizes that English is a part of the assimilation process and wants to help people learn the language in order to be able to take advantage of America.

You know, I've heard all the rhetoric—you've heard it too—about how this is amnesty. Amnesty means that you've got to [you don't have to]\* pay a price for having been here illegally, and this bill does [doesn't do]\* that. But it also recognizes it's in our Nation's interest to bring people out of the shadows, that there's got to be

a way forward that recognizes there is a penalty for being here illegally, on the other hand, that recognizes that each person has got worth and dignity.

I love a country where people come with dreams and aspirations and through hard work can realize those dreams and aspirations. I'm struck every time I hear—I'm struck about our greatness every time I hear a story about a child taking advantage of a mother's or dad's hard work to realize the blessings of America. I was at the Coast Guard Academy—I've told this story several times—and the number-one cadet talked about his migrant grandfather. This fellow was a Mexican American—or is a Mexican American. The father came from—the grandfather came from Mexico to work hard so that, hopefully, someday, somebody in his family would realize the blessings of America. And it worked.

The country is better off, our soul is constantly renewed, our spirit is invigorated, when people come here and realize the blessings of America. And so the bill that we've worked hard to craft is an important piece of legislation that addresses the needs of a failed system, that says, we're going to change for the better.

I want to thank you all for working hard. We've got a couple of days of hard work ahead of us to get the bill through the first stage of the process, and then, of course, when successful in the Senate, we'll be reconvening to figure out how to get the bill out of the House. It's an important piece of legislation. It's an important time to act for the sake of the country.

Thanks for your time. God bless your efforts. God bless our country. Thank you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG.

---

\* White House correction.



## Remarks at a Rededication Ceremony at the Islamic Center of Washington June 27, 2007

*The President.* Imam, thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me. I bring my personal respect to you, sir.

*Imam Abdullah Khouj.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* And I appreciate your friendship. I too want to thank the governors of the Islamic Center. I welcome the Ambassadors. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate other distinguished guests who are here. It is an honor to join you at this rededication ceremony.

As the Imam mentioned, half a century has passed since one of our great leaders welcomed the Islamic Center into our Nation's family of faith. Dedicating this site, President Dwight D. Eisenhower offered America's hand in friendship to Muslims around the world. He asked that together we commit ourselves "to peaceful progress of all men under one God."

Today we gather with friendship and respect to reaffirm that pledge and to renew our determination to stand together in the pursuit of freedom and peace. We come to express our appreciation for a faith that has enriched civilization for centuries. We come in celebration of America's diversity of faith and our unity as free people. And we hold in our hearts the ancient wisdom of the great Muslim poet, Rumi: "The lamps are different, but the light is the same."

Moments like this dedication help clarify who Americans are as a people and what we wish for the world. We live in a time when there are questions about America and her intentions. For those who seek a true understanding of our country, they need to look no farther than here. This Muslim center sits quietly down the road from a synagogue, a Lutheran church, a Catholic parish, a Greek Orthodox chapel, a Buddhist temple, each with faithful followers who practice their deeply held beliefs and live side by side in peace.

This is what freedom offers: societies where people can live and worship as they choose without intimidation, without suspicion, without a knock on the door from the secret police. The freedom of religion is the very first protection offered in America's Bill of Rights. It is a precious freedom. It is a basic compact under which people of faith agree not to impose their spiritual vision on others and, in return, to practice their own beliefs as they see fit. This is the promise of our Constitution and the calling of our conscience and a source of our strength.

The freedom to worship is so central to America's character that we tend to take it personally when that freedom is denied to others. Our country was a leading voice on behalf of the Jewish refuseniks in the Soviet Union. Americans joined in common cause with Catholics and Protestants who prayed in secret behind an Iron Curtain. America has stood with Muslims seeking to freely practice their beliefs in places such as Burma and China.

To underscore America's respect for the Muslim faith here at home, I came to this center 6 days after the 9/11 attacks to denounce incidents of prejudice against Muslim Americans. Today I am announcing a new initiative that will improve mutual understanding and cooperation between America and people in predominately Muslim countries.

I will appoint a special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. This is the first time a President has made such an appointment to the OIC. Our special envoy will listen to and learn from representatives from Muslim states and will share with them America's views and values. This is an opportunity for Americans to demonstrate to Muslim communities our interest in respectful dialog and continued friendship.

We have seen that friendship reflected in the outpouring of support Americans have extended to Muslim communities across the globe during times of war and natural disaster. Americans came to the aid of the victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran and responded with urgency and compassion to the wreckage of the tsunami in Indonesia and Malaysia. Our country defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Today, we are rallying the world to confront genocide in Sudan. Americans of all beliefs have undertaken these efforts out of compassion, conviction, and conscience.

The greatest challenge facing people of conscience is to help the forces of moderation win the great struggle against extremism that is now playing out across the broader Middle East. We've seen the expansion of the concept of religious freedom and individual rights in every region of the world except one. In the Middle East, we have seen instead the rise of a group of extremists who seek to use religion as a path to power and a means of domination.

These self-appointed vanguard—this self-appointed vanguard presumes to speak for Muslims. They do not. They call all Muslims who do not believe in their harsh and hateful ideology “infidels” and “betrayers of the true Muslim faith.” This enemy falsely claims that America is at war with Muslims and the Muslim faith, when in fact it is these radicals who are Islam's true enemy.

They staged spectacular attacks on Muslim holy sites to divide Muslims and make them fight one another. The majority of the victims of their acts of terror are Muslims. In Afghanistan, they have targeted teachers for beatings and murder. In Iraq, they killed a young boy and then boobytrapped his body so it would explode when his family came to retrieve him. They put children in the backseat of a car so they could pass a security checkpoint and then blew up the car with the children still inside. These enemies bombed a wed-

ding reception in Amman, Jordan, a housing complex in Saudi Arabia, a hotel in Jakarta. They claim to undertake these acts of butchery and mayhem in the name of Allah. Yet this enemy is not the true face of Islam; this enemy is the face of hatred.

Men and women of conscience have a duty to speak out and condemn these—this murderous movement before it finds its path to power. We must help millions of Muslims as they rescue a proud and historic religion from murderers and beheaders who seek to soil the name of Islam. And in this effort, modern Muslim leaders have the most powerful and influential voice. We admire and thank those Muslims who have denounced what the Secretary General of the OIC called radical fringe elements who pretend that they act in the name of Islam. We must encourage more Muslim leaders to add to their voices, to speak out against radical extremists who infiltrate mosques, to denounce organizations that use the veneer of Islamic belief to support and fund acts of violence, and to reach out to young Muslims—even in our own country and elsewhere in the free world—who believe suicide bombing may someday be justified.

We need to rally the voices of Muslims who can speak most directly to millions in the Arab world left behind in the global movement toward prosperity and freedom. For decades, the free world abandoned Muslims in the Middle East to tyrants and terrorists and hopelessness. This was done in the interests of stability and peace, but instead the approach brought neither. The Middle East became an incubator for terrorism and despair, and the result was an increase in Muslims' hostility to the West. I have invested the heart of my Presidency in helping Muslims fight terrorism and claim their liberty and find their own unique paths to prosperity and peace.

The efforts underway in Afghanistan and Iraq are central in this struggle, but that struggle is not going to end the threats; it's not going to end there. We believe the

ultimate success of Afghans and Iraqis will inspire others who want to live in freedom as well. We will work toward a day when a democratic Palestine lives side by side with Israel in peace. We have seen stirrings of a democratic future in other parts of the Middle East, though it will take time for liberty to flower. A democratic future is not a plan imposed by Western nations; it is a future that the people of the region will seize for themselves. A future of freedom is the dream and the desire of every loving heart.

We know this because of the 8 million people who braved threats and intimidation to vote in Afghanistan. We know this because of the nearly 12 million people who cast ballots in free elections in Iraq. And we know this because the world watched as the citizens of Lebanon raised the banner of the Cedar Revolution, drove out their Syrian occupiers, and chose new leaders under free elections. Even now the hope for freedom is felt in some dark corners in the Middle East, whispering in living rooms and coffee houses and in classrooms. Millions seek a path to the future

where they can say what they think, travel where they wish, and worship as they choose. They plead in silence for their liberty, and they hope someone, somewhere will answer.

So today, in this place of free worship, in the heart of a free nation, we say to those who yearn for freedom from Damascus to Tehran: You are not bound forever by your misery. You plead in silence no longer. The free world hears you. You are not alone. America offers you its hand in friendship. We work for the day when we can welcome you into the family of free nations. We pray that you and your children may one day know freedom at all things, including the freedom to love and to worship the Almighty God.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. at the mosque. In his remarks, he referred to Imam Abdullah Khouj, director, the Islamic Center of Washington, DC; and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general, Organization of the Islamic Conference.

## Remarks Following a Discussion on Health Care

*June 27, 2007*

Good afternoon. Thank you all for being here. I just finished a really interesting and good discussion with a group of distinguished health care experts. I appreciate you all taking your time. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here as well.

These men and women have different specialties, different backgrounds, and different ideas, but they all agree on the—an important fact: America's health care system is in need of serious reform. And I agree. The American people share that belief as well. In my conversations with Republicans and Democrats and businessowners and workers, I hear the

same concerns: America's health care is too costly, it's too confusing, it leaves too many people uninsured.

The fundamental question is, what should we do about it? On that question, our Nation has a clear choice. One option is to put more power in the hands of government by expanding Federal health care programs and empowering bureaucrats to make medical decisions. The other option is to put more power in the hands of individuals by making private health insurance more affordable and accessible and empowering people and their doctors to make the

decisions that are right for them. That's the divide.

Debate between these two options is now beginning to play out on Capitol Hill. Democrat leaders in Congress are considering a massive expansion of government health care through a program called SCHIP, which stands for State Children's Health Insurance Program. This program was designed to ensure that poor children without health insurance receive the medical care they need. I support SCHIP for that purpose. I think it makes sense to have a program to help poor children get the health insurance they need.

My budget increases funding for the poor children in SCHIP. The problem is that Democrats want to expand SCHIP far beyond its original intent. If their proposal becomes law, SCHIP would expand its reach to include children from family that earn as much as \$80,000 a year as well as some adults. This is a massive expansion of the program.

And as a result, many of these people would give up the private health insurance they have now as they move to government health care. In fact, a recent study estimated that as many as half the children enrolling in SCHIP would drop their private health coverage, which is contrary to the program's original purpose.

The Democrats' proposal is part of a larger strategy. At the same time that they try to expand SCHIP to older citizens, they are trying to expand Medicare to younger citizens. Their goal is to take incremental steps down the path to government-run health care for every American. It's the wrong path for our Nation. Government-run health care would deprive Americans of the choice and competition that comes from the private market. It would cause huge increases in government spending, which could lead to higher taxes. It would result in rationing, inefficiency, and long waiting lines. It would replace the doctor-patient relationship with dependency on people here in Washington, DC.

And there's a better way forward. We strongly believe that the SCHIP proposal put forward by some Democrats in Congress needs to be resisted. And here's what we believe. We believe there's a better alternative. Instead of expanding SCHIP beyond its purpose, we should return its focus to the children most in need. And instead of encouraging people to drop private coverage in favor of government plans, we should work to make basic private health insurance affordable for all Americans.

My administration is pursuing this goal in a variety of innovative ways. We created health savings accounts which allow people to save, tax free, for routine medical expenses and help reduce the cost of private insurance. We're working to pass association health plans so that small businesses can insure their workers with private coverage at the same discounts that big businesses get. We're working to stop junk lawsuits to drive up private insurance premiums and good doctors out of practice.

The best way to make private insurance more affordable, however, is to reform the Tax Code. Under current law, workers who are fortunate enough to get health insurance from their employers receive a tax benefit. But if you buy insurance on your own, you get no tax benefit.

That's unfair, so I propose leveling the playing field. Under my plan, every family with private health coverage will receive a standard tax deduction of \$15,000. That means families could deduct \$15,000 from their income before they pay taxes, no matter where they get their health insurance. I'm pleased that many health care experts and Members of Congress share the objective for ending a bias in the Tax Code.

Now, I recognize some of them believe a tax credit for health insurance would be a better way to do so. For example, some have proposed a tax credit of \$5,000 for every family with private coverage. This would have a similar outcome as the standard deduction I proposed, and I'm open

to further discussions about this—about these two options.

Whichever plan we choose, reforming the Tax Code would have a major impact on American health care. That's what's important for our citizens to understand. There's a better way from expanding the government, and that is to reform the Tax Code. For example, just as tax incentives for homeownership have encouraged more Americans to buy homes through the private housing market, new incentives for health insurance would lead more Americans to buy coverage through the private health insurance market. And that's what we want. That ought to be the goal of this country.

By reforming the Tax Code, it would help more than 100 million people who are now covered by employer-provided insurance reduce their tax bills. Those who now purchase health insurance on their own would save money on their taxes for the first time. And as many as 20 million others who have no health insurance would purchase basic coverage.

While the Federal Government is working to reform the Tax Code, States should address other problems in our health care system. That's precisely what the Secretary is doing, working with our States. States should make reforms to ensure that their citizens have access to basic private health insurance. It's a dual responsibility. If we want a better system, the Federal Govern-

ment has got a responsibility to reform, and so do States. As they do so, they should ensure that help is provided to those who can least afford coverage.

We're at a decisive moment in the debate over health care. The choices we make now will set the direction of medical care in America for years to come. I'm going to continue to work with members of both parties to look past tired, old proposals that make bigger government programs the solution to every problem. I'm going to continue to push for new and innovative ways to help every American afford basic private health insurance. I will continue to put my trust in the good judgment of the American people, and I'll put my trust in the finest system of private medicine in the world.

I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for your interest. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Participating in the discussion were Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt; John B. Breaux, senior counsel, Patton Boggs; Stuart M. Butler, vice president of domestic and economic policy studies, Heritage Foundation; Len Nichols, director, health policy program, New America Foundation; C. Eugene Steuerle, senior fellow, Urban Institute; Grace-Marie Turner, president, Galen Institute; and Gail Wilensky, senior fellow, Project HOPE.

## Remarks at Opening Day of 2007 White House Tee-Ball *June 27, 2007*

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to opening day right here on the South Lawn of the White House. Jonas Brothers, thank you guys. It's good to see you. Proud you're here. As usual, you did a fantastic job with the national anthem. Just give them a hand.

I'm proud to be here with the commissioner of tee-ball today, two-time Olympic gold medalist, Michele Smith. Thanks for coming, Michele. Proud to be with you.

First, we want to welcome to tee-ball here on the South Lawn the Bobcats from



Allegany County Little League, Cumberland, Maryland. And we want to welcome their mighty opponent from Luray, Virginia, the Red Wings. The commissioner and I wish the girls all the very best. We want to thank the coaches, and, of course, we want to thank the parents for coming. We welcome you here—opening day of tee-ball on the South Lawn.

I do want to thank the Arizona Wildcat national champs for joining us today. Taryne Mowatt, the coach at first base; Taryne, thanks for coming. Congratulations, Caitlin Lowe, the third base coach. We've got bench coaches; we've got the team. We want to wish you all the very best next year. For this would be a three-peat, right? Good luck to you all. Thanks for setting such a fine example.

One reason that we invited the Wildcats to come today to honor these girls softball teams is because it's in the Nation's interest to promote women athletics. We're a big believer in Title IX programs. We think it's good for America that our women are playing sports. And the best way to convince women to play sports is to start early. So these champs are here to encourage these young girls to play hard, play often, and play good. And one day you may be national champs as well. So thanks for coming. We're glad you're here.

I do want to thank Mayor Ralph Dean of Luray. I forgot to welcome you, Mr. Mayor. We're proud you're here. Thanks for coming. We want to thank Girl Scouts of USA for joining us today. Girls, thanks for bearing the colors. We thank you for coming. We're proud you're here. Thanks for being Scouts.

And by the way, we're about to get the first pitch in. And Meredith Cripe is going to give me the ball in a minute. Meredith,

we're really glad you're here. Thanks for coming. It's a big day to be here to put out the first pitch on opening day, and we're glad we selected you.

I do want to thank Hannah Storm, the announcer today. Hannah, thanks for lending your talent, mother of three soon-to-be all-star softball players. We're glad you're here. We want to thank the Little League International staff. Thanks for putting on this event. Thanks for supporting Little League baseball. Thanks for helping our kids understand the blessings of exercise and team sports.

I do want to thank representatives from the YWCA, the Boys and Girls Club of America, and Girls on the Run.

And finally, after this event, the commissioner and I are going to present each of you all a token of our appreciation for you coming, and we're also going to say thanks to Erica Minor, who is the youth volunteer. We like to honor people who serve their neighbors; love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves. And Erica is such a person.

And now, before we begin the game and before you give me the ball, Meredith, we're going to have the Little League Pledge. Are you ready? Ready to go? Here we go.

*[At this point, the pledge was recited.]*

Play ball.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers, the Jonas Brothers; Meredith Cripe, member, Chantilly, Virginia, Little League Challenger League; and Hannah Storm, anchor, CBS News "The Early Show."

## Statement on the Appointment of Tony Blair as Quartet Representative in the Middle East

June 27, 2007

Earlier today, I spoke with Prime Minister Blair. It has been my pleasure to work with Tony Blair over the last 6½ years. He is not only a friend, but is also a visionary leader who has prepared his country to face challenges and opportunities over the horizon. Tony is a man who stands up for his beliefs and has the courage of his convictions. Because of his steadfast resolve in the war on terror, millions of people around the world now enjoy the great rights of freedom and democracy.

I am pleased that this capable man has agreed to continue his work for peace in the Middle East. I welcome the appointment of Tony Blair as the Quartet rep-

resentative. In his new role, Tony will help Palestinians develop the political and economic institutions they will need for a democratic, sovereign state able to provide for its people and live in peace and security with Israel. I thank him for his willingness to give his time to this goal, which would be a historic step toward peace in the Middle East.

As he leaves the post of Prime Minister and as he undertakes a new role as Quartet representative, the people of the United States of America express our gratitude for his strong friendship and his continued efforts to lay the foundations for freedom in the Middle East.

## Remarks on the Nomination of Admiral Michael G. Mullen To Be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General James E. Cartwright To Be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

June 28, 2007

*The President.* Good morning. Thank you all for coming. Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us. I am sending to the United States Senate my nomination of Admiral Mike Mullen to be America's next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I'm sending my nomination of General James Cartwright to be the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mike Mullen and Hoss Cartwright are experienced military officers. They're highly qualified for these important positions. I thank them for agreeing to serve their country in these new capacities. We welcome Mike's wife Deborah and sons, John and Michael. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for wearing the uniform. Hoss's wife got stuck on an airplane. *[Laughter]* I'm sure she's going to forgive him—

*[laughter]*—and hopefully, forgive me. I thank you all for being here and joining on this—joining these good men on this exciting day for them.

America is at war, and we're at war with brutal enemies who have attacked our Nation and who would pursue nuclear weapons, who would use their control over oil as economic blackmail, and who intend to launch new attacks on our country. In such times, one of the most important decisions a President makes is the appointment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chairman is our Nation's highest-ranking military officer. He is the principal military adviser to the President, to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council. He is responsible for ensuring that our

military forces are ready to meet any challenge.

Admiral Mike Mullen is uniquely qualified to take on these important responsibilities. Mike has had an illustrious military career, spanning nearly four decades. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1968. He earned an advanced degree from the Naval Postgraduate School. He has commanded three ships, a cruiser-destroyer group, and an aircraft carrier battle group. He served as commander of NATO's Joint Forces Command in Naples, Italy, with responsibility for Alliance missions in the Balkans, Iraq, and Mediterranean. He served as commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

At the Pentagon, he has served as the Navy's Director of Surface Warfare, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Requirements, and Assessments, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and Chief of Naval Operations. Mike is a man of experience, of vision, and high integrity. He is the right man to lead America's Armed Forces. And, Mike, I thank you for agreeing to take on this important assignment.

I'm also nominating an outstanding military officer to serve as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hoss Cartwright. He's a graduate of the University of Iowa. He earned an advanced degree from the Naval War College. He completed a fellowship at MIT. He's a Marine aviator who has commanded deployed marines at all levels. He has broad experience on the Joint Staff, having served twice in the Directorate of Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment.

And since 2004, he's served as head of the U.S. Strategic Command. In that position, Hoss has been in charge of America's nuclear arsenal, missile defenses, space operations, information operations, global command and control, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and our Nation's efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction. These are vital responsibilities, and Hoss has met them with honor, skill, and

integrity. He has earned my trust and my confidence. And he's going to make an outstanding Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Upon confirmation by the Senate, Mike Mullen and Hoss Cartwright will succeed two of America's finest military officers, General Pete Pace and Admiral Ed Giambastiani. Pete Pace has been at my side most of my Presidency, serving first as my Vice Chairman—as the Vice Chairman and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We've been through a lot together. Pete was with me after the attacks of September the 11th. He played a key role in planning America's response to that brutal assault on the American homeland.

With the help of his leadership, our men and women in uniform brought down brutal dictatorships in Afghanistan and Iraq. It liberated 50 million people from unspeakable oppression. He's helped lead our military through unprecedented campaigns. And as he has done so, Pete never took his eye off the horizon and the threats that still lie ahead. He played a critical role in transforming our military for challenges of a new century. He made sure that future benefits—future generations will benefit from the reforms that he has set in motion.

Pete made history as the first marine to serve as Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I'm going to remember him simply as one of the best military officers and finest men I've been privileged to know. I'm grateful for his friendship, his sense of humor, and his character. I also thank—I thank him for the life of service, and I thank his wife Lynne and his children as well.

I'm also grateful to Admiral Ed Giambastiani. I just call him "Admiral G." I appreciated his outstanding leadership as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He's an officer of character and vision, and I appreciate his insights and his strong military advice.

Prior to his service as Vice Chairman, Admiral G helped lead the transformation of our military as commander of the U.S.

Joint Forces Command. He helped strengthen the NATO Alliance as the first Supreme Allied Commander Transformation. Ed has given 37 years of dedicated service to our country. His work will affect the security of our Nation for decades to come. I thank him for his devotion to duty. I thank his wife Cindy and their children as well.

Pete Pace and Ed Giambastiani are hard acts to follow. I can think of none more qualified to follow them than the men whose nominations I have—sending to the United States Senate today. I call on the Senate to quickly confirm Mike Mullen and Hoss Cartwright. I thank these fine officers

and their families for continuing to serve our country.

Thank you all for coming.

[At this point, Chairman-designate Adm. Mullen and Vice Chairman-designate Gen. Cartwright made brief remarks.]

*The President.* Thank you all. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:47 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman-designate Adm. Mullen and Vice Chairman-designate Gen. Cartwright.

## Remarks at the Naval War College and a Question-and-Answer Session in Newport, Rhode Island

June 28, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks, Governor; appreciate you. Go find a nice seat. [Laughter] I am really pleased to be among the best and brightest of the United States military. I am pleased to be with many here who represent nations from around the world. Thanks for coming by. [Laughter] Those who go to school here are at a great place. We actually have some things in common. We went to school in New England. [Laughter] We pursued advanced degrees. And we compiled outstanding academic records—[laughter]—well, two out of three. [Laughter]

The Naval War College is where the United States military does some of its finest thinking. You help the Navy define its mission. You support its combat readiness. You strengthen our maritime security cooperation with other countries. You train our officers to think strategically. And that's important. The United States Navy is one

of the most professional and advanced navies in—the world has ever seen, and the men and women of the Naval War College are working to keep it that way, and I appreciate your work.

More than a century ago, the president of this college wrote a book called “The Influence of Sea Power Upon History.” The book was read by Theodore Roosevelt. It affected American strategic thinking for decades to come. Now we're in a new and unprecedented war against violent Islamic extremists. This is an ideological conflict we face against murderers and killers who try to impose their will. These are the people that attacked us on September the 11th and killed nearly 3,000 people. The stakes are high, and, once again, we have to change our strategic thinking.

The major battleground in this war is Iraq. And this morning I'm going to give you an update on the strategy we're pursuing in Iraq. I'll outline some of the indicators that will tell us if we're succeeding.

And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit with you.

I appreciate the Governor of this great State and his wife Sue. I'm proud to call you friend, and thank you very much for your thoughtfulness today. The Governor gave me a helicopter tour of this beautiful part of the world. The tall ships were magnificent.

Rear Admiral Shuford and his wife Cathy, thanks, as well, for being in the military; thanks for leading; and thanks for inviting me here. I appreciate Rear Admiral Tom Eccles, commander, Naval Undersea Warfare Center. I thank my friends, Governors who have joined us: Governor Jodi Rell, Governor Mark Sanford, Governor Matt Blunt. One day we'll all be members of the ex-Governors club. *[Laughter]* Later, rather than sooner, in your case. *[Laughter]* I appreciate all the other State and local officials, the students here, the faculty here, and the alumni here. Thanks for coming.

Earlier this year, I laid out a new strategy for Iraq. I wasn't pleased with what was taking place on the ground. I didn't approve of what I was seeing. And so I called together our military and said, can we design a different strategy to succeed? And I accepted their recommendations. And this new strategy is different from the one we were pursuing before. It is being led by a new commander, General David Petraeus, and a new ambassador, Ryan Crocker. It recognizes that our top priority must be to help the Iraqi Government and its security forces protect their population from attack, especially in Baghdad, the capital. It's a new mission, and David Petraeus is in Iraq carrying it out. Its goal is to help the Iraqis make progress toward reconciliation, to build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law, and is an ally against the extremists in this war.

And it's in our interests; it's in our national interests to help them succeed. America has sent reinforcements to help the Iraqis secure their population. In other

words, one of the decisions I had to make was, what should our troop levels be? I asked the military what they thought the troop levels ought to be. That's what you expect from your Commander in Chief, to consult closely with the United States military in times of war. They made recommendations, and I sent the reinforcements in to help the Iraqis secure their population, to go after terrorists, insurgents, and militias that incite sectarian violence, and to help get this capital of Iraq under control.

The last of the reinforcements arrived in Iraq earlier this month, and the full surge has begun. One of our top commanders, Ray Odierno, puts it this way: "We are beyond a surge of forces, and we're now into a surge of operations." Today I am going to give you an update on how these operations are proceeding. I'll talk about the progress and challenges regarding reconciliation at both the national and local levels. And I'm going to outline some of the criterion we will be using to tell us if we are succeeding.

Let me begin with Anbar Province. You can see here on the map; Anbar is a largely Sunni Province that accounts for nearly a third of Iraqi territory. It's a big place. Anbar stretches from the outskirts of Baghdad to Iraq's borders with Jordan and Syria. It was Al Qaida's chief base of operations in Iraq. Remember, when I mention Al Qaida, they're the ones who attacked the United States of America and killed nearly 3,000 people on September the 11th, 2001. They're part of the enemy. They're extremists and radicals who try to impose their view on the world.

According to a captured document—in other words, according to something that we captured from Al Qaida—they had hoped to set up its—a government in Anbar. And that would have brought them closer to their stated objective of taking down Iraq's democracy, building a radical Islamic empire, and having a safe haven from which to launch attacks on Americans



at home and abroad. This is what the enemy said. And I think it is vital that the United States of America listen closely to what the enemy says.

Last September, Anbar was all over the news. It was held up as an example of America's failure in Iraq. The papers cited a leaked intelligence report that was pessimistic about our prospects there. One columnist summed it up this way: "The war is over in Anbar Province, and the United States lost."

About the same time some folks were writing off Anbar, our troops were methodically clearing Anbar's capital city of Ramadi of terrorists and winning the trust of the local population. In parallel with these efforts, a group of tribal sheiks launched a movement called The Awakening and began cooperating with American and Iraqi forces. These sheiks, these leaders were tired of murder and tired of mayhem that Al Qaida had brought to their towns and communities. They knew exactly who these folks were.

To capitalize on the opportunity, I sent more marines into Anbar. And gradually, they have been helping the locals take back their Province from Al Qaida.

These operations are showing good results. Our forces are going into parts of Anbar where they couldn't operate before. With the help of Iraqi and coalition forces, local Sunni tribes have driven Al Qaida from most of Ramadi. Attacks there are now down to a 2-year low. Recruiting of Iraqi police forces now draws thousands of candidates, compared to a few hundred just a few months ago. This month, Anbar opened its first police academy. And as the slide shows, overall attacks in Anbar are sharply down from this time last year.

Despite successes, Anbar Province remains a dangerous place. Why? Because Al Qaida wants their base of operations back; it's working to assassinate sheiks and intimidate the local population. We've got to prepare ourselves for more violence and more setbacks. But a Province that had

been written off as hopeless now enjoys a level of peace and stability that was unimaginable only a few months ago.

We are hoping to replicate the success we have had in Anbar in other parts of Iraq, especially in areas in and around Baghdad. In the months since I announced our new strategy, we have had—we've been moving reinforcements into key Baghdad neighborhoods and the areas around the capital to help secure the population. I told you what the mission was, and that's what we're doing. We—now we have launched a wider offensive called Operation Phantom Thunder, which is taking the fight to the enemy in the capital as well as its surrounding regions. This operation focuses on defeating Al Qaida terrorists, the insurgents, and militias, denying the extremists safe havens, and breaking up their logistics, supply, and communications.

This map shows Baghdad and its surrounding areas. In January, I explained that 80 percent of Iraq's sectarian violence occurs within 30 miles of the capital. Although some of the violence that plagues Baghdad is homegrown, a good part of it originates from terrorists operating in the surrounding areas. If we can clear these strongholds of Al Qaida and death squads, we can improve life for the citizens of the areas and inhibit the enemy's ability to strike within the capital. And this is what Phantom Thunder is designed to do.

I am going to describe some of the operations that are unfolding in different areas around the capital.

To the north of Baghdad, our forces have surged into Diyala Province. The primary focus is the Provincial capital of Baqubah, which is just an hour's car ride from Baghdad. There, masked gunmen enforce their brutal rule with prisons and torture chambers and punish crimes like smoking.

In one building, our forces discovered a medical facility for the terrorists. That tells us the enemy was preparing itself for a sustained and deadly fight. They had burrowed in. There was no resistance. They

were trying to export their violence to the capital. Iraqi and American troops are now fighting block by block. The colonel leading the assault says, "We have denied Al Qaida a major bastion." The city is cleared. The challenge, of course, is going to be for coalition and Iraqi forces to keep it that way. But we're making progress in Operation Phantom Thunder.

To the southeast of Baghdad, we are going after Al Qaida in safe havens they established along the Tigris River. These safe havens include areas like Salman Pak and Arab Jabour, areas well known for sending car bombs and truck bombs into Baghdad. Extremists in many of these areas are being confronted by U.S. and Iraqi forces for the first time in 3 years. We can expect determined resistance. They don't like to be confronted. But General Petraeus says, "In order to accomplish the mission, we're going to confront them with the finest military ever assembled on the face of the Earth." That's the U.S. military. Our forces are determined, and we're going to take those safe havens away from Al Qaida and the extremists.

To the west and northwest of Baghdad, Operation Phantom Thunder is going after Al Qaida's remaining outposts in Anbar. We're taking the fight to areas around Karmah; it's a known transit point for Al Qaida fighters. One example of what we are now seeing, U.S. and Iraqi forces in Fallujah seized 25,000 gallons of nitric acid, a critical ingredient for car bombs and truck bombs. The deputy commander of U.S. forces west of Baghdad says, "We have largely succeeded in driving the terrorists out of Anbar's population centers." He says, "The surge has given us the troops we needed to really clear up those areas, so we cleared them, and we stayed."

Within Baghdad itself, the surge of forces has allowed us to establish a presence in areas where the terrorists and insurgents had embedded themselves among the people. In the past 2 weeks alone, our troops in Baghdad have captured five militia cells.

Some of the names you will be hearing in the next few months will include places like Adhamiyah, Rashid, and Mansour. These areas are important because they represent so-called sectarian faultlines, locations where Shi'a extremists and Al Qaida terrorists are attempting to reignite sectarian violence through murder and kidnappings and other violent activities. Until these areas and others like them are secured, the people of Baghdad can't be protected; they can't go about their lives.

Right now, we're at the beginning stage of the offensive. We finally got the troops there. Americans have got to understand, it takes awhile to mobilize additional troops and move them from the United States to Iraq. And we got them there. And now we're beginning to move. And there are hopeful signs. Last week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior Al Qaida leaders north of Baghdad: one who operated a cell that helped move foreign fighters into Iraq and another who served as a courier for the same cell.

Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are now down substantially from what they were in January. We are finding arms caches at more than three times the rate a year ago. Although the enemy continues to carry out sensational attacks, the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been down in May and June. And because U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.

On the ground, our forces can see the difference the surge is making. General Petraeus recently described what he called astonishing signs of normalcy. He said that about Baghdad. He talks about professional soccer leagues and amusement parks and vibrant markets. In the mixed Shi'a-Sunni neighborhood of Rashid, our foot patrols discovered a wall with two Arabic sentences

spray-painted on them. It's just a small example. It certainly didn't get any news, but it says, "Yes, yes to the new security plan. No difference between Shi'a and Sunni."

The fight's been tough. It's a tough fight, and it is going to remain difficult. We've lost some good men and women. And even as our troops are showing some success in cornering and trapping Al Qaida, they face a lot of challenges. After all, the people of Iraq lived for decades under the brutal dictatorship that bred distrust. And so there's still sectarian tensions. The feelings are being exploited, and they're being manipulated by outsiders. Iran, for example, continues to supply deadly IED explosives that are being used against American forces. It is also providing training in Iran as well as funding and weapons for Iraqi militias. Meanwhile, Syria continues to be a transit station for Al Qaida and other foreign fighters on their way to Iraq.

Influx of foreign fighters and foreign support makes this job a lot tougher, tougher on the Iraqis, tougher on our troops. We can expect more casualties as our forces enter enemy strongholds and push back against foreign interference. But General Petraeus and our commanders in Iraq have carefully laid out a plan that our forces are executing on the ground. It's a well-conceived plan by smart military people, and we owe them the time, and we owe them the support they need to succeed.

I fully agree with the military that says this is more than a military operation. Have to be making tough decisions—the Iraqis have got to be making tough decisions towards reconciliation. And that's why I will keep the pressure on Iraqi leaders to meet political benchmarks they laid out for themselves. Now, at home, most of the attention's focused on important pieces of legislation that the Iraqi Parliament must pass to foster political reconciliation, including laws to share oil revenues, hold Provincial elections, and bring more people into the political process. I speak to the Prime Minister and I speak to the Presidency

Council quite often, and I remind them, we expect the Government to function and to pass law.

Many Americans have been frustrated by the slow pace of legislation, as have I. However, I think we ought to put the challenge into perspective. In a democracy, the head of government just can't decree the outcome. [Laughter] I'm not saying that's what I'd like to do. [Laughter] Some in Washington are suggesting that's what I'd like to do. The Iraqi Parliament is composed of members representing many different religions and ethnicities: Sunnis, Shi'a, Turkoman, Kurds, and others.

Even in a long-established democracy, it's not easy to pass important pieces of legislation in a short period of time. We're asking the Iraqis to accomplish all these things at a time when their country is being attacked. I make no excuses; we will continue to keep the pressure up. We expect there to be reconciliation. We expect them to pass law.

On the benchmarks not related to legislation, they're doing better. Prime Minister Maliki promised to provide three brigades to support the operations in Baghdad, and he did. Iraqi leaders promised to give military commanders the authority they need to carry out our plans, and for the most part, they have. In addition, Iraqis have helped reduce sectarian violence and established joint security stations. The Iraqi Ministry of Defense is working hard to improve its logistical capabilities. It's going to spend nearly \$2 billion of its own funds this year to equip and modernize its forces. The Iraqi Government appropriated \$2 billion so their force can become more modern, so their force is more ready to take the fight to the enemy.

With the help of our troops, the Iraqi security forces are growing in number; they are becoming more capable, and coming closer to the day when they can assume responsibility for defending their own country. Not all this progress is even, and we're going to keep pressing the Iraqis to keep

their commitments. Yet we must keep in mind that these benchmarks are aimed at improving life for the Iraqi people, and that is the standard by which they should be judged.

To evaluate how life is improving for the Iraqis, we cannot look at the country only from the top down. We need to go beyond the Green Zone and look at Iraq from bottom up. This is where political reconciliation matters the most because it is where ordinary Iraqis are deciding whether to support new Iraq or to sit on the fence, uncertain about the country's future. I'm encouraged, and, more importantly, the people in Baghdad are encouraged by what we're seeing. Citizens are forming neighborhood watch groups. Young Sunnis are signing up for the army and police. Tribal sheiks are joining the fight against Al Qaida. Many Shi'a are rejecting the militias.

Much progress we are seeing is the result of the work of our Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These teams bring together military and civilian experts to help local Iraqi communities pursue reconciliation, strengthen moderates, and speed the transition to Iraqi self-reliance. PRTs in Anbar are working with Iraqi judges to restore the rule of law with new trials for terrorist detainees. The PRT in Ramadi helped the Provincial council pass a budget that appropriates more than \$100 million for capital expenditures so people can begin rebuilding their Province and people can find work. PRT in Kirkuk is extending microloans to finance reconstruction and help stimulate job creation. The PRT in Ninewah has created more than 1,000 jobs through infrastructure projects that range from renovating a hospital to paving roads to building a new soccer field.

This bottom-up approach to reconciliation and reconstruction is not headline grabbing. You don't read a lot about it, but it is making a difference in the lives of Iraqi citizens. It's ongoing, and we need to make sure it continues.

We are also encouraged by the way Iraqis are responding to atrocities intended to inflame passions and provoke reprisals. In early 2006—things were going fine in 2005. You might remember, at the end, we had an election where 12 million people showed up, an astonishing moment for the Middle East. And I frankly wasn't surprised because I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe everybody wants to be free; that's what I believe.

I wasn't surprised, but I was pleased. I was pleased to hear the stories of Iraqis who got to vote and their joy in voting. Al Qaida wasn't pleased. As a matter of fact, they were frightened by the advance of democracy. You see, democracy is the opposite of their ideology. These folks believe something; it's just the opposite of what we believe. I remind people, one of the great, precious gifts of America is the right for people to worship or not worship and be equally American, that we're all Americans, that we're all Americans together, whether you're a Christian, Jew, Muslim, or don't believe. It's the opposite of what Al Qaida believes. They believe if you don't worship the way they tell you to, they're likely going to kill you.

And so they didn't like the advance of democracy in 2005. And so in early 2006, they blew up the Golden Mosque in Samarra. It's one of Shi'a Islam's holiest sites. It set off a spiral of sectarian killing. Earlier this month, in an attack that had all the hallmarks of Al Qaida, the terrorists went back to their old playbook and blew up the minarets on the same mosque.

This time, Iraqi leaders united immediately in rejecting the attack. They took swift and aggressive actions to prevent a rerun of last year's violence. Prime Minister Maliki imposed a curfew, ordered additional security for holy places, and convened a meeting of Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish leadership. He traveled to Samarra with his Defense and Interior Ministers to demonstrate their commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Now, look, there are still some reprisals that have occurred, and it's too early to judge whether the Government's efforts will be enough to prevent a spiral of violence that we saw after last year's attacks. But it is not too early to say that the response by the Iraqi leadership has been impressive and very different from what it was the last time around.

One reason it is different is that the Iraqis are beginning to understand that Al Qaida is the main enemy for Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurds alike. Al Qaida is responsible for the most sensational killings in Iraq. They're responsible for the sensational killing on U.S. soil, and they're responsible for the sensational killings in Iraq. Here at home, we see the bloody aftermath of a suicide bombing in an Iraqi market, and we wonder what kind of people would do that. That's what we wonder. We're good-hearted people. Our commanders tell me that 80 to 90 percent of these suicide bombings are the work of foreign fighters—people who don't like the advance of an alternative to their ideology—and they come in and murder the innocent to achieve their objective.

And that's their strategy. Al Qaida's strategy is use—is to use human beings as bombs to create grisly images for the world to see. They understand that sensational images are the best way to overwhelm the quiet progress on the ground. They aim to cultivate a sense of despair about the future of a free Iraq. They hope to gain by the television screen what they cannot gain on the battlefield against U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Our success in Iraq must not be measured by the enemy's ability to get a car bombing into the evening news. No matter how good the security, terrorists will always be able to explode a bomb on a crowded street. In places like Israel, terrorists have taken innocent human life for years in similar attacks. The difference is that Israel is a functioning democracy that is not prevented from carrying out its responsibilities.

And that's a good indicator of success that we're looking for in Iraq: the rise of a government that can protect its people, deliver basic services for all its citizens, and function as a democracy even amid violence.

We're involved in a broader war against these ideological killers. Iraq is just a theater in this war. The extremists understand this, that if the Middle East knows—if the Middle East know that if the Iraqis succeed, it's going to be a terrible blow to their ambitions. That's what they see. But they also feel the same way about Afghanistan, where the Taliban, one-time allies of Al Qaida, is trying to murder its way back into power; or in Lebanon, where extremists are trying to bring down that nation's democratic Government; or in the Palestinian Territories, where terrorists have set off a suicidal war; or in Iran, where the Government pursues nuclear weapons while its President declares that Israel must be wiped off the map.

The stakes are high in the beginning stages of this global war against ideologues that stand for the exact opposite of what America stands for. And what makes the more—the war even more significant is that what happens overseas matters to the security in the United States of America, as we learned on September the 11th, when killers were able to use a failed state to plot the deadly attack. And so if we withdraw before the Iraqi Government can defend itself, we would yield the future of Iraq to terrorists like Al Qaida, and we would give a green light to extremists all throughout a troubled region.

The consequences for America and the Middle East would be disastrous. In Iraq, sectarian violence would multiply on a horrific scale. Fighting could engulf the entire region in chaos. We would soon face a Middle East dominated by Islamic extremists who would pursue nuclear weapons, who would use their control of oil for economic blackmail, and who would be in a position to launch new attacks on the United States of America. September the



11th, we saw how a failed state, like I'd just told you, can affect the security at home. And so for the sake of our own security, for the sake of the security of the United States of America, the United States must stand with millions of moms and dads throughout the Middle East who want a future of dignity and peace, and we must help them defeat a common enemy.

No one understands that better than the men and women in uniform. It is a huge honor to be the Commander in Chief of such a noble group of men and women. Our military is not only great, it's good. Good-hearted people, all volunteers, who said, "I want to serve in the face of danger." It's a remarkable country that can produce such good men and women.

I think of a fellow named Cory Endlich. Cory was an Ohio boy. He wanted to join the Army so badly that his dad let him start training his senior year of high school. He was deployed to Iraq. It tells you something about his character that when his mom asked him if he needed anything, he said the only things he asked for—she said the only things he asked for were coloring books, crayons, and candy for the Iraqi children he had befriended. Earlier this month, he was killed. Here's what his dad said: "He felt the war was justified and wanted to be there." That's what his dad said. "I am proud of him and the job he is doing." And so am I. [Applause] Thank you. Thank you all.

I know you will join me in asking a loving God to hold the families of those who have lost a loved one in His loving hand. We resolve to honor their sacrifice by finishing the work they have begun. That's the task ahead of us. And when we do, we'll see a true legacy of a man like Sergeant Endlich: a dawn of a Middle East where leaders are at peace with their own people, where children enjoy the opportunities their parents only dreamed of, and where America has new allies in the cause of freedom.

Thanks for letting me come today. God bless your work, and God bless our country. [Applause]

Thank you all. Thank you. Be seated. I've enjoyed my stay so much, I thought I might answer some questions—[laughter]—if you've got any, particularly from the students who might be curious. Yes, sir. You're the guy. Are you the mic-man, or are you the questioner? Well, you're the questioner. Mic-man, okay. [Laughter] Yes, sir.

#### *Role of U.S. Navy/War on Terror*

Q. Mr. President, it was my great privilege to be a representative of the Royal Navy here at the Naval Command College class of 1994. It's a huge privilege, clearly, to be here today as well. We support and admire your country's commitment and sacrifice in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world in the war on terror. But it strikes me that what you described today is very much a land-orientated campaign. What, if any, impact is that land campaign focus likely to have on your propensity to invest in a maritime strategy in the future, please?

The President. Yes, thanks. Yes. [Laughter] Now, who exactly invited you here? No. [Laughter] I think the—thank you, sir. No, never mind, just kidding. [Laughter] It is a land-based campaign because that's where the enemy is. They hide in caves, and they hide in remote regions, and they try to destabilize countries. They try to create chaos. You've got to understand, chaos is the friend of these radicals. The more chaos there is, the more likely it is they'll be able to find a place to roost.

And I know people—some people in our country just have trouble believing that they want to strike us again, but they do. That's what I live with every day. That's what Presidents do: They think about the threats, and they deal with them. And my attitude has been, let's keep the pressure on them. And the Nation is going to have to do that. We're going to have to continually press. This means good intelligence,

good special ops, working with allies like Great Britain, who have been a fantastic country to work with, by the way—and just got to pressure them. It's hard to plan and plot when you're on the move. And it takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of diplomacy, it takes a lot of military action, it takes a lot of good intel, and it's going to take a lot of determination by the United States.

In the meantime, we have—we're going through a transformation of our forces. And one of the most transformative branches has been the Navy. It's amazing how the Navy has been able to accomplish more with less. Perhaps that's what you've been able to—that's less manpower, more mission, better use of equipment, the capacity to manage manpower better. No question, we're increasing our Army and Marines, which some claim is part of the Navy—[laughter]—he doesn't claim it, yes. [Laughter] Well, we're not going there. [Laughter]

But our Navy is modern, and we'll keep it that way. And it's—the main thing for militaries as we head into the 21st century is, constantly adjust to meet threat. And we've got a lot of money in our budget, and I hope that this new Congress keeps it that way for the Navy, as well as the rest of the military. It's really important. And it's important we continue to transform and become more interoperable. And that's really the challenge I presume you're studying this year at the university. It's part of the strategic thought for our military, is interoperability. And we're becoming much better at it; at least, that's what the commanders tell me. And that's important.

By the way, named a Navy man today, sent his name up to the Senate for confirmation as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs: Admiral Mullen. And Vice Chairman is going to be a marine named Hoss Cartwright. They understand the need to continue to wage this war and also to transform our military to meet the threats of the 21st century. And we're doing it.

One of the major transformative events we have done is, we have begun to reposition our troops in Europe. The cold war is over; it ended. And therefore, the troop posture doesn't need to be the way it has been for the—throughout the fifties, sixties, and seventies. That's transformative. That also frees up money for capital investment as well as different places where—let me just say, the capacity to base out of home is going to save us a lot of money and save you a lot of wear and tear.

The Volunteer Army only works well if we take care of the wives and husbands, the spouses. And one way to do that is to reposition our forces to meet the threats of the 21st century. Well, it turns out, in many times—it means they have to be based here and be, then, in a capacity to move quickly to deal with the threats.

Anyway, thanks, good question. Great Britain has been a great ally. I said goodbye to my friend, Tony Blair, yesterday. I said hello to the new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. And there's no doubt in my mind, we'll continue to have a good, close working relationship for the sake of peace, for doing the hard work necessary to make this world a peaceful place.

Surely there's more questions than that. [Laughter]

Yes, ma'am.

#### *President's Decisionmaking*

*Q.* Mr. President, I just returned from a week at the United States Army War College in Pennsylvania on national security. I walked away with so much more pride in our military. I would follow them anywhere. My question is: At the beginning of your speech—that you said that you consult with the military. With all due respect, sir, how much do you really listen and follow them?

*The President.* Yes, a lot. I don't see how you can be the Commander in Chief of a well-motivated military without listening carefully to the advice of your commanders. I talk to General Petraeus all the time.

I say, “all the time”—weekly; that’s all the time—[laughter]—on secure video from Baghdad. There’s a lot of discussions about troop positioning—what will our footprint look like?

My answer is, it depends on what David Petraeus says. David Petraeus is the commander on the ground, and he’ll have the full support. And that’s the way I do business. It’s the way it’s been throughout the—you know, I told you that, and rightly so, that—look, I had a decision to make: more troops to secure Baghdad and Anbar, or pull back and hope for the best? I made a decision to put more troops in. That was in close consultation with the Pentagon and, in particular, with the—you know, the folks who have been charged with the operations in Baghdad. And that’s what you expect from the Commander in Chief.

We do have a chain of command. It goes from me to Gates to Fox Fallon to Petraeus. But a lot of times—and we’re all on the SVTS together—the secure video together to talk about matters and—so that’s the way we do it, yes. Thanks for the question.

Yes, sir.

#### *U.S. Military Capacity To Engage in Multiple Conflicts*

*Q.* Thank you very much. Our family was touched by 9/11, and I want to thank you very much for the support of the 9/11 families. Peter Dutton is my name. I’m from the Naval War College faculty. I wanted to ask you about your thoughts concerning strategic culmination. Are we—

*The President.* Strategic—

*Q.* Strategic culmination. In other words, are we getting to the point where we’re unable to continue to affect world events in other areas other than the Middle East because of our huge commitment there to the Middle East?

*The President.* No, I appreciate that. Obviously, we’re constantly balancing—the first mission is, succeed in Iraq; let me just put it to you that way. And—yes, I

think we are. I think we’re capable of dealing with more thing—more than one event at a time. Witness the fact that we’ve got a lot of troops in Afghanistan. Fortunately, we’ve got a lot of NATO allies with us in Afghanistan. One of the things that I don’t think a lot of people have really figured out is how successful we’ve been about putting—about our ability to put coalitions together. There are a lot of troops in Iraq other than our own, and there’s a lot of troops in Afghanistan other than our own.

The other hotspots, of course, would be the Far East. And we’ve got a significant military presence there. We hope and pray that diplomacy works—I think it will—in dealing with the North Korean issue. But we got—we’re amply suited to deal with a lot of different theaters. But we’re constantly watching. That’s the job of the Joint Chiefs. Their job is to constantly monitor threats, positioning of troops, capabilities. And they bring them to my attention.

And I think people recognize that obviously, you know, our military is going—undergoing through a lot of hard work and pressure. But according to them, they feel pretty good about it. And if they feel good about it, so do I.

Yes, sir.

#### *U.S. Foreign Policy*

*Q.* Good morning, Mr. President. My name is Captain Norcross. I’m a family physician here, and I wanted to say, thank you for your support for the—for our military. I wanted to ask you your thoughts about our hospital ships that we’ve had.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* We had good success with the *Mercy* over in Indonesia, and also, pretty soon, we’re going to be having the *Comfort* now in deployment. I’d like to ask your thoughts about using these humanitarian missions as a way to fight the global war on terror.

*The President.* Yes, thank you very much. Our foreign policy is much more than the use of the military. I know the focus is

on the military; it's, like, on TV everyday. I understand that. And that's normal during a time of combat. But our foreign policy is much broader than the use of military. You bring up those—the Navy ships—*Comfort*, for example, is just—saving lives in South America and Central America. I remember going to see—Laura and I went to Guatemala. And we went to this remote region and ran into some military docs and nurses that were just providing essential health care. It's really effective diplomacy to help a mom deal with a child's sickness. And we do a lot of it. We get no credit for it, but we do a lot of it.

Our HIV/AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa—first of all, I believe to whom much is given, much is required. We've been given a lot in the United States. It's in our interests; it's in our moral interests to help deal with the pandemic on the continent of Africa and elsewhere—some in our neighborhood, like Haiti, for example.

It's in our strategic interest to do so as well, because one of the lessons of this conflict we're in is that how people live matters as to whether or not the enemy is able to recruit. If you live in a society full of despair and hopelessness, it is more likely that you would become a suicide bomber or be swayed by an ideology that is really grim. Desperation is what these people prey on.

And therefore, it's up to the United States, with our allies, by the way, to deal with desperate situations. I happen to believe that encouraging people and helping people to live in a free society is essential to our long-term security. I think that it is imperative that we have confidence in the ability of liberty to be a transforming agent for peace.

I worry about isolationism in America. I worry about the struggle—which is going to take awhile—will cause us to lose our confidence in the ability to help others realize the blessings of liberty. I told you earlier; I believe in the universality of free-

dom. It is a principle by which I have made decisions. I believe—I personally believe there is an Almighty, and I believe a gift of the Almighty to each man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. That's what I believe.

And I have read a lot of history, as have you. I share the story about my friend Prime Minister Koizumi, the former Prime Minister of Japan. I marvel at the fact—or I used to marvel at the fact that my dad fought the Japanese as a United States Navy fighter pilot, and his son sits down at the table to work to keep the peace. It's an amazing—to me it's an amazing irony and—I guess is the best way to describe that—that a fellow's father fought them, and I'm working to keep peace. We had no stronger ally—and we still have a strong ally in Prime Minister Abe, by the way, from Japan—but no stronger ally in recognizing that democracy is the long-term solution to defeating this ideological enemy. And Japan, our former enemy, was making sacrifices in Iraq and helping in Afghanistan.

We've got no stronger ally in working to peacefully solve the North Korean nuclear issue than Japan. And it is—something happened between when H.W. Bush was flying torpedo bombers and W. was in the White House. And what happened was, Japan changed its form of government. Liberty has got the capacity to change enemies to allies. And the fundamental question facing this country was, will we recognize that as we head into the 21st century, do we care what life is like around the world? Or are we going to hope for the best?

I care about what life is like around the world, and so should America. And therefore, we ought to worry when people live under the thumb of a tyrant. Our foreign policy for years in the Middle East was stability. What mattered most was stability; it was: Are things stable? That, however, created conditions that enabled a group of killers to recruit people to come and kill

us. And therefore, I changed our foreign policy in the Middle East to promote liberty as the great alternative to tyranny and a dark vision.

Now, we're going to be kinetic if we need to be to protect ourselves. I've told you: We're going to stay on the offense and keep the pressure on them. But the long-term solution as to whether or not your grandkids can live in a peaceful world is whether or not we encourage liberty to take root around the Middle East, in particular. And people say, well, they can't possibly—you know, that's not going to work.

Well, I suspect if you look back at history, they made us—they might have been somewhat suspect if someone would have predicted an American President would be sitting down keeping the peace with the Japanese Prime Minister at some point, particularly after World War II.

I think it's going to be very important for our country to have faith in the capacity of liberty to be transformative. Some say that's—you know, he's a hopeless idealistic guy. Well, I think it's realistic to understand that this is a long-term struggle, and alternative ideologies need to be promoted—one particularly based upon hope. That's worked every time when given a chance to take root.

That's not a seersucker suit, is it?  
[Laughter]

Q. Mr. President—

*The President.* It's coming back, yes. They're coming back.

Q. I'm—[inaudible]—Campos from Colombia.

*The President.* From?

Q. Colombia, class of 1979.

*The President.* Okay. Si. Thank you, sir.

### *Free and Fair Trade/Spread of Democracy*

Q. First of all, I want to thank you for the support you are giving our country. And you have—we know that your main goal is to win the situation in Iraq. I want to

ask you, which is your assessment for the situation in South America?

*The President.* Si, thank you. First, I am a big admirer of *mi amigo Presidente Uribe*. He's strong—that's the President of Colombia. [Laughter] He's strong; he's courageous; and he believes in democracy. And he was—he started off in a—with a really very tough problem, and that is dealing with a very rich group of people who are violent, who didn't necessarily agree with democracy. And I admire the way he has led his nation.

A key moment in our relations with Colombia will be coming up pretty soon. And that is, we negotiated a free trade agreement with your country. Why? Well, one, we did it because it's in our economic interests to open up markets for U.S. goods and services, just like it's in Colombia's economic interests to open up our markets for goods and services.

I believe in trade. I believe trade is in the interests of our workers. I think more markets—listen, we're 5 percent of the people. That means 95 percent of the market should be available to our goods and services. When you're good at something, you ought to make it easier to sell it. We're good farmers; we ought to be selling our crops overseas to the extent they're not needed here at home. We're good manufacturers of a lot of products; we ought to be selling them.

I also believe that trade is the best way to lift people out of poverty. When there's commerce, when there's activity, when there's enterprise, a society has a better chance of enabling its people to realize dreams. So I'm a big trader, a freetrader.

And that's why we worked with the agreement with Colombia. Now the Congress is going to have an opportunity to determine whether or not they're going to be protectionist in nature and whether or not they'll turn—this country will turn its back on our friend or not.



I—the freetrader vote has got a lot of strategic implications because in the neighborhood, there is a person who is undermining a democracy, and, therefore, we need to be concerned about the loss of democracies in our neighborhood. Democracies yield peace. They don't war against each other. And when we see a democracy being undermined—and I think it's going to be in the interests for the United States to work with friends in the neighborhood to promote the institutions necessary to prevent individuals from undermining a free society. And what does that mean? Free media, the right to dissent, the capacity to have open elections.

And so I've got good relations with a lot of the leaders in the neighborhood. And we're working very closely with Brazil, for example, on a lot of initiatives, starting with the biodiesel initiative. It's an interesting initiative, by the way. That has got—that initiative is all done because of national security interests and economic security interests as well as environmental concerns. And Brazil grows—makes a lot of ethanol, and we're beginning to make a lot of ethanol. It's in our interests to share technologies, to promote others so we become less dependent on oil—I'm skipping around here.

My only point to you is that good relations with Brazil are necessary to work—to make sure our neighborhood remains a peaceful place based upon the form of government. There's only one nondemocracy in our neighborhood; that's Cuba. And I strongly believe the people of Cuba ought to live in a free society. It's in our interests that Cuba become free, and it's in the interests of the Cuban people that they don't have to live under an antiquated form of government that has just been repressive.

So we'll continue to press for freedom on the island of Cuba. One day, the good Lord will take Fidel Castro away and then the question—[laughter]—no, no, no—then the question is, what will be the approach of the U.S. Government? My attitude is, is that we need to use the opportunity to

call the world together to promote democracy as the alternative to the form of government they have been living with.

You'll see an interesting debate. Some will say, all that matters is stability, which, in my judgment, will just simply reinforce the followers of the current regime. I think we ought to be pressing hard for democracy.

I went overseas recently to the Czech Republic and gave a speech on democracy. I saw Vaclav Havel. You might remember him; he was the leader of the Velvet Revolution that helped lead Eastern Europe to a new form of government and—new forms of government. And he's very much interested in the United States attitude toward Cuba because he believes we need to be promoting freedom before stability.

It's going to be an interesting challenge for our country. We're working, by the way—back to your question: Can we do more than one thing at one time? We're working very closely with the Navy and Coast Guard to make sure that there is not any issues when it comes between the United States and Cuba, should there be a—or when there is a transition.

Anyway, thanks for the question. I think I am somewhat concerned by the fact that—you know, a lot of our rhetoric is geared toward the Middle East and Africa and that people in the neighborhood say, "Well, the United States is not paying attention, nor do they care about us." That's just simply not the case. In my recent trip down there, I did go to Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, and Central America and emphasized our humanitarian programs, the health programs, the education programs. I wanted to make it clear to the people of South and Central America that the United States keeps—cares deeply about the human condition and that we believe that on the one hand, our Government aid ought to make sure that we battle corruption—we just don't give money to corrupt societies, that we ought to say, that in return for our aid: Change your habits if

you're corrupt; otherwise, you're not going to get additional money.

And at the same time, we believe we ought to foster programs aimed at the individual. And it's—and we are. We're spending a lot of money in South America. Now, we're not doing a very good job with the propaganda battle around the world. We created it, and we're losing. And that's one thing we've got to spend a lot of time on, is to make sure that the image of the United States corresponds to the realities on the ground.

Yesterday I went to a mosque—or Islamic Center in Washington, DC. It's the 50th anniversary of the Islamic Center. It was a place where Dwight Eisenhower went to dedicate, and I went to rededicate it. And my message was, one, freedom is a beautiful thing, and that we expect societies to work toward freedom, and we want to do that. And at the same time, we honor all religion. That's what we do in America. And it is really meant to counter this notion that somehow America is in war against Islam. We're not. We're at war against kill-

ers who subvert a great religion in order to achieve their political objectives. And we'll keep working as hard as we can.

Anyway, great question. Look, I've got to go. I thank you all for coming by. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. at Connelly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Donald L. Carcieri of Rhode Island; Rear Adm. Jacob L. Shuford, president, Naval War College; Gov. M. Jodi Rell of Connecticut; Gov. Mark C. Sanford, Jr., of South Carolina; Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri; Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commander, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufriji, and Minister of the Interior Jawad al-Bulani of Iraq; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Adm. William J. “Fox” Fallon, USN, commander, U.S. Central Command; President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba; and former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic.

## Remarks on the Senate's Failure to Pass Immigration Reform Legislation in Newport *June 28, 2007*

I thank the Members of the Senate and members of my administration who worked so hard on the border security and immigration reform bill. I'm sorry the Senate was unable to reach agreement on the bill this morning.

Legal immigration is one of the top concerns of the American people, and Congress's failure to act on it is a disappointment. The American people understand the status quo is unacceptable when it comes to our immigration laws. A lot of us worked hard to see if we couldn't find common ground, and it didn't work.

Congress really needs to prove to the American people that it can come together on hard issues. The Congress needs to work on comprehensive energy policy and good health care, making sure health care is affordable without inviting the Federal Government to run the health care system. We've got to work together to make sure we can balance this Federal budget, not overspend or raise taxes on the American people. And we've got a lot of work to do.

When they come back from the summer—from the July recess, before the summer break begins, we'll be focusing on the

appropriations process. And I look forward to working with Congress to balance our budgets and to be wise about how we spend the people's money.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 p.m. in Connelly Hall at the Naval War College. In his remarks, he referred to S. 1639. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Removal of the Bald Eagle From the List of Endangered Species

June 28, 2007

I am pleased that the bald eagle—our Nation's symbol for more than 225 years and an image of inspiration and freedom to all Americans—is now being removed from the list of endangered species.

Forty years ago, only 400 nesting pairs were living. Today, nearly 10,000 nesting pairs are thriving in the lower 48 States. This number is more than triple the recovery goal set in the Endangered Species Act.

The overwhelming success of bald eagle recovery was made possible by a strong

partnership between Federal and State governments and private landowners. The eagle will continue to flourish under Federal protection through the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

This great conservation achievement means more and more Americans across the Nation will enjoy the thrill of seeing bald eagles soar. What a wonderful way to celebrate this Fourth of July.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Waiver on the Extension of Normal Trade Relations Status for Turkmenistan

June 28, 2007

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I hereby transmit the document referred to in subsection 402(c)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, with respect to a waiver of the application of subsections 402(a) and (b) of that Act to Turkmenistan.

I report in that document my determination that such a waiver will substantially promote the objectives of section 402. I have instructed the Secretary of State to provide a copy of that determination to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate. The report also indicates that I have received assurances with respect to the emigration prac-

tices of Turkmenistan required by section 402(c)(2)(B) of the Act.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 29. The related Executive order and Presidential determination of June 28 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Message on the Observance of Independence Day, 2007 *June 29, 2007*

I send greetings to Americans everywhere celebrating Independence Day.

Two hundred thirty-one years ago, 56 brave men signed their names to a bold creed of freedom that set the course of our Nation and changed the history of the world. On this anniversary, we remember the great courage and conviction of our Founders, and we celebrate the enduring principles of our Declaration of Independence.

Through selfless sacrifice and unrelenting determination, the patriots of the American Revolution ensured that our Nation's claim to liberty and equality would not be dismissed or forgotten. The ideals they fought for and the country they helped establish are lasting symbols of hope to the entire world.

Our commitment to America's founding truths remains steadfast. We believe that

freedom is a blessing from the Almighty and the birthright of every man and woman. As our Nation faces new challenges, we are answering history's call with confidence that our legacy of freedom will always prevail. On Independence Day, we express our gratitude to the generations of courageous Americans who have defended us and those who continue to serve in our country's hour of need, and we celebrate the liberty that makes America a light to the nations.

Laura and I wish you a Happy Fourth of July. May God bless you, and may He bless our wonderful country.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this message. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## The President's Radio Address *June 30, 2007*

Good morning. Next week, Americans will gather with friends and family to celebrate the Fourth of July. I look forward to spending this Independence Day in Martinsburg, West Virginia, with the men and women of the West Virginia Air National Guard.

On the Fourth of July, we celebrate the courage and convictions of America's founders. We remember the spirit of liberty that led men from 13 different colonies to gather in Philadelphia and pen the Declaration of Independence. In that revolutionary document, they proclaimed our independence based on the belief that freedom was God's gift to all mankind.

To defend that freedom, the 56 signers of the Declaration pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Their sacrifices built a new nation and created a future of freedom for millions yet to be born.

Today, a new generation of Americans has stepped forward and volunteered to defend the ideals of our Nation's founding. Around the world, our brave men and women in uniform are facing danger to protect their fellow citizens from harm. In Afghanistan, our military and NATO forces are hunting down the Taliban and Al Qaida and helping the Afghan people defend their young democracy. And in Iraq, American

and Iraqi forces are standing with the nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a future of peace and opposing ruthless enemies who want to bring down Iraq's democracy and turn that nation into a terrorist safe haven.

This week, I traveled to the Naval War College in Rhode Island to give an update on the strategy we're pursuing in Iraq. This strategy is being led by a new commander, General David Petraeus, and a new Ambassador, Ryan Crocker. It recognizes that our top priority must be to help the Iraqi Government and its security forces protect their population, especially in Baghdad. And its goal is to help the Iraqis make progress toward reconciliation and build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law, and is an ally in the war on terror.

So America has sent reinforcements to help the Iraqis secure their population; go after the terrorists, insurgents, and militias that are inciting sectarian violence; and get the capital under control. The last of these reinforcements arrived in Iraq earlier this month, and the full surge has begun. One of our top commanders in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, put it this way: "We are beyond a surge of forces. We're now into a surge of operations."

Recently, we launched Operation Phantom Thunder, which has taken the fight to the enemy in Baghdad as well as the surrounding regions. We're still at the beginning of this offensive, but we're seeing some hopeful signs. We're engaging the enemy and killing or capturing hundreds. Just this week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior Al Qaida leaders north of Baghdad. Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are significantly down from what they were in January. We're also finding arms caches at more than three times the rate of a year ago. The enemy continues to carry out sensational attacks, but the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been

down in May and June. And because of our new strategy, U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, with the result that many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.

The fight in Iraq has been tough, and it will remain difficult. We've lost good men and women in this fight. One of those lost was a marine lance corporal named Luke Yepsen. In the spring of 2005, Luke withdrew from his classes at Texas A&M to join the United States Marines. And in October 2006, he deployed to Iraq, where he manned a 50-caliber machine gun on a Humvee. Six months ago, Luke was killed by a sniper while on patrol in Anbar Province. Luke's father describes his son's sacrifice this way: "Luke died bringing freedom to an oppressed people. My urgent request is, finish the mission. Bring freedom to the Iraqi people."

On this Fourth of July, we remember Luke Yepsen and all the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in this struggle. They've helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people. They've helped make Americans more secure. We will not forget their sacrifice. We remember their loved ones in our prayers. And we give thanks for all those from every generation who have defended our Nation and our freedoms.

Laura and I wish you a safe and happy Fourth of July. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on June 29 in Kennebunkport, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 29, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Corps—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also



released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on Modifications to the Visa Waiver Program *June 30, 2007*

Last November, I announced my intention to seek modifications to our Visa Waiver Program that would offer our closest partners in Central and Eastern Europe as well as others, such as the Republic of Korea, an accelerated process for admission to the program as we strengthen the program's security components. I am com-

mitted to continuing to work with Congress to produce legislation that would strengthen our country's security by implementing this initiative. It is in our Nation's interest to facilitate travel to the United States and, at the same time, to prevent terrorists from being able to exploit that travel.

## Statement on the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement *June 30, 2007*

I am pleased that United States Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab and Republic of Korea Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong today signed the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement. This agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and service suppliers, promote economic growth and the creation of better paying jobs in

the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them greater choices. The agreement will also further enhance the strong United States-Korea partnership, which has served as a force for stability and prosperity in Asia. I call on Congress to ratify this landmark agreement, to the considerable benefit of the American people.

## Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

*The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.*

### January 1

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, in the Rotunda at the U.S. Capitol, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the public viewing of former President Gerald R. Ford, who lay in state until his funeral on January 4. Later, they visited with Betty Ford, widow of President Ford, at Blair House. They then returned to the White House.

### January 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

### January 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with members of his Cabinet.

In the afternoon, the President hosted a reception for Members of Congress and their spouses.

### January 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he and Vice President Dick Cheney had a teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

In the evening, the President had dinner with Chancellor Merkel.

The President announced his intention to nominate P. Robert Fannin to be Ambassador to the Dominican Republic.

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Menarchik to be Assistant Administrator (Europe and Eurasia) of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate William R. Steiger to be Ambassador to Mozambique.

The President announced his intention to nominate Howard Charles Weizmann to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bradley Udall to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation.

The President announced his intention to accord the personal rank of Ambassador to Richard M. Russell during his tenure as the U.S. Representative to the World Radio Communication Conference.

### January 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate John D. Negroponte to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Michael McConnell to be Director of National Intelligence.

The President announced his intention to designate Thomas P. D'Agostino as Acting Under Secretary for Nuclear Security of the National Nuclear Security Administration at the Department of Energy.

The President announced that he has named Mark D. Pfeifle as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Florida by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for public assistance projects undertaken as a result of Hurricane Wilma.

### January 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*January 7*

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms from December 19, 2006, to January 1, 2007.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from December 28 to 31, 2006.

*January 8*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had separate telephone conversations with President Enrique Bolanos and President-elect Jose Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Jose Daniel Ortega Saavedra as President of Nicaragua on January 10:

Michael O. Leavitt (head of delegation);  
Paul A. Trivelli;  
John J. Danilovich; and  
Thomas A. Shannon, Jr.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to Quito, Ecuador, to attend the inauguration of Rafael Vicente Correa Delgado as President of Ecuador on January 15: Carlos M. Gutierrez (head of delegation); and Linda Jewell.

The President announced his intention to nominate Zalmay Khalilzad to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador, the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ryan C. Crocker to be Ambassador to Iraq.

The President declared an emergency in Colorado and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near record snow from December 18 to 22, 2006.

The President declared an emergency in Colorado and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow from December 28 to 31, 2006.

*January 9*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with Republican Members of the House of Representatives.

The President announced his intention to nominate William Herbert Heyman to be a director of the Board of Directors of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (Securities Industry).

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities:

Rebecca Turner Gonzales;  
Adele C. Hall;  
Barbara Jacobs Mitnick; and  
Marc I. Stern.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board:

Robert H. Bruininks;  
John S. Butler;  
Shirley M. Green; and  
Kathryn Hubbard.

The President announced his intention to designate Richard A. Hertling as Acting Assistant Attorney General (Legislative Affairs).

The President announced his intention to designate Douglas Menarchik as Acting Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Europe and Eurasia).

*January 10*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate David James Gribbin IV to be General Counsel of the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Andrea Fisher Newman and Joseph Carter Whitaker as members of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

*January 11*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Fort Benning, GA, arriving in the afternoon. While en route, aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

In the afternoon, at Freedom Hall, the President had lunch with military personnel and their families. He then participated in an interview with Scott Pelley of CBS's "60 Minutes." Later, at Eubanks Field at Fort Benning, he participated in a demonstration of infantry training. He then met with family members of military personnel killed in the war on terror.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

*January 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will meet with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the White House on January 16.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Marc Ravalomanana as President of Madagascar on January 19:

Michael O. Johanns (head of delegation);  
James D. McGee;  
Ronald A. Tschetter; and  
R. Timothy Ziemer.

*January 13*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

*January 14*

The President declared an emergency in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms and flooding beginning on January 12 and continuing.

*January 15*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms and flooding beginning on January 12 and continuing.

*January 16*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with Jim Lehrer of PBS's "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

*January 17*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Bethesda, MD, where he toured the National Institutes of Health laboratories.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he met with Republican Members of the House of Representatives.

*January 18*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Map Room, the President participated in separate interviews with David Cassidy of Belo Television, Morris Jones of Sinclair Broadcasting, Sabrina Fang of Tribune Broadcasting, and Alison Burns of Cox Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul J. Bonicelli to be Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Latin America and the Caribbean).

The President announced his intention to nominate Mario Mancuso to be Under Secretary for Export Administration at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick P. Shen to be Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate William B. Wood to be Ambassador to Afghanistan.

*January 19*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Family Theater,

he participated in a speech preparation session for his January 23 State of the Union Address.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with David Jackson of USA Today.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania to the White House on February 12.

#### *January 20*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

During the day, the President met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

#### *January 22*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

Later in the afternoon, in the Family Theater, the President participated in a speech preparation session for his January 23 State of the Union Address.

The President announced his intention to nominate James R. Clapper, Jr., to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

The President announced his intention to designate Howard Radzely as Acting Deputy Secretary of Labor.

#### *January 23*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *January 24*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Wilmington, DE, where he toured DuPont Experimental Station.

Later in the morning, prior to his departure from New Castle Airport, the President met with members of the National Guard. He then returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Dick Cheney met with Gen. Dan K. McNeill, USA, incoming commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan.

In the evening, in the Yellow Oval Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted the annual dinner for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and combat commanders and their spouses.

#### *January 25*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Kansas City, MO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Susan Hoskins. He then traveled to Lee's Summit, MO, where he toured Saint Luke's East—Lee's Summit Hospital.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Alabama by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for public assistance projects undertaken as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

#### *January 26*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Cambridge, MD.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to Blair House where they attended a reception for Counsel to the President Harriet E. Miers. Later, they returned to the White House.

In the evening, the President attended a retirement reception for Chief Usher Gary Walters.

#### *January 27*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Capital Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Alfalfa Club dinner.

#### *January 29*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in an interview with Juan Williams of National Public Radio.

#### *January 30*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Peoria, IL.

Later in the morning, the President participated in an interview with Betsy Stark of ABC News. Later, he traveled to East Peoria, IL,



where he toured Caterpillar, Inc. He then participated in another interview with Ms. Stark.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Peoria, IL, where, prior to his departure, he met with members of the Illinois Air National Guard and their families. He then returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has named Jean Staton Mamo as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Media Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Joel Bagnol as Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security.

The President announced that he has named Martin E. McGuinness as Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Michael Y. Scudder, Jr., as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Amy Swartz Zantlinger as Special Assistant to the President and White House Social Secretary.

#### *January 31*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to New York City, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Adam Houhoulis. He then participated in an interview with the Wall Street Journal, and afterwards went to Federal Hall, where he participated in an interview with Neil P. Cavuto of FOX News. Later, he met with Eva Borja, Cesar Borja, Jr., Evan Borja, and Nhia Borja, the family of Cesar Borja, a 20-year veteran of the New York Police Department, who died of lung disease on January 23.

In the afternoon, the President went to the New York Stock Exchange, where he met with traders on the floor. He then returned to Washington, DC.

#### *February 1*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in a signing ceremony for a Presidential proclamation in honor of American Heart Month.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama to the White House on February 16.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supple-

ment State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from December 28 to 30, 2006.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms from January 12 to 26.

#### *February 2*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov of Russia.

In the afternoon, the President met with Republican Members of the Senate. He then hosted a reception for the Members.

The President announced his intention to nominate John C. Rood to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security at the Department of State.

#### *February 3*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Newport News, VA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Pat Taylor. He then traveled to Williamsburg, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on February 1 and 2.

#### *February 5*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with 2006 NASCAR Nextel Cup champion driver Jimmie Johnson.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Indianapolis Colts owner James Irsay to congratulate the team on their February 4 Super Bowl victory. He then had separate telephone conversations with Indianapolis Colts head coach Anthony K. Dungy and quarterback Peyton W. Manning.

In the evening, in the Red Room, the President hosted a dinner in honor of Major League Baseball.

*February 6*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Manassas, VA, where he toured Micron Technology, Inc.

Later in the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

*February 7*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Luray, VA. Upon arrival, they went to Shenandoah National Park.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, at Blair House, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a reception for Ambassador Donald B. Ensenat, Chief of Protocol, State Department.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark P. Lagon to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons with the rank of Ambassador at Large at the Department of State.

*February 8*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with former President Amine Gemayel of Lebanon.

In the evening, the President hosted a reception for National Park Foundation board members.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will travel to Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico from March 8 to 14.

The President announced his intention to nominate Steven Jeffrey Isakowitz to be Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Williamson Evers to be Assistant Secretary of Education (Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development).

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development:

Perry R. Eaton;  
Sonya Kelliher-Combs;  
Brenda L. Kingery;  
Julie E. Kitka; and  
Kristine Mary Miller.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol D'Amico, David C. Geary, and Eric Alan Hanushek to be members of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences (Researchers).

The President announced his intention to nominate Marylyn Andrea Howe, Lonnie C. Moore, and Cynthia Allen Wainscott to be members of the National Council on Disability.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janis Herschkowitz, David George Nason, and Nguyen Van Hanh to be members of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank.

The President announced his intention to appoint Vayl Oxford as Director of the Office of Domestic Nuclear Detection at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint J. David Cox, Sr., as a member of the Federal Salary Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on December 25.

*February 9*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Stephen F. Hayes of the Weekly Standard.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia to the White House on February 14.

The President declared a major disaster in Illinois and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from November 30 to December 1, 2006.

*February 10*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*February 11*

In the evening, in the East Room, the President presented the Ford's Theatre Lincoln Medal to historians David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin. Later, he and Mrs. Bush attended a performance in honor of the Ford's

Theatre Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration.

*February 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a signing ceremony for the 2007 Economic Report of the President. Then, in the Library, he participated in an interview with Steve Scully of C-SPAN.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lt. Gen. Dell L. Dailey, USA, to be the Coordinator for Counterterrorism with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ford M. Fraker to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Craig Vanderwagen to be Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services.

*February 13*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President went to the YMCA Anthony Bowen and toured the facility. Later, he returned to the White House.

*February 14*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm, landslides, and mudslides on December 14 and 15, 2006.

*February 15*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the State Dining Room, the President met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

*February 16*

In the morning, the President had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Adm. William J. "Fox" Fallon, USN, incoming combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bijan R. Rafiekian to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eli Whitney Debevoise II to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint J. Anthony Poleo as a member of the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Department of Defense).

*February 17*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*February 19*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to President George Washington's Estate in Mount Vernon, VA, where they toured the grounds and participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at President Washington's tomb.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

*February 20*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dennis W. Carlton as a member of the Antitrust Modernization Commission (Government Representative).

The President announced his intention to designate Clay Lowery as the Acting U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

*February 21*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Chattanooga, TN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Debbie Chadwick. He then went to Erlanger Hospital—Baroness Campus, where he toured the facility.

In the afternoon, the President went to Porkers Bar-B-Que, where he had lunch and met with patrons. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Elias Antonio Saca

Gonzalez of El Salvador to the White House on February 27.

*February 22*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Morrisville, NC, where, at the Raleigh-Durham International Airport, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Jamie Lathan. He then traveled to Franklinton, NC, where he toured Novozymes North America, Inc.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host the annual U.S.-EU Summit in Washington, DC, on April 30.

The President announced his intention to nominate S. Ward Casscells to be Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs).

The President announced his intention to nominate Claude M. Kicklighter to be Inspector General of the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate William Charles Ostendorff to be Principal Deputy Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration.

The President announced his intention to appoint James H. Herring as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to designate Dennis R. Spurgeon as Acting Under Secretary of Energy.

The President announced his intention to designate Thomas J. Barrett as Acting Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to designate Kimberly A. Owens as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President declared a major disaster in Oregon and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm and flooding on December 14 and 15, 2006.

*February 23*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with transportation fuel experts and researchers to discuss alternative fuel sources.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts

in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on November 16 and 17, 2006.

The President declared an emergency in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near-record snow from February 2 to 12.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on February 12 and 13.

*February 24*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will host King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan for a private dinner at the White House on March 6.

*February 25*

In the evening, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a performance by entertainer Ronan Tynan.

*February 26*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President briefly attended a meeting between National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley and members of Lebanon's March 14 coalition.

Later in the afternoon, in an Oval Office ceremony, the President received the annual report of the Boy Scouts of America.

*February 27*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Senators Pete V. Domenici and Jeff Bingaman and Representatives John D. Dingell, Jr., and Joseph L. Barton to discuss energy legislation.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Rear Adm. Stephen W. Rochon, USCG, who he named as Director of the Executive Residence and Chief Usher.

The President announced that he has named Dennis Freemyer as Deputy Director of the Executive Residence and Deputy Chief Usher.

The President announced his intention to nominate T. Timothy Ryan to be Under Secretary of the Treasury (International Affairs).

#### *February 28*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with Andrew Roberts, author of "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples Since 1900." Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with a congressional consultative group on the war on terror.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand to the White House on March 21.

#### *March 1*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Gulfport, MS, where, at the Trent Lott National Guard Training Center, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Alan Petz. He then traveled to Long Beach, MS, where he toured a neighborhood and visited homes that had been rebuilt after being damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Later, he traveled to Biloxi, MS.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA, where, at Lil' Dizzy's Cafe, he had lunch with elected officials and community leaders. Later, he went to Samuel J. Green Charter School where he toured the school and met with students.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Robert R. Riley of Alabama and Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to Accra, Ghana, to attend the 50th Anniversary of Independence, March 5-7:

Alphonso R. Jackson (head of delegation);  
Pamela E. Bridgewater;  
John J. Danilovich;  
Ronald A. Tschetter;  
Jendayi Elizabeth Frazer; and  
R. Timothy Ziemer.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael E. Baroody to be Chairman and member of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick D. Duddy to be Ambassador to Venezuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate David G. Nason to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Financial Institutions).

The President announced his intention to appoint Blake G. Hall and John Stringer Rainey as members of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Military Academy.

#### *March 2*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on the tornado damage in Alabama, Georgia, and Missouri. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. George E. "Sonny" Perdue of Georgia. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, he met with Members of the Senate.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New Albany, IN. Later, he toured Silver Street Elementary School.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Louisville, KY, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Lea Fischbach. Later, he met with students from the McConnell Center.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil to Camp David on March 31.

#### *March 3*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Enterprise, AL, where he took an aerial tour of the area damaged by tornadoes on March 1. Later, he met with families whose homes were damaged by the tornadoes.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Americus, GA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he took an aerial tour of the damaged area. He then participated in a briefing on tornado damage and met with affected families.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on March 1.



The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on March 1 and 2.

*March 5*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with Foreign Service officers.

*March 6*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President watched the verdict read in the trial of former Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had dinner with King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph Timothy Kelliher to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and to redesignate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to designate Kerri Layne Briggs as Acting Assistant Secretary of Education for Elementary and Secondary Education and to nominate her to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Elementary and Secondary Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas G. Myers, Jeffrey Patchen, and Lotsee Patterson to be members of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

*March 7*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush went to DAR Constitution Hall, where he made remarks to political appointees and Federal Government employees. Later, they returned to the White House.

Later in the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with congressional leaders.

*March 8*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Sao Paulo, Brazil, arriving in the evening. Upon arrival, they met with Brazil's

Ambassador to the U.S. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota and U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford M. Sobel.

*March 9*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he greeted U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

Later in the morning, the President went to Petrobras Transporte S.A. Facility, where he toured the facility and participated in a briefing on biofuel technology.

In the afternoon, the President had a lunch meeting with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush went to Meninos do Morumbi, where they toured the facility with president and director Flavio Pimenta and watched a performance.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay.

The White House announced that, to commemorate Saint Patrick's Day, the President will host Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland at the White House on March 16.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dale Cabaniss to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority and, upon confirmation, redesignate him as Chair.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol Waller Pope to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace:

Anne Cahn;  
Kathleen Martinez;  
Bruce P. Jackson;  
George E. Moose; and  
Jeremy A. Rabkin.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors:

Marc A. Giammatteo;  
Jose R. Ramos;  
Tammy L. Edwards;  
Kenneth Fisher;  
C. Martin Harris;  
Edward A. Eckenhoff; and  
Gail R. Wilensky.

### *March 10*

In the morning, at the Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza Hotel in Montevideo, Uruguay, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush went to Anchorena Park, where he met with President Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with President Vazquez and his wife Maria Auxiliadora Delgado de Vazquez. They then toured Anchorena Park.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza Hotel. He then participated in an interview with Greta Van Susteren of FOX News for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the U.S. Ambassador's residence, where they attended a reception for government and business leaders. Later, they returned to the Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza Hotel.

### *March 11*

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Bogota, Colombia, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival, they went to Casa de Narino where they participated in an arrival ceremony with President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia and his wife Lina Maria Moreno de Uribe.

Later in the afternoon, the President had a meeting followed by a working lunch with President Uribe. Later, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a briefing on alternative farm products development. They then went to the U.S. Embassy where they met with the staff and their families.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Guatemala City, Guatemala, where, upon arrival, they went to the Real InterContinental Guatemala hotel.

### *March 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to Carlos Emilio Leonardo School in Santa Cruz Balanya, Guatemala, and met with U.S. military medical readiness personnel. They then went to the town square where they met President Oscar Berger Perdomo of Guatemala and his wife Wendy Widmann de Berger. They also met with Mayor Raymundo Juarez of Santa Cruz

Balanya, visited with market vendors, and toured the Dr. Richard Carroll Municipal Library.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Iximche, Guatemala, where they toured Mayan ruins and attended a cultural performance.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Real InterContinental Guatemala in Guatemala City. Later, they went to the National Palace where they participated in an arrival ceremony with President Berger and Mrs. Widmann de Berger. Later, he met with President Berger.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Real InterContinental Guatemala where they met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the National Palace where they had dinner with President Berger and Mrs. Widmann de Berger. Later, they traveled to Merida, Mexico, where, upon arrival, they went to the Hyatt Regency Merida hotel.

### *March 13*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Temozon Sur, Mexico, where they went to the Hacienda Temozon and toured the facility. He then met with President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Uxmal, Mexico, where they toured the Uxmal ruins with President Calderon and his wife Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo. Later, they returned to the Hyatt Regency Merida.

On March 12, the President declared an emergency in Indiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near-record snow from February 12 to 14.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe freeze from January 11 to 17.

### *March 14*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with U.S. Consular staff and their families.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms from February 23 to March 2.

#### *March 15*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Capitol, the President and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland attended a Saint Patrick's Day luncheon hosted by Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.

The President announced that he has nominated Henry Bonilla to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced that he has nominated Hans G. Klemm to be Ambassador to East Timor-Leste.

The President announced that he has nominated William R. Brownfield to be Ambassador to Colombia.

The President announced that he has nominated Phillip Carter III to be Ambassador to Guinea.

The President announced that he has nominated Stephen W. Porter to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint H. Gary Morse and A.J. Scribante as members of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council:

Fred S. Zeidman (Chair);  
Miriam Adelson;  
Tom A. Bernstein;  
Carol B. Cohen;  
Joel M. Geiderman;  
Michael J. Gerson;  
Zvi Gitelman; and  
William S. Levine.

#### *March 16*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he

met with Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia and President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

#### *March 17*

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *March 18*

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

#### *March 19*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia. He then had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, in the Situation Room, he and Vice President Dick Cheney participated in a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with members of the Boone and Crockett Club.

#### *March 20*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Kansas City, MO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Rob Mullin, Jr.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fairfax, KS, where he toured the General Motors Fairfax Assembly Plant. Later, he traveled to Claycomo, MO, where he toured the Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has named Julie Cram as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Public Liaison.

The President announced that he has named Brent McIntosh as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Staff Secretary.

The President announced that he has named Dan Meyer as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced that he has named David Boyer as Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Daniel J. Kaniewski as Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Response Policy.

The President announced that he has named Matt Latimer as Special Assistant to the President for Speechwriting.

The President announced that he has named Stacie Maass as Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.

#### *March 21*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had a working lunch with Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 White House News Photographers Association "Eyes of History" winners.

Later in the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with chief executive officers from the Business Roundtable.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Sullivan to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to accord the personal rank of Ambassador to Thomas A. Schweich during his tenure as Coordinator for Counternarcotics and Justice Reform in Afghanistan.

#### *March 22*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, in the State Dining Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a reception in honor of the Education Department's National Higher Education Transformation Summit, "A Test of Leadership: Committing to Advanced Postsecondary Education for All Americans."

#### *March 23*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay House, the President attended a Republican Na-

tional Committee luncheon. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a signing ceremony for H.R. 584, designating the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janet E. Garvey to be Ambassador to Cameroon.

The President announced his intention to nominate George A. Krol to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Lyle Lavery to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishing Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Niels Marquardt to be Ambassador to Madagascar and Comoros.

#### *March 24*

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *March 25*

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

#### *March 26*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, on the South Lawn, the President participated in a demonstration of alternative fuel vehicles.

#### *March 27*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with White House Press Secretary Tony Snow. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, at the U.S. Postal Service Vehicle Maintenance Facility, the President participated in a demonstration of alternative fuel vehicles.

#### *March 28*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *March 29*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the East Room, he met with the House Republican Conference.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with members of the Children's Miracle Network.

The President announced his intention to designate the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Dakar, Senegal, to attend the inauguration of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal on April 3:

Elaine L. Chao (head of delegation);  
Janice L. Jacobs;  
Louis W. Sullivan;  
Bobby Pittman, Jr.; and  
R. Timothy Ziemer.

#### *March 30*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he visited with patients and medical personnel in the Occupational Therapy Unit and the Physical Therapy Unit. He also presented Purple Heart medals to 11 soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru to the White House on April 23.

The President declared an emergency in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by record snow and near record snow on February 28 to March 2.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Alabama by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of severe storms and tornadoes that struck the State on March 1.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Georgia by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of severe storms and tornadoes that struck the State on March 1 and 2.

#### *March 31*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an arrival ceremony for President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. Later, he and President Lula da Silva had a meeting.

#### *April 1*

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

#### *April 2*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on March 23 and 24.

#### *April 3*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

#### *April 4*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Victorville, CA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Randy Hatfield. He then traveled to Fort Irwin, CA.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a briefing and demonstration at the U.S. Army National Training Center. He then had lunch with military personnel and their families. Later, he met with family members of soldiers killed in Iraq.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Hannah Locke. Later, at a private residence, he attended a Republican National Committee reception.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will welcome Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to the White House on April 26, and on April 27, the President and Prime Minister Abe will meet at Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles L. English to be Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President announced his intention to nominate Miriam K. Hughes to be Ambassador to Micronesia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cameron P. Munter to be Ambassador to Serbia.



The President announced his intention to nominate Robert B. Nolan to be Ambassador to Lesotho.

The President announced his intention to nominate John L. Withers II to be Ambassador to Albania.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Couch to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Kussman to be Under Secretary for Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter B. McCarthy to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Management) and, upon appointment, to designate him as Chief Financial Officer.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dennis R. Schrader to be Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency, at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael G. Vickers to be Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, and Interdependent Capabilities).

The President announced his intention to appoint Jeffrey Scott Wilpon as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations:

Calvin M. Dooley;  
Edward C. Emma;  
John Engler;  
William E. Frenzel;  
Nicholas Giordano;  
Mark Raymond Kennedy;  
Scott Klug;  
James W. Morrison;  
Stephen W. Sanger;  
Jose A. Villamil; and  
James L. Ziemer.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Andrew G. Biggs as Deputy Commissioner of Social Security.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Susan E. Dudley as Administrator

of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Sam Fox as Ambassador to Belgium.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Carol Waller Pope as a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced that he has appointed Mark C. Treanor as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Naval Academy.

#### *April 5*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

#### *April 6*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *April 7*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had Easter dinner with family members.

#### *April 8*

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Fort Hood, TX, where they attended an Easter Sunday church service at the 13th Sustainment Command Chapel.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Bush Ranch.

#### *April 9*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Yuma, AZ, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Michael Christopher.

Later in the morning, the President participated in a briefing on U.S. Border Patrol use of unmanned aerial vehicles and toured the Mexico-U.S. border.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

#### *April 10*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdellahi of Mauritania. He then had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Fairfax, VA.

Later in the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has nominated Peter M. McKinley to be Ambassador to Peru.

The President announced that he has nominated Charles L. Hopkins III to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Operations, Preparedness, Security and Law Enforcement).

The President announced that he has appointed Ronald Radosh as a member of the Public Interest Declassification Board.

The President announced that he has appointed Ira F. Jaffe, Annette M. Sandberg, and Peter W. Tredick (Chair) as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 241.

#### *April 11*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Senators John E. Sununu of New Hampshire, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallahi as President of Mauritania on April 19:

John D. Negroponte (head of delegation);  
Jendayi Elizabeth Frazer;  
William E. Ward; and  
Bobby Pittman, Jr.

#### *April 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Senators John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey O. Graham of South Carolina to discuss their recent trip to Iraq.

#### *April 13*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Lech Kaczynski of Poland to the White House on July 16.

#### *April 14*

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *April 15*

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

#### *April 16*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had a telephone conversation with Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales.

In the afternoon, the President had a briefing on the shootings at Virginia Tech.

The President announced his intention to nominate Reuben Jeffery III to be Under Secretary of State (Economic, Energy, and Agricultural Affairs) and to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the following organizations: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the African Development Fund, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

#### *April 17*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a meeting with families to discuss taxes.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Blacksburg, VA. He then met with Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Later, at Cassell Coliseum, the President and Mrs. Bush met with survivors and family members of victims of the Virginia Tech shootings of April 16.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in separate interviews with Katie Couric of CBS News, Brian Williams of NBC News, and Charles Gibson of ABC News. He then visited and added their names to a campus memorial for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings. Later, he and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

#### *April 18*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he toured the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with congressional leaders to discuss emergency supplemental appropriations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Frederick B. Cook to be Ambassador to the Central African Republic.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph A. Ereli to be Ambassador to Bahrain.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard B. Norland to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan J. Patricof to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Phillip Jackson Bell, Franklin G. Gale, and Lee J. Lofthus as members of the Board of Directors of the Federal Prison Industries, Inc.

#### *April 19*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Dayton, OH, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Bob Rehmet.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Tipp City, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC. He then had a telephone conversation with Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales.

#### *April 20*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Grand Rapids, MI, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Chuck Hinken. He then traveled to East Grand Rapids, MI.

Later in the afternoon, the President met with family members of soldiers killed in Iraq. He then visited the gravesite of President Gerald R. Ford. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has named Thomas P. Bossert as Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Preparedness Policy.

The President announced that he has named Elizabeth H. Dial as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Eric Draper as Special Assistant to the President and White House Photographer.

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement

State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by flooding from March 16 to 18.

#### *April 21*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

#### *April 23*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Situation Room, he participated in a briefing by Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson to discuss the findings of the Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes.

#### *April 24*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to New York City, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Charles "Chick" Lemonick.

Later in the afternoon, the President toured Harlem Village Academy Charter School and met with students, parents, and teachers to discuss charter schools. Later, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, he participated in an interview with Charlie Rose of PBS's "Charlie Rose." He then met with Gov. Eliot Spitzer of New York.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a Republican National Committee dinner. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden to the White House on May 15.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will travel to Heiligendamm, Germany, to attend the G-8 Summit from June 6 to 8. Prior to the Summit, the President will visit Prague, Czech Republic, on June 5 for meetings with President Vaclav Klaus and Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek of the Czech Republic. Following the G-8, the

President will travel to Jurata, Poland, on June 8 for a meeting with President Lech Kaczynski of Poland. On June 9, he will visit the Vatican for his first meeting with Pope Benedict XVI, and Rome, Italy, for meetings with President Giorgio Napolitano and Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy. The President will then proceed to Tirana, Albania, on June 10, to meet with President Alfred Moisiu and Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania, before concluding his trip in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he will meet on June 11 with President Georgi Parvanov and Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev of Bulgaria.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral service of former President Boris Yeltsin of Russia on April 25: George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton (heads of delegation); and William Joseph Burns.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding from April 14 to 18.

#### *April 25*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Conference.

The White House announced that the President will host President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia at the White House on May 2.

The President announced his intention to nominate James R. Keith to be Ambassador to Malaysia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nancy J. Powell to be Ambassador to Nepal.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stephen A. Seche to be Ambassador to Yemen.

The President announced his intention to nominate James K. Glassman to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors and, upon appointment, to nominate him to be Chairman.

The President announced his intention to appoint William Hogarth as a U.S. Commissioner to the International Commission for the Con-

servation of Atlantic Tunas (Government Representative).

The President announced his intention to appoint Todd T. Semonite as the Federal member of the Delaware River Basin Commission (Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania), and as the Federal member of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania).

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations:

Jennifer Dunn;  
Terry D. Growcock;  
Herbert Fisk Johnson;  
James W. Owens;  
Sidney Taurel; and  
William G. Walter.

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding beginning on April 15 and continuing.

#### *April 26*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 National and State Teachers of the Year.

In the evening, at Blair House, the President and Mrs. Bush visited Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and his wife Akie Abe. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, they hosted a dinner for Prime Minister Abe and Mrs. Abe.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen to the White House on May 2.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore to the White House on May 4.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding from April 14 to 20.

#### *April 27*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Camp David, MD, where he welcomed Prime Minister

Shinzo Abe of Japan. He then met with Prime Minister Abe.

Later in the morning, the President had lunch with Prime Minister Abe.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea from May 3 to 5: Dirk Kempthorne (head of delegation); Robert D. McCallum, Jr.; and Rear Adm. James D. Kelly.

The President declared a major disaster in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on April 15 and continuing.

#### *April 28*

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Miami, FL, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Josh Blyden. He then traveled to Key Biscayne, FL, where he attended a Republican National Committee luncheon at a private residence.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Miami, FL.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

#### *April 30*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, in her capacity as President of the European Council.

In the afternoon, the President had a lunch meeting with President Durao Barroso and President Merkel. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with members of the TransAtlantic Business Dialogue.

Later in the afternoon, on the State Floor, the President participated in a photo opportunity with winners of the FIRST Competition (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology).

The President announced his intention to nominate Maurice S. Parker to be Ambassador to Swaziland.

The President announced his intention to nominate June Carter Perry to be Ambassador to Sierra Leone.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kristine L. Svinicki to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew Saul (Chair), Alejandro Modesto Sanchez, and Gordon James Whiting to be members of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities:

Ricardo Barraza, Jr.;  
Sharman Word Dennis;  
Carmela Vargas Gonzales;  
Harris N. Hollin;  
Casey P. O'Halloran;  
Thomas J. Reilly;  
Steven C. Rhatigan; and  
Neil Romano.

#### *May 1*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Daniel Middaugh.

Later in the morning, the President participated in a briefing at U.S. Central Command by Adm. William J. "Fox" Fallon, USN, commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. Bryan D. "Doug" Brown, USA, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President met with family members of military personnel killed in Iraq. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from April 14 to 18.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes from April 21 to 24.



*May 2*

In the morning, the President had a breakfast meeting with President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia. Later he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a lunch meeting with President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Rene Garcia Preval of Haiti to the White House on May 9.

*May 3*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Tevi D. Troy to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kerry N. Weems to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cameron R. Hume to be Ambassador to Indonesia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bradford P. Campbell to be Assistant Secretary of Labor (Pension and Welfare Benefits).

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles E.F. Millard to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bartholomew H. Chilton to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jill E. Sommers to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Palmer and Stan Z. Soloway to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lorne W. Craner to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled:

Kathleen A. James;

Paul M. Laird;  
Patrick R. Leahy;  
James Omvig;  
Alan S. Thompson; and  
Edward W. Walters III.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee:

Joan Breton Connelly;  
Winton S. Holladay;  
Robert B. Korver; and  
Katharine Lee Reid.

*May 4*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, on the Oval Office patio, the President participated in an interview with the BBC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Toomas Ilves of Estonia to the White House on June 25.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Restoration for Devolved Government in Northern Ireland in Belfast, United Kingdom:

Paula J. Dobriansky (head of delegation);  
Thomas C. Foley;  
Edward M. Kennedy;  
Howard D. Pittman; and  
Richard F. Powers III.

The President announced his intention to nominate William G. Sutton, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce (Manufacturing and Services).

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from April 15 to 21.

*May 5*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Beltsville, MD, where he went mountain biking with members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

*May 6*

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Nicolas

Sarkozy of France to congratulate him on his election victory.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on May 4 and continuing.

#### *May 7*

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India and President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Situation Room, the President had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Yellow Oval Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a luncheon for Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

In the evening, on the North Portico, the President and Mrs. Bush greeted Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. They then participated in a photo opportunity in the Grand Foyer.

Later in the evening, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Mrs. Cheney, and Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip attended a performance by Itzhak Perlman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Henrietta Holsman Fore to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

#### *May 8*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Yellow Oval Room, the President met with Republican Members of the House of Representatives.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the British Embassy where they met with Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Later, they returned to the White House.

#### *May 9*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, KS. Later, aboard Marine One, he traveled to Greensburg, KS, where he took an aerial tour of the area dam-

aged by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 4.

In the afternoon, the President took a walking tour of the damaged area and met with affected families. Later, in the Emergency Operations Center, he participated in a briefing on recovery efforts.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

#### *May 10*

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Arlington, VA, where, at the Pentagon, he participated in a briefing by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. He then met with U.S. military personnel.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will host NATO Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer and Mrs. de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on May 20 and 21.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ravic R. Huso to be Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The President announced his intention to nominate Howard Radzely to be Deputy Secretary of Labor and appoint him as a Labor representative on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ned L. Siegel to be Ambassador to the Bahamas.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert Lance Boldrey to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate John E. Osborn and Lezlee J. Westine to be members of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The President announced his intention to nominate William S. Jasien and Mark S. Shelton to be Directors of the Board of Directors of

the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (Securities Industry).

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen E. Henry, James D. Range, and Edward R. Tinsley III as members of the Board of Directors of the Valles Caldera Trust.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barbara Bruin as a member of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael L. Cromartie, Talil Eid, and Leonard A. Leo as members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission:

Brad T. Barber;  
Don A. Christiansen;  
James F. Karpowitz; and  
Dallin W. Jensen.

The President announced his intention to designate Michael O. Leavitt (chief delegate), William R. Steiger, and Warren W. Tichenor as delegates of the United States to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization.

The President announced his intention to designate the following individuals as alternate delegates of the United States to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization:

John O. Agwunobi;  
Ann S. Blackwood;  
Julie L. Gerberding;  
David E. Hohman;  
Michael W. Miller; and  
Mary Lou Valdez.

#### *May 11*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Pittsburgh, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Dan Wiesman. He then traveled to Latrobe, PA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom at the White House on May 16 and 17.

The President declared a major disaster in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supple-

ment State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from April 15 to 27.

#### *May 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *May 13*

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Williamsburg, VA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Angela Schminke. Later, he and Mrs. Bush toured the Jamestown settlement.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

#### *May 14*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan. He then had an intelligence briefing.

#### *May 15*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elizabeth A. Duke, Larry A. Klane, and Randall S. Kroszner to be members of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald Spoehel to be Chief Financial Officer of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Miguel Campaneria to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

#### *May 16*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he went to the Embassy Suites Washington D.C.-Convention Center hotel, where he participated in a demonstration of Basic Pilot and the Employment Eligibility Verification system.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Rebekah Wade of the Sun.

In the evening, on the North Portico, the President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, they had dinner.

The President announced that he has named William L. Behrens as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Jedd Medefind as Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

The President announced that he has named Jason Thomas as Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy in the National Economic Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding from April 15 to 25.

#### *May 17*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Situation Room, the President, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, and members of the National Security Council participated in a video teleconference with leaders in Iraq. Later, in the Oval Office, the President met with Prime Minister Blair.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas P. D'Agostino to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security (Administrator for Nuclear Security, National Nuclear Security Administration) at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles W. Grim to be Director of the Indian Health Service for the Public Health Service at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric G. John to be Ambassador to Thailand.

#### *May 18*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with a member of AmeriCorps. Later, he participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the completion of renovation of the Situation Room.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the 2006 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Richmond, VA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volun-

teer Jim DeVito. Later, at a private residence, they attended a Republican Party of Virginia reception.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Crawford, TX.

#### *May 19*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *May 20*

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and his wife Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had dinner with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and Mrs. de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

#### *May 21*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and his wife Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Steve Holland of Reuters.

#### *May 22*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with Republican Members of Congress.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ondray T. Harris to be Director of the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Diane Auer Jones to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne Woods Patterson to be Ambassador to Pakistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Schwartz to be member at

large and Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jerome F. Kever to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing carriers).

The President announced his intention to nominate Virgil M. Speakman, Jr., to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing employees).

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles E.F. Millard as Interim Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad:

Linda Leuchter Addison;  
Ronald H. Bloom;  
Amy S. Epstein;  
Tyrone Fahner;  
Andrew M. Klein;  
Michael A. Menis;  
Warren L. Miller;  
Harriet Rotter;  
Steven E. Some; and  
Robert Zarnegin.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on May 4 and continuing.

#### *May 23*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with members of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels. He then traveled to New London, CT, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Charles R. England.

In the afternoon, the President met with family members of U.S. military personnel killed in the war on terror. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has appointed Noel J. Francisco as a member of the District of Columbia Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure.

#### *May 24*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Build-

ing, he met with the Chinese delegation to the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the 2006 President's "E" Award and "E" Star Award for Export Achievement.

The President announced his intention to nominate Diane G. Farrell to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Preston M. "Pete" Geren III to be Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate James W. Holsinger, Jr., to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service and Surgeon General of the Public Health Service at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael W. Michalak to be Ambassador to Vietnam.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert C. Tapella to be the Public Printer.

#### *May 25*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, where he visited with wounded military personnel and presented Purple Heart medals to five soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, mudslides, and rockslides on April 14 and 15.

The President declared a major disaster in Rhode Island and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding on April 15 and 16.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes from May 5 to 7.



*May 26*

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*May 27*

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, on the South Portico, he met with leaders of Rolling Thunder.

*May 28*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Arlington, VA, where they participated in a Memorial Day wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery.

In the afternoon, they returned to Washington, DC.

*May 29*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Brunswick, GA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Ron Hutcheson of the McClatchy Company. Later, he traveled to Glynn, GA, where he toured the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, on the North Portico, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2006 Major League Soccer Cup champion Houston Dynamo.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Vietnamese democracy and human rights activists.

*May 30*

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Kim Strassel of the Wall Street Journal. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Situation Room, the President had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, two members of the Presidency Council, and Vice Presidents Tariq al-Hashimi and Adil Abd Al-Mahdi of Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Edison, NJ, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Chuck Wiemer.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to Kennebunkport, ME, on July 1 and 2.

The President announced his intention to nominate James L. Caswell to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate William J. Garvelink to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Christian Kennedy to be accorded the rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roderick W. Moore to be Ambassador to Montenegro.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald Jay Tenpas to be Assistant Attorney General (Environment and Natural Resources Division) at the Department of Justice, and to designate him Acting.

The President announced his intention to designate Theodore F. Stevens as Personal Representative of the President at the 47th International Paris Air Show.

*May 31*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel to the White House on June 19.

The President announced his intention to nominate David H. McCormick to be Under Secretary of the Treasury (International Affairs).

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships:

Leanna Brown;  
Les T. Csorba;  
Joseph V. Del Raso;  
Richard S. Mroz;  
Joseph E. Samora;  
Justin J. Sayfie; and  
Gordon D. Sondland.

The President announced that he has named Daniel M. Price as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs.

*June 1*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he met with the Homeland Security Council to discuss hurricane readiness.

The President announced that he has named Jonathan D. Felts as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs.

*June 2*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*June 4*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Prague, Czech Republic, arriving in the evening. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Parliament Member Saad Hariri of Lebanon.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to the Hilton Atrium Hotel Prague.

*June 5*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Atrium Hotel Prague, he and Mrs. Bush met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Prague Castle, where, on the First Courtyard, they participated in an arrival ceremony with President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic and his wife Livia Klausova. Then, in the Hapsburg Salon, they participated in a photo opportunity and met with President Klaus and Mrs. Klausova.

In the afternoon, in Rudolph's Gallery, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in a social luncheon with President Klaus and Mrs. Klausova. He then returned to the Hilton Atrium Hotel Prague.

Later in the afternoon, the President met with Social Democratic Party leader Jiri Paroubek of the Czech Republic. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Czernin Palace. Later, in the Music Salon, they met with democracy advocates.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Rostock, Germany. While en route aboard Air Force One, he was informed of the sentence handed down in the trial of former Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Heiligendamm, Germany, where, upon arrival, they went to the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Amadou Toumani Toure as President of Mali on June 8:

Michael O. Johanns (head of delegation);  
Josephine K. Olsen;  
Morgan W. Davis;  
Mary Beth Leonard;  
Steven Phillips; and  
Judy Van Rest.

*June 6*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush met with musicians and activists Paul D. "Bono" Hewson, Sir Robert Geldof, and Youssou N'Dour. Later, they traveled to Hohen Luckow, Germany. They then went to the Gut Hohen Luckow estate, where they attended a reception, an entertainment event, and a dinner for G-8 leaders and their spouses hosted by Chancellor Merkel and her husband Joachim Sauer.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to the Kempinski Grand Hotel Heiligendamm in Heiligendamm, Germany.

The President announced that he has nominated Douglas A. Brook to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management).

The President announced that he has nominated Mark Green to be Ambassador to Tanzania.

The President announced that he has nominated David W. Hagy to be Director of the National Institute of Justice at the Department of Justice.

The President announced that he has nominated Wanda L. Nesbitt to be Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire.

The President announced that he has appointed Kenneth B. Mehlman as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes from May 4 to 19.

*June 7*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a breakfast meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. He then participated in G-8 summit meetings.

Later in the morning, the President participated in the G-8 summit official photograph. He then met with Junior 8 student leaders.

In the afternoon, the President had a working lunch with G-8 leaders. He then participated in G-8 summit meetings.

In the evening, the President attended a reception for G-8 leaders. He then had a working dinner with G-8 leaders.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had after-dinner coffee with G-8 leaders.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Nguyen Minh Triet of Vietnam to the White House on June 22.

*June 8*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with President Nicolas Sarkozy of France.

Later in the morning, the President met with President Hu Jintao of China. He then participated in G-8 summit meetings with outreach country representatives.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a photo opportunity with outreach country representatives. He then had a working lunch with G-8 leaders, Africa outreach representatives, and outreach country representatives.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Gdansk, Poland, where, at the Gdansk Lech Walesa International Airport, they were greeted by President Lech Kaczynski of Poland and his wife Maria Kaczynska. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to the Presidential Retreat in Jurata Hel, Poland, where they participated in an arrival ceremony with President Kaczynski and Mrs. Kaczynska. He then met with President Kaczynski. Later, he had a working dinner with President Kaczynski.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Gdansk Lech Walesa International Airport. Later, they traveled to Rome, Italy, where, upon arrival, they went to the Villa Taverna.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas J. Barrett to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

The President announced that he has named J. Michael Farren as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named William Burck as Deputy Assistant to the President and Special Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Emmet Flood as Deputy Assistant to the President and Special Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Scott Coffina as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Amy F. Dunathan as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Francis Q. Hoang as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Al Lambert as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Michael Purpura as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Kate Todd as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding from May 4 to 11.

*June 9*

In the morning, in Rome, Italy, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to Quirinale Palace. He then met with President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Vatican City where he met with Pope Benedict XVI. Later, he and Mrs. Bush and members of the U.S. delegation met with the Pope. The President then met with Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone of the Holy See.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Rome, Italy, where they toured the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere. Later, he went to Chigi Palace where he met with Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy. They then had a working lunch.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush went to Villa Taverna where they met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

Later, he met with former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

*June 10*

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Tirana, Albania, where, at the Palace of Brigades, they participated in an arrival ceremony with President Alfred Moisiu of Albania. He then met with President Moisiu.

Later in the morning, the President met with Albanian military personnel who served in Iraq. He then went to the Council of Ministers where he met with Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania.

In the afternoon, at the Tirana-Rinas Airport, the President and Mrs. Bush met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families. They then traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria, arriving in the evening.

*June 11*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to Nevsky Square where they participated in an arrival ceremony. Then, in Plenary Hall, he met with President Georgi Parvanov of Bulgaria.

Later in the morning, the President went to the Council of Ministers where he met with Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev of Bulgaria.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the American Embassy Sofia and met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families. Later, they returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

*June 12*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President went to the U.S. Capitol where he participated in a Senate Republican Policy Committee lunch.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lisa E. Epifani to be Assistant Secretary of Energy (Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs).

The President announced his intention to nominate Gracia M. Hillman to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gail D. Mathieu to be Ambassador to Namibia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harry K. Thomas, Jr., to be Director General of the Foreign Service and, upon confirmation, appoint him as Chairman of the

Board of the Foreign Service at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bonnie McElveen-Hunter to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the American National Red Cross.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from May 5 to 18.

*June 13*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President met with the Congressional Global War on Terror Consultative Group.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland, on June 26:

Tevi Troy (head of delegation);  
Victor H. Ashe;  
Cheryl Feldman Halpern; and  
Michael M. Kaiser.

*June 14*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*June 15*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Wichita, KS, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Alex Robinson.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President made remarks at a luncheon for senatorial candidate Charles P. "Pat" Roberts. He then traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Montebello, Quebec, Canada, to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico at the North American Leaders' Summit on August 20 and 21.

*June 16*

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

*June 17*

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

*June 18*

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority to discuss the situation in the Middle East. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, and Vice Presidents Adil Abd Al-Mahdi and Tariq al-Hashimi of Iraq.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay House, the President attended a Republican National Committee luncheon. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a signing ceremony for H.R. 1676, the Native American Home Ownership Opportunity Act of 2007.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will host a White House Conference on the Americas on July 9.

The President announced that he has nominated Paul R. Brubaker to be Administrator of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced that he has nominated Nancy Goodman Brinker to be Chief of Protocol at the Department of State, and to have the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service.

The President announced that he has nominated David W. James to be Assistant Secretary of Labor (Public Affairs).

The President announced that he has nominated Steven H. Murdock to be Director of the Census at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced that he has nominated Eunice S. Reddick to be Ambassador to Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

*June 19*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

The President announced his intention to nominate James A. Nussle to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Kansas by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures as a result of severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding that struck the State from May 4 to 18.

*June 20*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he went to the State Department where he participated in a photo opportunity and met with Caribbean heads of government.

In the afternoon, the President returned to the White House.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald K. McMullen to be Ambassador to Eritrea.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deborah Taylor Tate to be a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate John J. Young, Jr., to be Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to appoint LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., as a member of the President's Cancer Panel.

The President announced his intention to designate Horace A. Thompson as Chairman of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

*June 21*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Huntsville, AL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Don Clark. He then traveled to Athens, AL, arriving in the afternoon, where he toured the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Mobile, AL, where he was joined by Mrs. Bush. Upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Debbie Gardner.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Clarence H. "Bud" Albright to be Under Secretary of Energy.



The President announced his intention to nominate Robert Clarke Brown to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science:

Susan Davis Allen;  
Ching-Wu Chu;  
Darleane Christian Hoffman;  
Linda P.B. Katehi; and  
Rodney J. Brown.

The President announced that he has named John G. Embling as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

#### *June 22*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with President Nguyen Minh Triet of Vietnam.

#### *June 23*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### *June 24*

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Ford's Theatre Gala, where he made remarks for television broadcast at a later date.

#### *June 25*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had a working lunch with President Toomas Ilves of Estonia.

#### *June 26*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in an interview with Bill Sammon of the Washington Examiner.

The President announced his intention to nominate Scott M. Burns to be Deputy Director of National Drug Control Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Ross Ashley III to be an Assistant

Administrator (Grant Programs) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gen. Wayne A. Downing, USA (Ret.), as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint R. Todd Gardenhire, Paul Clinton Harris, Sr., and Richard A. Manka as members of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to designate Craig W. Duehring as Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

#### *June 27*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, on the South Lawn, the President participated in an interview with Hannah Storm of CBS News "The Early Show." Later, in the Rose Garden, he participated in a photo opportunity with the NCAA women's softball champion University of Arizona Wildcats.

#### *June 28*

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to North Kingstown, RI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sherrill Estes.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Newport, RI. While en route aboard Marine One, he took an aerial tour of "Tall Ships Rhode Island 2007" in Newport Harbor.

In the afternoon, the President met with family members of military personnel killed in the war on terror. Later, he traveled to the Bush family home in Kennebunkport, ME.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher Egan to be the Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald B. Marron to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brent T. Wahlquist to be Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement at the Department of the Interior.

*June 29*

In the morning, the President was briefed by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley concerning the attempted terrorist bombings in London, England. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President was briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend on the situation in London.

The President announced that he has nominated Paul J. Hutter to be General Counsel at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced that he has nominated Thomas M. Beck to be a member of

the Federal Labor Relations Authority and, upon appointment, to designate him as Chair.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding from June 16 to 18.

*June 30*

In the morning, at the Bush family home in Kennebunkport, ME, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had briefings on the attempted terrorist attacks in London, England, and Glasgow, Scotland.

## Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

*The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.*

### Submitted January 9

John Preston Bailey,  
of West Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of West Virginia, vice Frederick P. Stamp, Jr., retired.

Valerie L. Baker,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Consuelo B. Marshall, retired.

Vanessa Lynne Bryant,  
of Connecticut, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Connecticut, vice Dominic J. Squatrito, retired.

Carol A. Dalton,  
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice A. Noel Anketell Kramer, elevated.

Mary O. Donohue,  
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of New York, vice Frederick J. Scullin, Jr., retired.

Thomas Alvin Farr,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina, vice Malcolm J. Howard, retired.

Nora Barry Fischer,  
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, vice Robert J. Cindrich, resigned.

Dabney Langhorne Friedrich,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for the remainder of the term expiring October 31, 2009, vice Michael O'Neill, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Gregory Kent Frizzell,  
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma, vice Sven E. Holmes, resigned.

Philip S. Gutierrez,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Terry J. Hatter, Jr., retired.

Thomas M. Hardiman,  
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Richard L. Nygaard, retired.

Marcia Morales Howard,  
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice Harvey E. Schlesinger, retired.

Beryl A. Howell,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2011 (reappointment), to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

John Alfred Jarvey,  
of Iowa, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa, vice Ronald E. Longstaff, retired.

Frederick J. Kapala,  
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Philip G. Reinhard, retiring.

Peter D. Keisler,  
of Maryland, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, vice John G. Roberts, Jr., elevated.

Sara Elizabeth Lioi,  
of Ohio, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio, vice Lesley Brooks Wells, retired.

Debra Ann Livingston,  
of New York, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Second Circuit, vice John M. Walker, Jr., re-  
tired.

Roslynn Renee Mauskopf,  
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Eastern District of New York, vice David G.  
Trager, retired.

Liam O'Grady,  
of Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Eastern District of Virginia, vice Claude M. Hil-  
ton, retired.

Lawrence Joseph O'Neill,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Eastern District of California, vice Oliver W.  
Wanger, retired.

William Lindsay Osteen, Jr.,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the Middle District of North Carolina, vice  
William L. Osteen, Sr., retired.

Halil Suleyman Ozerden,  
of Mississippi, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Southern District of Mississippi, vice David C.  
Bramlette, retired.

Heidi M. Pasichow,  
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate  
Judge of the Superior Court of the District of  
Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Anna  
Blackburne-Rigsby, elevated.

Martin Karl Reidinger,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the Western District of North Carolina, vice  
Graham C. Mullen, retired.

James Edward Rogan,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Central District of California, vice Nora M.  
Manella, resigned.

Thomas D. Schroeder,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the Middle District of North Carolina, vice  
Frank W. Bullock, Jr., retired.

Benjamin Hale Settle,  
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Western District of Washington, vice Frank-  
lin D. Burgess, retired.

Norman Randy Smith,  
of Idaho, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth  
Circuit, vice Stephen S. Trott, retired.

John R. Steer,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Sen-  
tencing Commission for a term expiring October  
31, 2011 (reappointment), to which position he  
was appointed during the last recess of the Sen-  
ate.

Lisa Godbey Wood,  
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Southern District of Georgia, vice Dudley H.  
Bowen, Jr., retired.

Otis D. Wright II,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Central District of California, vice Gary L. Tay-  
lor, retired.

George H. Wu,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Central District of California, vice Ronald S.W.  
Lew, retired.

Anthony C. Epstein,  
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate  
Judge of the Superior Court of the District of  
Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Susan  
Rebecca Holmes, retired.

Leslie Southwick,  
of Mississippi, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Fifth Circuit, vice Charles W. Pickering, Sr.,  
retired.

Joseph S. Van Bokkelen,  
of Indiana, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Northern District of Indiana, vice Rudy Lozano,  
retiring.

Katherine Almquist,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of  
the U.S. Agency for International Development,  
vice Lloyd O. Pierson, resigned.

Carl Joseph Artman,  
of Colorado, to be an Assistant Secretary of the  
Interior, vice David Wayne Anderson.

Michael J. Astrue,  
of Massachusetts, to be Commissioner of Social  
Security for a term expiring January 19, 2013,  
vice Jo Anne Barnhart.

Alex A. Beehler,  
of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Environmental Protection Agency, vice Nikki Rush Tinsley, resigned.

Warren Bell,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2012, vice Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Wayne Cartwright Beyer,  
of New Hampshire, to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years expiring July 1, 2010, vice Othoniel Armendariz, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Andrew G. Biggs,  
of New York, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for the term expiring January 19, 2013, vice James B. Lockhart III.

Anita K. Blair,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Michael L. Dominguez.

Steven G. Bradbury,  
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Jack Landman Goldsmith III, resigned.

Michael J. Burns,  
of New Mexico, to be Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, vice Dale Klein, resigned.

Gregory B. Cade,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration, Department of Homeland Security, vice R. David Paulison, resigned.

Curtis S. Chin,  
of New York, to be U.S. Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Paul William Speltz.

Peter E. Cianchette,  
of Maine, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2010, vice Nancy Killefer, term expired.

John Ray Correll,  
of Indiana, to be Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, vice Jeffrey D. Jarrett.

Paul DeCamp,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Tammy Dee McCutchen, resigned.

Susan E. Dudley,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, vice John D. Graham, resigned.

Michael F. Duffy,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of 6 years expiring August 30, 2012 (reappointment).

Sam Fox,  
of Missouri, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Belgium.

C. Boyden Gray,  
of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Floyd Hall,  
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Reform Board (Amtrak) for a term of 5 years, vice Amy M. Rosen, term expired.

Thomas E. Harvey,  
of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Congressional Affairs), vice Pamela M. Iovino, resigned.

Richard Allan Hill,  
of Montana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring June 10, 2009, vice Juanita Sims Doty, term expired.

D. Jeffrey Hirschberg,  
of Wisconsin, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2007 (reappointment).

Richard E. Hoagland,  
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-



*Appendix B / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia.

Arlene Holen,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of 6 years expiring August 30, 2010, vice Robert H. Beatty, Jr., term expired.

Caroline C. Hunter,  
of Florida, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2009, vice Paul S. DeGregorio, term expired.

Scott A. Keller,  
of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Steven B. Nesmith, resigned.

Peter N. Kirsanow,  
of Ohio, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring August 27, 2008, vice Ronald E. Meisburg.

Kevin M. Kolevar,  
of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability), vice John S. Shaw, resigned.

James R. Kunder,  
of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Frederick W. Schieck.

Robert D. Lenhard,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2011, vice Danny Lee McDonald, term expired.

Margrethe Lundsager,  
of Virginia, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 2 years, vice Nancy P. Jacklin, term expired.

Jane C. Luxton,  
of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, vice James R. Mahoney.

Roger Romulus Martella, Jr.,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Ann R. Klee, resigned.

David M. Mason,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2009 (reappointment).

Patricia Mathes,  
of Texas, to be a member of the National Institute for Literacy Advisory Board for a term expiring November 25, 2007, vice Mark G. Yudof, resigned.

Andrew J. McKenna, Jr.,  
of Illinois, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Robert N. Shamansky, term expired.

Mark McKinnon,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2009, vice Fayza Veronique Boulad Rodman, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

William W. Mercer,  
of Montana, to be Associate Attorney General, vice Robert D. McCallum, Jr.

Daniel Meron,  
of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services, vice Alex Azar II.

Hector E. Morales,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2010, vice Jose A. Fourquet, resigned.

Julie L. Myers,  
of Kansas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, vice Michael J. Garcia.

James F.X. O'Gara,  
of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Director for Supply Reduction, Office of National Drug Control Policy, vice Barry D. Crane.

David Palmer,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2011, vice Cari M. Dominguez, term expired.

John L. Palmer,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal

Disability Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

John L. Palmer,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

John L. Palmer,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Stanley Davis Phillips,  
of North Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Estonia.

Dean A. Pinkert,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the United States International Trade Commission for the term expiring December 16, 2015, vice Jennifer Anne Hillman, term expired.

John A. Rizzo,  
of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice Scott W. Muller, resigned.

Rosemary E. Rodriguez,  
of Colorado, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for the remainder of the term expiring December 12, 2007, vice Raymundo Martinez III, resigned.

Ellen R. Sauerbrey,  
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Population, Refugees, and Migration), vice Arthur E. Dewey, resigned.

Thomas R. Saving,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Thomas R. Saving,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Thomas R. Saving,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Supplementary Medical In-

surance Trust Fund for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Leon R. Sequeira,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, vice Veronica Vargas Stidvent.

Ron Silver,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Stephen D. Krasner, term expired.

Charles Darwin Snelling,  
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring May 30, 2012 (reappointment).

Enrique J. Sosa,  
of Florida, to be a member of the Reform Board (Amtrak) for a term of 5 years, vice Linwood Holton, term expired.

Richard Stickler,  
of West Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health, vice David D. Lauriski, resigned.

Michael W. Tankersley,  
of Texas, to be Inspector General, Export-Import Bank (new position).

Judy Van Rest,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Daniel Pipes.

Hans von Spakovsky,  
of Georgia, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2011, vice Bradley A. Smith, resigned.

Dennis P. Walsh,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2009 (reappointment).

Steven T. Walther,  
of Nevada, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2009, vice Scott E. Thomas, term expired.

William Ludwig Wehrum, Jr., of Tennessee, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Jeffrey R. Holmstead, resigned.

Catherine G. West, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2008, vice Karen Hastie Williams, term expired.

Ellen C. Williams, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2016 (reappointment).

Irving A. Williamson, of New York, to be a member of the U.S. International Trade Commission for the term expiring June 16, 2014, vice Stephen Koplan, term expired.

*Submitted January 10*

P. Robert Fannin, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Dominican Republic.

Douglas Menarchik, of Texas, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (reappointment).

William Raymond Steiger, of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Mozambique.

Bradley Udall, of Colorado, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2012 (reappointment).

Howard Charles Weizmann, of Maryland, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, vice Dan Gregory Blair.

*Submitted January 11*

David James Gribbin IV, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, vice Jeffrey A. Rosen.

John Roberts Hackman, of Virginia, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of 4 years, vice John Francis Clark.

*Submitted January 16*

Michael David Credo, of Louisiana, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Louisiana for the term of 4 years, vice Theophile Alceste Duroncelet, resigned.

Robert Gideon Howard, Jr., of Arkansas, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Arkansas for the term of 4 years, vice Ray Elmer Carnahan, resigned.

Rosa Emilia Rodriguez-Velez, of Puerto Rico, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico for the term of 4 years, vice Humberto S. Garcia, resigned.

Norman Randy Smith, of Idaho, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Thomas G. Nelson, retired.

John Wood, of Missouri, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri for the term of 4 years, vice Todd Peterson Graves, resigned.

*Withdrawn January 16*

Norman Randy Smith, of Idaho, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Stephen S. Trott, retired, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted January 18*

Paul J. Bonicelli, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Adolfo A. Franco.

Mario Mancuso, of New York, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration, vice David H. McCormick.

Patrick P. Shen, of Maryland, to be Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices for a term of 4 years, vice William Sanchez, resigned.

William B. Wood,  
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

*Submitted January 22*

Ryan C. Crocker,  
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank Personal Rank of Career Ambassador, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

J. Michael McConnell,  
of Virginia, to be Director of National Intelligence, vice John D. Negroponte.

John D. Negroponte,  
of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of State, vice Robert B. Zoellick, resigned.

*Submitted January 29*

James R. Clapper, Jr.,  
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, vice Stephen A. Cambone.

William Herbert Heyman,  
of New York, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2008, vice Thomas Waters Grant, term expired.

*Submitted February 8*

Williamson Evers,  
of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education, vice Tom Luce, resigned.

Steven Jeffrey Isakowitz,  
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, vice Susan Johnson Grant, resigned.

*Submitted February 12*

Carol D'Amico,  
of Indiana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010 (reappointment).

Perry R. Eaton,  
of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice A. David Lester, term expired.

Ford M. Fraker,  
of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

David C. Geary,  
of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010, vice Roberto Ibarra Lopez, term expired.

Eric Alan Hanushek,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010 (reappointment).

Janis Herschkowitz,  
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Rafael Cuellar, term expired.

Marylyn Andrea Howe,  
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Glenn Bernard Anderson, term expired.

Sonya Kelliher-Combs,  
of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2008, vice Michael A. Naranjo, term expired.

Zalmay Khalilzad,  
of Maryland, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Zalmay Khalilzad,  
of Maryland, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations,

with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Brenda L. Kingery,  
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice John Richard Grimes, resigned.

Julie E. Kitka,  
of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice Katherine L. Archuleta, term expired.

Kristine Mary Miller,  
of Colorado, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2010, vice D. Bambi Kraus, term expired.

Lonnie C. Moore,  
of Kansas, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Marco A. Rodriguez, term expired.

David George Nason,  
of Rhode Island, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Michael Scott, resigned.

Nguyen Van Hanh,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Alfred Plamann, term expired.

W. Craig Vanderwagen,  
of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Department of Health and Human Services (new position).

Cynthia Allen Wainscott,  
of Georgia, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Barbara Gillcrist, term expired.

Ellen C. Williams,  
of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2014 (reappointment).

*Withdrawn February 12*

Ellen C. Williams,  
of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2016 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted February 15*

Timothy D. DeGiusti,  
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, vice Timothy D. Leonard, retired.

Richard Sullivan,  
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Michael B. Mukasey, retired.

*Submitted February 16*

Eli Whitney Debevoise II,  
of Maryland, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 2 years, vice Robert B. Holland III, resigned.

Bijan Rafiekian,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2011 (reappointment).

*Submitted February 26*

S. Ward Casscells,  
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice William Winkenwerder, Jr.

Claude M. Kicklighter,  
of Georgia, to be Inspector General, Department of Defense, vice Joseph E. Schmitz, resigned.

William Charles Ostendorff,  
of Virginia, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, vice Jerald S. Paul, resigned.



*Submitted February 27*

Jeffrey A. Taylor,  
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Attorney  
for the District of Columbia for the term of  
4 years, vice Kenneth L. Wainstein, resigned.

*Submitted March 5*

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be Chairman of the Consumer  
Product Safety Commission, vice Harold D.  
Stratton, resigned.

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Con-  
sumer Product Safety Commission for a term  
of 7 years from October 27, 2006, vice Harold  
D. Stratton, resigned.

Patrick Dennis Duddy,  
of Maine, a career member of the Senior For-  
eign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the United States of America to the  
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

David George Nason,  
of Rhode Island, to be an Assistant Secretary  
of the Treasury, vice Emil W. Henry, Jr.

*Submitted March 7*

Kerri Layne Briggs,  
of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Ele-  
mentary and Secondary Education, Department  
of Education, vice Henry Louis Johnson, re-  
signed.

Joseph Timothy Kelliher,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member  
of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
for the term expiring June 30, 2012 (reappoint-  
ment).

Douglas G. Myers,  
of California, to be a member of the National  
Museum and Library Services Board for a term  
expiring December 6, 2011, vice Peter Hero,  
term expired.

Jeffrey Patchen,  
of Indiana, to be a member of the National  
Museum and Library Services Board for a term  
expiring December 6, 2011, vice John E. Bu-  
chanan, Jr., term expired.

Lotsee Patterson,  
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the National  
Museum and Library Services Board for a term  
expiring December 6, 2011, vice Donald Leslie,  
term expired.

*Submitted March 12*

William Herbert Heyman,  
of New York, to be a Director of the Securities  
Investor Protection Corporation for a term ex-  
piring December 31, 2007, vice Deborah Doyle  
McWhinney, term expired.

William Herbert Heyman,  
of New York, to be a Director of the Securities  
Investor Protection Corporation for a term ex-  
piring December 31, 2010 (reappointment).

Anne Cahn,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board  
of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for  
a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Betty  
F. Bumpers, term expired.

Bruce P. Jackson,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member  
of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute  
of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011,  
vice Chester A. Crocker, term expired.

Kathleen Martinez,  
of California, to be a member of the Board  
of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for  
a term expiring January 19, 2011, vice Seymour  
Martin Lipset, term expired.

George E. Moose,  
of Colorado, to be a member of the Board of  
Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a  
term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Mora L.  
McLean, term expired.

Jeremy A. Rabkin,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board  
of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for  
a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Barbara  
W. Snelling, term expired.

Dale Cabaniss,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal  
Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years  
expiring July 29, 2012 (reappointment).

Carol Waller Pope,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member  
of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for

the term of 5 years expiring July 1, 2009 (re-appointment).

*Withdrawn March 12*

William Herbert Heyman,  
of New York, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2008, vice Thomas Waters Grant, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on January 29, 2007.

*Submitted March 15*

Dell L. Dailey,  
of South Dakota, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large, vice Henry Crumpton.

Mark P. Lagon,  
of Virginia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large, vice John Ripin Miller, resigned.

Henry Bonilla,  
of Texas, to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador, vice John F. Maisto, resigned.

William R. Brownfield,  
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Colombia.

Phillip Carter III,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guinea.

Hans G. Klemm,  
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Stephen W. Porter,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2012, vice David Gelernter, term expired.

*Submitted March 19*

Sharion Aycock,  
of Mississippi, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi, vice Glen H. Davidson, retiring.

David R. Dugas,  
of Louisiana, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, vice Frank J. Polozola, retired.

James Randal Hall,  
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia, vice B. Avant Edenfield, retired.

Richard H. Honaker,  
of Wyoming, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Wyoming, vice Clarence A. Brimmer, Jr., retired.

Richard A. Jones,  
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Washington, vice John C. Coughenour, retired.

Robert James Jonker,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Michigan, vice Gordon J. Quist, retired.

Raymond M. Kethledge,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice James L. Ryan, retired.

Paul Lewis Maloney,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Michigan, vice Richard Alan Enslen, retired.

Stephen Joseph Murphy III,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice Susan Bieke Neilson, deceased.

Janet T. Neff,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Michigan, vice David W. McKeague, elevated.

Janis Lynn Sammartino,  
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of California, vice Judith Nelsen Keep, deceased.

*Submitted March 22*

John C. Rood,  
of Arizona, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, vice Robert Joseph, resigned.

Michael J. Sullivan,  
of Massachusetts, to be Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (new position).

*Submitted March 26*

Janet E. Garvey,  
of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cameroon.

R. Lyle Laverty,  
of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, vice Harold Craig Manson.

R. Niels Marquardt,  
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of Comoros.

*Withdrawn March 28*

Sam Fox,  
of Missouri, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Belgium, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted March 29*

Jennifer Walker Elrod,  
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice Patrick E. Higginbotham, retired.

*Submitted April 10*

Robert M. Couch,  
of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, vice Keith E. Gottfried, resigned.

Charles Lewis English,  
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Miriam K. Hughes,  
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia.

Michael J. Kussman,  
of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, vice Jonathan Brian Perlin, resigned.

Peter B. McCarthy,  
of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Sandra L. Pack.

Cameron Munter,  
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Serbia.

Robert B. Nolan,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Michael G. Vickers,  
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Thomas W. O'Connell.

John L. Withers II,  
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Albania.

*Submitted April 11*

Charles L. Hopkins,  
of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Operations, Preparedness, Security and Law Enforcement) (new position).

Peter Michael McKinley,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Peru.

*Withdrawn April 11*

Alex A. Beehler, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Environmental Protection Agency, vice Nikki Rush Tinsley, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

William Ludwig Wehrum, Jr., of Tennessee, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Jeffrey R. Holmstead, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted April 16*

Dennis R. Schrader, of Maryland, to be Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security (new position).

*Submitted April 18*

Frederick B. Cook, of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Central African Republic.

Joseph Adam Erel, of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Reuben Jeffery III, of the District of Columbia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Economic, Energy, and Agricultural Affairs), vice Josette Sheeran Shiner.

Reuben Jeffery III, of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the African Development Fund; U.S. Alternate Governor of the Asian De-

velopment Bank; and U.S. Alternate Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, vice Josette Sheeran Shiner.

Richard Boyce Norland, of Iowa, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

*Withdrawn April 18*

Enrique J. Sosa, of Florida, to be a member of the Reform Board (Amtrak) for a term of 5 years, vice Linwood Holton, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted April 26*

James K. Glassman, of Connecticut, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2010 (reappointment).

James K. Glassman, of Connecticut, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2007, vice Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, term expired.

James K. Glassman, of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, vice Kenneth Y. Tomlinson.

James R. Keith, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Malaysia.

Nancy J. Powell, of Iowa, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Nepal.

Stephen A. Seche, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

*Submitted April 30*

James Russell Dedrick,  
of Tennessee, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee for the term of 4 years, vice Harry Sandlin Mattice, Jr., resigned.

Maurice S. Parker,  
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Swaziland.

June Carter Perry,  
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Esteban Soto III,  
of Maryland, to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Puerto Rico for the term of 4 years, vice Herman Wirshing Rodriquez, term expired.

Joe W. Stecher,  
of Nebraska, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Nebraska for the term of 4 years, vice Michael G. Heavican, term expired.

Kristine L. Svinicki,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of 5 years expiring June 30, 2012, vice Jeffrey S. Merrifield, term expiring.

*Submitted May 3*

Bradford P. Campbell,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, vice Ann Laine Combs, resigned.

Bartholomew H. Chilton,  
of Delaware, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for the remainder of the term expiring April 13, 2008, vice Frederick William Hatfield, resigned.

Cameron R. Hume,  
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Indonesia.

Charles E.F. Millard,  
of New York, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (new position).

James Palmer,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2011, vice Donna N. Williams, term expired.

Alejandro Modesto Sanchez,  
of Florida, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2010 (reappointment).

Andrew Saul,  
of New York, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2008 (reappointment).

Andrew Saul,  
of New York, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2012 (reappointment).

Stan Z. Soloway,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2011, vice Carol Kinsley, term expired.

Jill E. Sommers,  
of Kansas, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for the remainder of the term expiring April 13, 2009, vice Sharon Brown-Hruska, resigned.

Tevi David Troy,  
of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Alex Azar II.

Kerry N. Weems,  
of New Mexico, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, vice Mark B. McClellan.

Gordon James Whiting,  
of New York, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2010 (reappointment).

*Withdrawn May 3*

Jane C. Luxton,  
of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, vice James R. Mahoney, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.



*Appendix B / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

*Submitted May 7*

William G. Sutton, Jr.,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Albert A. Frink, Jr.

*Submitted May 10*

Robert Boldrey,  
of Michigan, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation for a term expiring May 26, 2013 (reappointment).

Ravic Rolf Huso,  
of Hawaii, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

William S. Jasien,  
of Virginia, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2009, vice Noe Hinojosa, Jr., term expired.

John E. Osborn,  
of Delaware, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2009, vice Charles William Evers III, term expired.

Howard Radzely,  
of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, vice Steven J. Law, resigned.

Mark S. Shelton,  
of Kansas, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2008, vice Thomas Waters Grant, term expired.

Ned L. Siegel,  
of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Lezlee J. Westine,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2009, vice Marie Sophia Aguirre, term expired.

*Submitted May 16*

Andrew G. Biggs,  
of New York, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for a term expiring January 19, 2013, vice James B. Lockhart III, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Miguel Campaneria,  
of Puerto Rico, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2012, vice Gerard Schwarz, term expired.

Lorne W. Craner,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years (new position).

Susan E. Dudley,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, vice John D. Graham, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Elizabeth A. Duke,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of 14 years from February 1, 1998, vice Susan Schmidt Bies, resigned.

Larry Allan Klane,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of 14 years from February 1, 1996, vice Mark W. Olson, resigned.

Randall S. Kroszner,  
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 14 years from February 1, 2008 (reappointment).

Alan J. Patricof,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years (new position).

Carol Waller Pope,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term expiring July 1, 2009 (reappointment),

to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Ronald Spoechel,  
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, vice Gwendolyn Brown, resigned.

*Submitted May 21*

Thomas P. D'Agostino,  
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Department of Energy, vice Linton F. Brooks, resigned.

Charles W. Grim,  
of Oklahoma, to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, for the term of 4 years (re-appointment).

Eric G. John,  
of Indiana, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

*Submitted May 22*

Diane Auer Jones,  
of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Post-secondary Education, Department of Education, vice Sally Stroup, resigned.

Jerome F. Kever,  
of Illinois, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2008 (reappointment).

Anne Woods Patterson,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Michael Schwartz,  
of Illinois, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2012 (reappointment).

Virgil M. Speakman, Jr.,  
of Ohio, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2009 (reappointment).

*Submitted May 23*

Ondray T. Harris,  
of Virginia, to be Director, Community Relations Service, for a term of 4 years, vice Sharee M. Freeman.

*Withdrawn May 23*

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 2006, vice Harold D. Stratton, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on March 5, 2007.

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, vice Harold D. Stratton, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on March 5, 2007.

*Submitted May 24*

Diane G. Farrell,  
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2011, vice Joseph Max Cleland, term expired.

Henrietta Holsman Fore,  
of Nevada, to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Randall L. Tobias, resigned.

Preston M. Geren,  
of Texas, to be Secretary of the Army, vice Francis J. Harvey, resigned.

James W. Holsinger, Jr.,  
of Kentucky, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefore as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of 4 years, vice Richard H. Carmona, term expired.

Michael W. Michalak,  
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

*Appendix B / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

William J. Powell,  
of West Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Northern District of West Virginia, vice W.  
Craig Broadwater, deceased.

Robert Charles Tapella,  
of Virginia, to be Public Printer, vice Bruce  
R. James, retired.

Amul R. Thapar,  
of Kentucky, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Eastern District of Kentucky, vice Joseph M.  
Hood, retiring.

*Submitted June 4*

James L. Caswell,  
of Idaho, to be Director of the Bureau of Land  
Management, vice Kathleen Burton Clarke, re-  
signed.

William John Garvelink,  
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to  
be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-  
potentiary of the United States of America to  
the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

J. Christian Kennedy,  
of Indiana, a career member of the Senior For-  
eign Service, class of Counselor, for the rank  
of Ambassador during his tenure of service as  
Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues.

David H. McCormick,  
of Pennsylvania, to be an Under Secretary of  
the Treasury, vice Timothy D. Adams.

Roderick W. Moore,  
of Rhode Island, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Am-  
bassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of  
the United States of America to the Republic  
of Montenegro.

Ronald Jay Tenpas,  
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney Gen-  
eral, vice Sue Ellen Wooldridge.

*Withdrawn June 4*

Bruce P. Jackson,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member  
of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute  
of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011,  
vice Chester A. Crocker, term expired, which  
was sent to the Senate on March 12, 2007.

*Submitted June 5*

Douglas A. Brook,  
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of  
the Navy, vice Richard Greco, Jr., resigned.

Mark Green,  
of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary of the United States of  
America to the United Republic of Tanzania.

David W. Hagy,  
of Texas, to be Director of the National Institute  
of Justice, vice Sarah V. Hart, resigned.

Wanda L. Nesbitt,  
of Pennsylvania, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to  
be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-  
potentiary of the United States of America to  
the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

*Withdrawn June 5*

Henry Bonilla,  
of Texas, to be Permanent Representative of  
the United States of America to the Organiza-  
tion of American States, with the rank of Am-  
bassador, vice John F. Maisto, resigned, which  
was sent to the Senate on March 15, 2007.

*Submitted June 11*

Thomas J. Barrett,  
of Alaska, to be Deputy Secretary of Transpor-  
tation, vice Maria Cino, resigned.

*Withdrawn June 11*

Michael J. Burns,  
of New Mexico, to be Assistant to the Secretary  
of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Bio-  
logical Defense Programs, vice Dale Klein, re-  
signed, which was sent to the Senate on January  
9, 2007.

*Submitted June 13*

Lisa E. Epifani,  
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy  
(Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs),  
vice Jill L. Sigal, resigned.

Gracia M. Hillman,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member  
of the Election Assistance Commission for a  
term expiring December 12, 2009 (reappoint-  
ment).

Joseph N. Laplante, Jr.,  
of New Hampshire, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the District of New Hampshire, vice Joseph  
A. Diclerico, Jr., retired.

Gail Dennise Mathieu,  
of New Jersey, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to  
be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-  
potentiary of the United States of America to  
the Republic of Namibia.

Gustavus Adolphus Puryear IV,  
of Tennessee, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Middle District of Tennessee, vice Robert L.  
Echols, retired.

*Submitted June 18*

Nancy Goodman Brinker,  
of Florida, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have  
the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of  
service, vice Donald Burnham Ensenat, re-  
signed.

Paul R. Brubaker,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Research  
and Innovative Technology Administration, De-  
partment of Transportation, vice Ashok G.  
Kaveeshwar, resigned.

David W. James,  
of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of  
Labor, vice Randolph James Clerihue.

Steven H. Murdock,  
of Texas, to be Director of the Census, vice  
Louis Kincannon.

Eunice S. Reddick,  
of New York, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to  
be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-  
potentiary of the United States of America to  
the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concu-  
rently and without additional compensation as  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the United States of America to the Demo-  
cratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

*Submitted June 21*

Clarence H. Albright,  
of South Carolina, to be Under Secretary of  
Energy, vice David Garman, resigned.

Robert Clarke Brown,  
of Ohio, to be a member of the Board of Direc-  
tors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports  
Authority for a term expiring November 22,  
2011 (reappointment).

Ronald K. McMullen,  
of Iowa, a career member of the Senior Foreign  
Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador  
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United  
States of America to the State of Eritrea.

Deborah Taylor Tate,  
of Tennessee, to be a member of the Federal  
Communications Commission for a term of 5  
years from July 1, 2007 (reappointment).

John J. Young, Jr.,  
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense  
for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, vice  
Kenneth J. Krieg.

*Submitted June 25*

Jim Nussle,  
of Iowa, to be Director of the Office of Manage-  
ment and Budget, vice Robert J. Portman.

*Withdrawn June 25*

William W. Mercer,  
of Montana, to be Associate Attorney General,  
vice Robert D. McCallum, Jr., which was sent  
to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

*Submitted June 27*

W. Ross Ashley III,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of  
the Federal Emergency Management Agency,  
Department of Homeland Security (new posi-  
tion).

Scott M. Burns,  
of Utah, to be Deputy Director of National  
Drug Control Policy, vice Mary Ann Solberg,  
resigned.

George A. Krol,  
of New Jersey, a career member of the Senior  
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to  
be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-  
potentiary of the United States of America to  
Turkmenistan.

*Appendix B / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

Reed Charles O'Connor,  
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
Northern District of Texas, vice A. Joe Fish,  
retiring.

*Submitted June 28*

Christopher Egan,  
of Massachusetts, to be Representative of the  
United States of America to the Organization  
for Economic Cooperation and Development,  
with the rank of Ambassador.

Reed Verne Hillman,  
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. Marshal for the  
District of Massachusetts for the term of 4  
years, vice Anthony Dichio.

Donald B. Marron,  
of Maryland, to be a member of the Council  
of Economic Advisers, vice Matthew Slaughter,  
resigned.

Brent T. Wahlquist,  
of Pennsylvania, to be Director of the Office  
of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforce-  
ment, vice Jeffrey D. Jarrett.

Thomas M. Beck,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal  
Labor Relations Authority for a term expiring  
July 29, 2012, vice Dale Cabaniss, term expiring.

Paul J. Hutter,  
of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department  
of Veterans Affairs, vice Tim S. McClain, re-  
signed.

*Withdrawn June 28*

John Ray Correll,  
of Indiana, to be Director of the Office of Sur-  
face Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, vice  
Jeffrey D. Jarrett, which was sent to the Senate  
on January 9, 2007.

Dale Cabaniss,  
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal  
Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years  
expiring July 29, 2012 (reappointment), which  
was sent to the Senate on March 12, 2007.



## Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

*The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary which are not included in this book.*

### *Released January 3*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: A Balanced Budget by 2012 & Earmark Reform

### *Released January 4*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

### *Released January 5*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 7.2 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

Fact sheet: John Negroponte and Mike McConnell: The Right Choices for Deputy Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence

### *Released January 6*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

### *Released January 7*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nebraska

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

### *Released January 8*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statements by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Colorado

Fact sheet: The No Child Left Behind Act: Five Years of Results for America's Children

### *Released January 9*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

### *Released January 10*

Transcript of a press briefing by senior administration officials on the President's address to the Nation on the war on terror in Iraq

Fact sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq

Excerpts of the President's address to the Nation on the war on terror in Iraq

Advance text of the President's address to the Nation on the war on terror in Iraq

### *Released January 11*

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, and General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 486, H.R. 4588, H.R. 6060, and H.R. 6345

### *Released January 12*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Instrument of Ratification for the Third Additional Protocol and H.R. 6338

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 482, H.R. 1245, H.R. 4709, H.R. 4997, H.R. 5483, H.R. 5948, and H.R. 6338

Fact sheet: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act

### *Released January 15*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Oklahoma

### *Released January 16*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Appendix C / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that on January 15 the President signed H.R. 6164

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Missouri

*Released January 17*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 159

Fact sheet: A New Era in Cancer Prevention

*Released January 18*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released January 19*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome President of Lithuania to the White House

*Released January 22*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Julie Goon and Council of Economic Advisers member Katherine Baicker on the President's health care initiative to be announced during his State of the Union Address

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President received the report and recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board No. 240

Fact sheet: Affordable, Accessible, and Flexible Health Coverage

*Released January 23*

Transcript of a press briefing by Counselor to the President Daniel J. Bartlett, National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Joel Kaplan, and Press Secretary Tony Snow on the State of the Union Address

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Strengthening America's Energy Security

Excerpts: State of the Union Address

Advance text: State of the Union Address

Text: Guest List for the First Lady's Box at the 2007 State of the Union

*Released January 24*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Strengthening America's Energy Security and Improving the Environment

*Released January 25*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Alabama

*Released January 29*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist bombing in Eilat, Israel

*Released January 30*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto and Director of the National Economic Council Allan B. Hubbard

*Released January 31*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow and Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Edward P. Lazear

Fact sheet: The State of the Economy

*Released February 1*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Martin Torrijos Espino of the Republic of Panama

Statements by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Oklahoma

Fact sheet: Encouraging Child Fitness

*Released February 2*

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the National Intelligence Estimate

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 475

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 7.4 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

*Released February 3*

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist attack in Baghdad, Iraq

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

*Released February 5*

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman on the President's Fiscal Year 2008 Budget

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

*Released February 6*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Balancing the Budget Without Raising Taxes

*Released February 7*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: The National Parks Centennial Initiative

*Released February 8*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: President and Mrs. Bush To Travel to Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 188

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

*Released February 9*

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of the Republic of Liberia

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Illinois

*Released February 12*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Edward P. Lazear on the 2007 Economic Report of the President

Fact sheet: The Economic Report of the President

*Released February 13*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Five Years of USA Freedom Corps: Celebrating American Service

*Released February 14*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Washington

*Released February 15*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 434

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 20

Fact sheet: Increasing Support To Help the People of Afghanistan Succeed

*Released February 16*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives passage of a nonbinding resolution on Iraq

*Released February 17*

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senate action on a nonbinding resolution on Iraq

*Released February 20*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released February 21*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of the Republic of El Salvador

Fact sheet: Helping More Americans Afford Health Insurance

*Released February 22*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the annual U.S.-EU Summit

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Oregon

Fact sheet: Harnessing the Power of Technology for a Secure Energy Future

*Released February 23*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Pennsylvania

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Louisiana

Fact sheet: Making Private Health Insurance More Affordable for Low-Income Americans

*Released February 24*

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome King Abdallah II and Queen Rania of Jordan

*Released February 26*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 742

*Released February 27*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released February 28*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand

*Released March 1*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Working With State and Local Leaders To Help Rebuild the Gulf Coast

*Released March 2*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil

Fact sheet: The No Child Left Behind Act: Preparing Our Nation's Students To Succeed

Fact Sheet: Fulfilling the President's Vision for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument

*Released March 3*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel and Federal Emergency Management Agency Director R. David Paulison

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Alabama

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Georgia

*Released March 5*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's upcoming visit to Central and South America

Fact sheet: Advancing the Cause of Social Justice in the Western Hemisphere

*Released March 6*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Taking Care of America's Returning Wounded Warriors

Fact sheet: Pursuing a Strategy for Success in Iraq

*Released March 7*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released March 8*

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley, Counselor to the President Daniel J. Bartlett, and Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 49, H.R. 335, H.R. 433, H.R. 514, and H.R. 577

*Released March 9*

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Ahern of Ireland

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 7.5 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

Fact sheet: The President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors

Transcript of a press briefing by Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs Daniel W. Fisk of the National Security Council

*Released March 11*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs Daniel W. Fisk of the National Security Council and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon

*Released March 13*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs Daniel W. Fisk of the National Security Council

Transcript of a press briefing by Counselor to the President Daniel J. Bartlett

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Indiana

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to California

*Released March 14*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

*Released March 15*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 521

*Released March 16*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Senegalese Elections

Fact sheet: Four Years Later: New Strategy Requires Patience and Determination

*Released March 19*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President consulted with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq on the implementation of the Baghdad security plan

*Released March 20*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Reducing America's Dependence on Oil

Text: Letter from Counsel to the President Fred F. Fielding to Senators Patrick J. Leahy and Arlen Specter and Representative John Conyers, Jr.

*Released March 21*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 342 and H.R. 544

*Released March 22*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Expanding Provincial Reconstruction Teams To Achieve Iraqi Self Reliance

*Released March 23*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 584

*Released March 26*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released March 27*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on Egypt's referendum on amendments to its Constitution

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on Senate action on emergency supplemental appropriations

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Powering Large Vehicle Fleets With Alternative Fuels

*Released March 28*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1129

*Released March 29*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released March 30*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit by President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on additional disaster assistance to Alabama

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on additional disaster assistance to Georgia

*Released March 31*

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on congressional action on emergency supplemental appropriations

*Released April 2*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Mexico

*Released April 3*

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on a U.S. delegation traveling to North Korea to facilitate the return of remains of missing servicemen

*Released April 4*

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan

Fact sheet: President Bush Meets With Military Personnel and Their Families at Fort Irwin

*Released April 5*

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

*Released April 6*

Transcript of a press briefing by White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Associate Director Sharon L. Hays and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James L. Connaughton on the Second International Panel on Climate Change

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 7.8 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

*Released April 6*

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Fact sheet: Acting This Year To Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform

*Released April 10*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary announcing that on April 9 the President signed S. 494

*Released April 11*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released April 12*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released April 13*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino and Ali Al-Dabbagh, spokesman for the Government of Iraq

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of President Lech Kaczynski of Poland

Announcement: President and Mrs. Bush Release 2006 Tax Return



*Released April 16*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released April 18*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Zimbabwe's Independence Day

Fact sheet: Stop the Genocide in Darfur

*Released April 19*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released April 20*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the President's reaction to Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales's testimony before the Senate

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maine

Fact Sheet: Earth Day 2007

Fact Sheet: Update on the New Iraq Strategy

*Released April 23*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1002

*Released April 24*

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: President Bush To Attend Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Germany and Travel to the Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Albania, and Bulgaria

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Results of Syrian Elections

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Fact sheet: No Child Left Behind: Keeping America Competitive in the 21st Century

*Released April 25*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino, National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Dennis Wilder, and National Security Council Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs David H. McCormick

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on congressional action on emergency supplemental appropriations

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of President Uribe of Colombia

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maine

*Released April 26*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino, National Security Council Director for European Affairs Judy Ansley, and National Security Council Senior Director for International Trade, Energy, and the Environment Rod Hunter

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Yemeni President Salih

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Jersey

*Released April 27*

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Hampshire

Fact sheet: U.S.-Japan Cooperation To Tackle Global Trade, Energy, and Environmental Challenges

*Released April 28*

Advance text of the President's commencement address at Miami Dade College

*Released April 30*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by senior administration officials on the U.S.-EU Summit

Text of U.S.-EU Summit

Text of U.S.-EU Declaration on Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration Between the United States of America and the European Union

Text of U.S.-EU Declaration on Energy Security, Efficiency, and Climate Change

Text of U.S.-EU Declaration Promoting Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy Worldwide

Text of U.S.-EU Economic Progress Report

Text of U.S.-EU Political Progress Report

*Released May 1*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to West Virginia

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Texas

Fact sheet: America and Our Allies Are Working Together To Keep Our Nations Safe

*Released May 2*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Rene Garcia Preval of Haiti

*Released May 3*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that on May 2 the President signed H.R. 753 and H.R. 1003

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 137, H.R. 727, and H.R. 1130

*Released May 4*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by State Department Senior Climate Negotiator and Special Representative Harlan Watson, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Chairman James L. Connaughton, and State Department Climate Change Technology Program Director Stephen Eule on the Third Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report on Climate Change

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of President Toomas Ilves of Estonia

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Vermont

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 7.8 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

Fact sheet: The State Visit by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh

*Released May 6*

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

*Released May 7*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released May 8*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 521

*Released May 9*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

*Released May 10*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

Text: Open Economies Policy Statement

*Released May 11*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of British Prime Minister Tony Blair

Statement by the Press Secretary: Political Prisoners in Syria and Vietnam

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1681

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Connecticut

*Released May 14*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters, Secretary of Agriculture Michael O. Johanns, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, Deputy Secretary of Energy Clay Sell, and Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel on the President's announcement on CAFE and alternative fuel standards

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Strengthening Energy Security and Addressing Climate Change

*Released May 15*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Lieutenant General Douglas E. Lute: Experience and Authority

*Released May 16*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Massachusetts

*Released May 17*

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Joel Kaplan on immigration reform

Statement by the Press Secretary: Statement on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President received the report and recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board No. 241

Fact Sheet: Border Security and Immigration Reform

*Released May 18*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

*Released May 21*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

*Released May 22*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to South Dakota

Fact sheet: Border Security and Immigration Reform Agreement Overcomes 1986 Mistakes

Fact sheet: Immigration Fact Check: Responding to Key Myths

*Released May 23*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Frances Fragos Townsend

Fact sheet: A Record of Achievement on Border Security and Worksite Enforcement

Fact sheet: Keeping America Safe From Attack

*Released May 25*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 988

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2206

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kentucky

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Rhode Island

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

*Released May 29*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Fighting Genocide in Darfur

Fact sheet: Securing the Border First

*Released May 30*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin

Fact sheet: Holding Employers Accountable for the Workers They Hire

Fact sheet: President Bush Announces Five-year, \$30 Billion HIV/AIDS Plan

*Released May 31*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow and Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality James L. Connaughton

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome Prime Minister Olmert of Israel

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's National Parks Centennial Initiative

Fact sheet: A New International Climate Change Framework

Fact sheet: Commitment to International Development

Fact sheet: Establishing a Merit-Based System for Future Immigration

*Released June 1*

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the upcoming G-8 summit

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino and Counselor to the President Daniel J. Bartlett

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 414, H.R. 437, H.R. 625, H.R. 1402, and H.R. 2080

Statement by the Press Secretary: Presidential Designation of Foreign Narcotics Kingpins

Fact Sheet: Overview of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act

Fact Sheet: Ending Chain Migration

Fact sheet: Job Creation Continues—More Than 8 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

*Released June 4*

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs David H. McCormick, and Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released June 5*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: Advancing Freedom and Democracy Around the World

Advance text of the President's remarks in Prague, Czech Republic

*Released June 6*

Transcript of a press briefing by Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James L. Connaughton and Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs Daniel S. Sullivan

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the G-8 summit

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Edward P. Lazear

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nebraska

*Released June 7*

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs David H. McCormick

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the G-8 summit

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the G-8 summit

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit of Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet

*Released June 8*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcripts of press gaggles by Counselor to the President Daniel J. Bartlett on the G-8 summit

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Oklahoma

Fact sheet: The President's Achievements at the G-8 Summit, Heiligendamm, Germany

Fact sheet: Best of the Immigration Fact Check: Top 10 Common Myths

Fact sheet: A Record of Commitment to Africa: U.S. Plans To Substantially Increase Resources for Fight Against Global HIV/AIDS

*Released June 10*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released June 12*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Missouri

*Released June 13*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of remarks by Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt after presentation of the "Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy"

Fact sheet: The Consequences of Inaction

*Released June 14*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Meet With CARICOM Leaders

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 214

*Released June 15*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel

Statement by the Press Secretary: USNS *Comfort* Deployment to Latin America and the Caribbean

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Attend North American Leaders' Summit in Canada

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1675 and S. 1104

*Released June 18*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: President and Mrs. Bush To Host White House Conference on the Americas

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1676

*Released June 19*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

*Released June 20*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Advancing Stem Cell Research While Respecting Moral Boundaries

*Released June 21*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 676 and S. 1537

Fact sheet: Expanding the Safe Use of Nuclear Power

*Released June 22*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

*Released June 25*

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Joel Kaplan on immigration reform

Fact sheet: Only Enforcing Our Ineffective Current Law Leaves the Nation Vulnerable

Fact sheet: No Child Left Behind: Keeping a Historic Commitment to Our Children

*Released June 26*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on immigration reform

*Released June 27*

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael O. Leavitt

*Appendix C / Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

and National Economic Council Director Allan B. Hubbard on health care

Fact sheet: Strengthening Our Friendship With the Muslim Community Worldwide

Fact sheet: Bipartisan Border Security and Immigration Reform Bill

*Released June 28*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a teleconference press briefing by senior administration officials on the President's executive privilege

Fact sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq: An Update

*Released June 29*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Texas

*Released June 30*

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow



## Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the Federal Register

*This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. The texts of the documents are printed in the Federal Register (F.R.) at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

### PROCLAMATIONS

<i>Proc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
8099	Jan. 11	Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 2007 .....	1907
8100	Jan. 11	Religious Freedom Day, 2007 .....	1909
8101	Jan. 18	National Sanctity of Human Life Day, 2007 .....	3023
8102	Jan. 25	Fifth Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps, 2007 .....	4407
8103	Jan. 26	National African American History Month, 2007 .....	4613
8104	Feb. 1	American Heart Month, 2007 .....	5325
8105	Feb. 2	National Consumer Protection Week, 2007 .....	5913
8106	Feb. 16	275th Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington .....	8259
8107	Feb. 26	Irish-American Heritage Month, 2007 .....	9431
8108	Feb. 27	American Red Cross Month, 2007 .....	9641
8109	Feb. 27	Women's History Month, 2007 .....	9643
8110	Feb. 28	Save Your Vision Week, 2007 .....	9649
8111	Feb. 28	To Implement the Dominican Republic-Central America- United States Free Trade Agreement With Respect to the Dominican Republic and for Other Purposes .....	10025
8112	Feb. 28	Amending Proclamation 8031 of June 15, 2006, To Read, "Es- tablishment of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument" .....	10031
8113	Mar. 16	National Poison Prevention Week, 2007 .....	13163
8114	Mar. 19	To Implement Modifications to the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act and the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes .....	13655
8115	Mar. 21	Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2007 .....	14033
8116	Mar. 26	Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2007 .....	15007
8117	Mar. 27	National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2007 .....	15593
8118	Mar. 28	National Donate Life Month, 2007 .....	15595
8119	Mar. 29	Cancer Control Month, 2007 .....	16255
8120	Apr. 5	Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2007 .....	17785
8121	Apr. 5	National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2007 .....	17787
8122	Apr. 6	400th Anniversary of Jamestown, 2007 .....	18341
8123	Apr. 11	National D.A.R.E. Day, 2007 .....	19087
8124	Apr. 11	Thomas Jefferson Day, 2007 .....	19089
8125	Apr. 11	National Volunteer Week, 2007 .....	19091
8126	Apr. 17	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy at Virginia Tech .....	19779
8127	Apr. 19	Small Business Week, 2007 .....	20417
8128	Apr. 19	Dutch-American Friendship Day, 2007 .....	20419
8129	Apr. 20	National Day of Prayer, 2007 .....	20421
8130	Apr. 20	National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2007 .....	20697

PROCLAMATIONS—Continued

<i>Proc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
8131	Apr. 20	National Park Week, 2007 .....	20699
8132	Apr. 24	Malaria Awareness Day, 2007 .....	21075
8133	Apr. 26	Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2007 .....	24173
8134	Apr. 27	National Charter Schools Week, 2007 .....	24175
8135	Apr. 27	Law Day, U.S.A., 2007 .....	24177
8136	Apr. 30	Jewish American Heritage Month, 2007 .....	25181
8137	Apr. 30	Loyalty Day, 2007 .....	25183
8138	May 1	National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, 2007 .....	25185
8139	May 1	Older Americans Month, 2007 .....	25187
8140	May 7	Mother's Day, 2007 .....	26705
8141	May 9	Military Spouse Day, 2007 .....	27239
8142	May 10	National Defense Transportation Day and National Transportation Week, 2007 .....	27401
8143	May 10	National Safe Boating Week, 2007 .....	27403
8144	May 11	Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 2007 .....	27405
8145	May 15	Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day, 2007 .....	28445
8146	May 18	National Hurricane Preparedness Week, 2007 .....	29047
8147	May 18	World Trade Week, 2007 .....	29049
8148	May 18	National Maritime Day, 2007 .....	29051
8149	May 25	Great Outdoors Month, 2007 .....	30237
8150	May 30	National Oceans Month, 2007 .....	30951
8151	May 31	Black Music Month, 2007 .....	30953
8152	May 31	National Child's Day, 2007 .....	31165
8153	June 1	Caribbean-American Heritage Month, 2007 .....	31167
8154	June 1	National Homeownership Month, 2007 .....	31169
8155	June 5	Flag Day and National Flag Week, 2007 .....	31967
8156	June 11	Father's Day, 2007 .....	32771
8157	June 28	To Modify Duty-Free Treatment Under the Generalized System of Preferences, Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and for Other Purposes .....	35895
8158	June 28	Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Persons Responsible for Policies and Actions That Threaten Lebanon's Sovereignty and Democracy .....	36587

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

<i>E.O. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
13422	Jan. 18	Further Amendment to Executive Order 12866 on Regulatory Planning and Review .....	2763
13423	Jan. 24	Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management .....	3919
13424	Jan. 26	Further Amendment to Executive Order 13285, Relating to the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation ...	4409
13425	Feb. 14	Trial of Alien Unlawful Enemy Combatants by Military Commission .....	7737

# EXECUTIVE ORDERS—Continued

<i>E.O. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
13426	Mar. 6	Establishing a Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors and a Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes .....	10589
13427	Mar. 7	Extending Privileges and Immunities to the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations .....	10879
13428	Apr. 2	Renaming a National Forest in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico .....	16693
13429	Apr. 4	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate a Dispute Between Metro-North Railroad and Its Maintenance of Way Employees Represented by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters .....	18101
13430	Apr. 18	2007 Amendments to the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States .....	20213
13431	May 8	Establishment of Temporary Organization To Facilitate United States Government Assistance for Transition in Iraq .....	26709
13432	May 14	Cooperation Among Agencies in Protecting the Environment With Respect to Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Motor Vehicles, Nonroad Vehicles, and Nonroad Engines .....	27717
13433	May 16	Protecting American Taxpayers From Payment of Contingency Fees .....	28441
13434	May 17	National Security Professional Development .....	28583
13435	June 20	Expanding Approved Stem Cell Lines in Ethically Responsible Ways .....	34591
13436	June 28	Further Amending Executive Order 13381, as Amended, To Extend Its Duration by One Year .....	36337
13437	June 28	Waiver Under the Trade Act of 1974 With Respect to Turkmenistan .....	36339

# OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

<i>Doc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
	Jan. 5	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Regarding the Citizens Health Care Working Group .....	1133
	Jan. 18	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process .....	2595
	Jan. 25	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Under the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006 .....	5149
07–11	Jan. 26	Presidential Determination: Transfer of Funds Under Section 610 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 .....	9223
	Feb. 5	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Cote d'Ivoire .....	5593

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS—Continued

<i>Doc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
	Feb. 5	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Under Section 556 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 .....	6917
07-12	Feb. 7	Presidential Determination: Implementation of Sections 603 and 604 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228) .....	9225
	Feb. 9	Memorandum: Designation of Officers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation .....	7343
07-13	Feb. 14	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance With Respect to Chad .....	9227
	Feb. 15	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Relating to the Transfer of a Ship to the Government of Greece .....	7819
	Feb. 20	Memorandum: Designation of Officers of the Office of the United States Trade Representative To Act as the United States Trade Representative .....	8085
	Feb. 26	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels .....	9231
	Feb. 28	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe .....	9645
07-14	Feb. 28	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination Under Section 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act Relating to the Largest Exporting and Importing Countries of Certain Precursor Chemicals .....	10881
	Mar. 5	Memorandum: Assignment of Certain Functions Relating to Procurement Sanctions on Persons Engaging in Export Activities that Contribute to Proliferation .....	11283
	Mar. 8	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran .....	10883
07-15	Mar. 19	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on the Eligibility of the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia To Receive Defense Articles and Defense Services .....	15009
	Mar. 23	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Under Section 530 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, and Section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as Amended .....	18103
	Mar. 30	Notice: Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Panama .....	15803
	Apr. 1	Notice: Notice of Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Korea .....	16259
	Apr. 10	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Relating to the Information Sharing Environment .....	18561
07-16	Apr. 11	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions Regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization Office .....	19781

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS—Continued

<i>Doc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
07-17	Apr. 25	Presidential Determination: Transfer of Defense Articles and Services in Support of the Southern Sudan Security Sector Reform (SSR) Program .....	26281
	May 8	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods to Syria .....	26707
07-18	May 9	Presidential Determination: Transfer of Funds from FY 2007 Economic Support Fund Account to the International Peacekeeping Account To Support Security Sector Reform in Liberia .....	29053
07-19	May 10	Presidential Determination: Unexpected Urgent Refugee and Migration Needs Related to Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Other Parts of Africa, and the West Bank and Gaza .....	29427
	May 17	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma .....	28447
	May 18	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Property in Which Iraq Has an Interest .....	28581
07-20	June 1	Presidential Determination: Assistance for the West Bank and Gaza .....	34973
07-21	June 1	Presidential Determination: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act .....	34975
07-22	June 5	Presidential Determination: Partial Resumption of Travel to Lebanon To Promote Peace and Security .....	31711
	June 12	Memorandum: Assignment of Certain Reporting Functions of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 .....	34977
	June 14	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Belarus .....	33381
	June 19	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation Created by the Accumulation of Weapons-Usable Fissile Material in the Territory of the Russian Federation .....	34159
	June 22	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans .....	34981
	June 26	Memorandum: Assignment of Functions Under Section 1035 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 .....	36335
	June 28	Memorandum: Assignment of Reporting Function .....	35907
	June 28	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination To Waive Military Coup-Related Provision of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006, as Carried Forward Under the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007, With Respect to Pakistan .....	37419

OTHER PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS—Continued

<i>Doc. No.</i>	<i>Date 2007</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>72 F.R. Page</i>
07-24	June 28	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination Under Section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974— Turkmenistan .....	37421



## Subject Index

- ABC News—838, 850  
Aeronautics and Space Administration, National.  
    *See* Space program  
Afghanistan  
    Afghan military and security forces—150, 154, 510  
    Central Narcotics Tribunal—152  
    Counternarcotics and Justice Reform Coordinator, U.S.—847  
    Counternarcotics programs—152  
    Criminal Justice Task Force—152  
    Democracy efforts—149, 154, 403, 510, 609, 754  
    Economic growth and development—149  
    Education reform—149  
    Former regime—148, 605  
    International assistance—151, 510  
    Joint Intelligence Operations Center—150  
    Judiciary reforms—152  
    NATO, role—149–151, 510, 587, 602, 609, 825, 838  
    President—851  
    Reconstruction and infrastructure development—149, 151, 153  
    Relations with Pakistan—153  
    Terrorist attacks—149, 604  
    U.S. Ambassador—837  
    U.S. assistance—154  
    U.S. military forces, deployment—154, 155, 285, 351, 380, 388, 407, 753, 825  
    Women, status—149  
Africa  
    *See also* Developing countries; *specific country*  
    Africa Education Initiative—651, 680  
    Africa Financial Sector Initiative—651, 680  
    African Union—32, 422, 423, 631  
    Coptic Hope Center—642  
    Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, President's—49, 70, 99, 196, 222, 441, 462, 565, 587, 646, 661  
    HIV/AIDS epidemic, prevention and treatment—641  
    Malaria, prevention and treatment—483, 484, 661  
    U.S. humanitarian assistance—713, 739  
African American History Month, National—124  
Agriculture  
    Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease)—349  
    Legislation—348  
Agriculture, Department of, Commodity Futures Trading Commission—854  
AIDS. *See* HIV/AIDS; *specific country or region*  
Air Force Academy, U.S. *See* Air Force, Department of the  
Air Force, Department of the  
    Air Force Academy, U.S.—846  
    Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Acting Assistant Secretary for—864  
    Tuskegee Airmen—358  
Al Qaida. *See* Terrorism  
Alabama  
    Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant in Athens—863  
    Disaster assistance—838, 843, 848  
    Governor—843  
    President's visits—226, 228, 780, 786, 843, 863  
    Republican Party event—786  
    Tornadoes, damage and recovery efforts—226, 228, 843  
    Unemployment rate—790  
Albania  
    Afghanistan, Albanian military forces, deployment—722  
    Albanian servicemembers, meeting with President Bush—862  
    Democracy efforts—671, 722  
    Iraq, Albanian military forces, deployment—722, 862  
    North Atlantic Treaty Organization, membership bid—722  
    President—852, 862  
    President Bush's visit—671, 673, 720, 726, 852, 862  
    Prime Minister—720, 726, 852, 862  
    Relations with U.S.—722  
    Small-business owners, meeting with President Bush—726  
    U.S. Ambassador—849  
    U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—862  
    Vizion Plus TV—671

- Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Bureau of (ATF). *See* Justice, Department of  
Alfalfa Club—838  
American. *See other part of subject*  
American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, Institute of—840  
America's Heritage Abroad, Commission for the Preservation of—858  
AmeriCorps—857  
Antitrust Modernization Commission—841  
Appropriations. *See* Budget, Federal  
Archives and Records Administration, National, Public Interest Declassification Board—850  
Arizona  
    President's visit—395, 396, 849  
    Yuma Sector Border Patrol Headquarters—849  
Armed Forces, U.S.  
    *See also* Defense, Department of; Defense and national security; *specific military branch*  
    Expansion—28, 48  
    Funding—155, 439  
    Humanitarian aid and relief missions—234, 249, 294, 826, 845  
    Military families—23, 90, 137, 354, 389, 416, 527, 572, 574  
    National Guard—189, 398, 838, 839  
    Private organizations, assistance—204, 416, 572  
    Reorganization—824  
    Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)—595  
    Servicemembers  
        Casualties—28, 90, 226, 227, 321, 359, 378, 402, 409, 416, 626, 837, 848, 858, 864  
        Deployment—90, 393, 402, 409, 416, 439, 527, 738, 760  
        Hispanic and Mexican American servicemembers—500, 538, 759  
        Meetings with President—626, 837–839, 855  
        POW/MIAs' remains, recovery efforts—238  
        Service and dedication—20, 326, 377, 388, 528, 570, 629, 645  
Armenian Remembrance Day—480  
Arms and munitions  
    *See also specific country*  
    Proliferation Security Initiative—510  
    Weapons of mass destruction—109  
Army, Department of the  
    Army National Training Center, U.S., at Fort Irwin, CA—848  
    Chief of Staff—11, 57, 120  
    Funding—379, 391, 394, 406, 407, 417  
Army, Department of the—Continued  
    Military Academy, U.S.—843  
    Secretary—858  
    Walter Reed Army Medical Center—226, 237, 260, 359, 439, 848  
Arts and Humanities, President's Committee on the—836  
Arts, National Council on the—846, 856  
Asia  
    *See also specific country*  
    Asian Nations, Association of Southeast (ASEAN)—537  
    Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate—80  
    U.S. military forces, deployment—826  
    Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, White House Initiative on—560  
    Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month—560  
    Associated Builders and Contractors—747  
    Associated General Contractors of America—517  
    ATF. *See* Justice, Department of  
    Atlantic Tunas, International Commission for the Conservation of—852  
    Attorney General. *See* Justice, Department of  
    Australia  
        Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. *See* Asia  
        Free trade agreement with U.S.—79  
Awards. *See* Decorations, medals, and awards  
Baby Einstein Company—49  
Bahamas, U.S. Ambassador—855  
Balkans, Western. *See* Europe  
Banks. *See* Development banks and funds  
Battle Monuments Commission, American—864  
Belarus, blocking property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions—757  
Belgium  
    Taxation Convention, Belgium-U.S.—792  
    U.S. Ambassador—849  
Belo Television—837  
Black Music Month—794  
Blind or Severely Disabled, Committee for Purchase From People Who Are—841, 854  
Boone and Crockett Club—846  
Bosnia and Herzegovina, U.S. Ambassador—848  
Boy Scouts of America—842  
Brazil  
    Ambassador to the U.S.—844  
    CEO Forum, U.S.-Brazil—364, 373  
    Community members, meeting with President Bush—273

Brazil—Continued

- Energy
  - Alternative and renewable sources and technologies—245, 260, 262, 263, 267, 372, 844
  - Cooperation with U.S.—245, 260, 262, 263, 267, 364, 372, 828
- Haiti, role—267, 364, 374
- President—244, 264, 266, 268, 364, 372, 843, 844, 848, 855
- President Bush's visit—262, 264, 273, 840, 844
- Relations with U.S.—244, 260, 262, 372–374
- Sao Paulo
  - Meninos do Morumbi—844
  - Petrobras Transporte S.A. Facility—844
- Trade with U.S.—267, 373
- U.S. Ambassador—844
- U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—844
- Broadcasting Board of Governors—852
- Budget, Federal
  - See also specific Federal agency or organization*
  - Amendments—727
  - Appropriations
    - Cancellations—274
    - Defense, Department of—273
    - Supplemental—340, 471, 850
  - Congressional spending restraint—3, 100, 105, 745, 749, 763
  - Deficit—42, 105, 441, 745, 791
  - Earmark reform—3, 12, 43, 83, 95, 106, 155, 197, 763
  - Fiscal year 2007 budget—155, 273, 274
  - Fiscal year 2008 budget—95, 96, 100, 101, 103, 105, 106, 141, 273, 348, 362, 387, 763, 778
  - Government programs, spending reductions—106, 274
- Bulgaria
  - Afghanistan, role—733
  - Bulgarian National Television—673
  - European Union, membership—729, 733
  - Iraq
    - Civilian and military casualties in—674
    - Role—729, 733
  - North Atlantic Treaty Organization, membership—729, 733
  - Nurses in Libya, imprisonment—675, 729, 731
  - President—727, 733, 852, 862
  - President Bush's visit—659, 727, 733, 734, 852, 862

Bulgaria—Continued

- Prime Minister—852, 862
- Private investment, U.S.—728
- Relations with U.S.—673, 728
- U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—862
- Visa policy, U.S.—674, 729
- Burma, U.S. national emergency, continuation—599
- Business and industry
  - See also Commerce, international; Employment and unemployment; specific State or company*
  - Automobile industry—345, 346
  - Business leaders, meetings with President—74, 345, 346, 847
  - Corporate executives, compensation packages, regulation—88
  - Manufacturing industry—78
  - Small and minority business—77, 173, 758
  - Unions, card check legislation, proposed—749
- C-SPAN television—841
- Cabinet
  - See also specific Federal department or executive branch agency*
  - Members, meetings with President—2, 100, 835
- CAFTA, DR–. *See* Central America; Commerce, international
- California
  - Army National Training Center, U.S., at Fort Irwin—848
  - Disaster assistance—845
  - Fort Irwin Army Base—388, 848
  - President's visit—388, 848
- Cameroon, U.S. Ambassador—847
- Canada
  - Oil supply and refining—251
  - President Bush's visit—862
  - Prime Minister—862
- Cancer Panel, President's—863
- Caribbean, Conference on the—779
- Caribbean heads of government, meeting with President Bush—863
- Catholic. *See* Roman Catholic Church
- Cattlemen's Beef Association, National—347
- CBS
  - CBS News—850
  - "60 Minutes" program—837
  - "The Early Show"—864
- Central African Republic, U.S. Ambassador—851

Central America

*See also* Commerce, international; *specific country*

Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, Dominican Republic- (DR-CAFTA)—294

Crime and narcotrafficking—246

Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies—506

President Bush's visit—244, 254, 258, 260, 269

Trade with U.S.—250

U.S. assistance—828

Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, Dominican Republic- (DR-CAFTA). *See* Central America; Commerce, international

Children and youth

*See also* Education

Boys and Girls State—238

Childhood obesity, prevention—91

Junior 8 (J-8) project—861

Mentoring—128

Children's Miracle Network—848

Chile, free trade agreement with U.S.—78, 84

China

Air routes, opening to U.S.—616

Commercial products, exports from U.S., certification—122, 585

Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China—855

Democracy and human rights issues—662

Economic Dialogue, U.S.-China Strategic—858

President—861

Trade and economic practices—616

Trade with U.S.—79, 616

U.S. beef imports—616

Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation—842

Cinco de Mayo—538, 540

Civil rights

Freedom of religion—808, 829

Freedom of the press—528, 535

Minorities, racism—415

Class Action Fairness Act of 2005—82

Climate change. *See* Environment

CNN *En Español*—258

Coast Guard, U.S. *See* Homeland Security, Department of

Colombia

Afro-Colombian outreach program, U.S.—289

Alternative farm products development—845

American hostages—255, 288

Colombia—Continued

Crime and narcotrafficking—254, 284

Free trade agreement with U.S.—250, 254, 516, 562, 827, 828

Plan Colombia—246, 254, 284

President—246, 253, 255, 281, 516, 827, 845, 852

President Bush's visit—281, 289, 840, 845, 854

RCN TV—253

Relations with U.S.—283, 287

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) insurgent group—255, 288

Trade with U.S.—284

U.S. Ambassador—846

U.S. assistance—247, 250

U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—845

Colorado, disaster assistance—836

Commerce, Department of

Census Director—863

Export Administration, Under Secretary for—837

Manufacturing and Services, Assistant Secretary for—854

Commerce, international

*See also specific country or region*

Americas, Free Trade Area of the—268

Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, Dominican Republic- (DR-CAFTA)—294

Doha Development Agenda. *See* Developing countries

Free and fair trade—78, 84, 259, 290, 349, 461, 561, 649, 827

Group of Eight (G-8) nations—658, 680, 682, 701, 851, 860, 861

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—251, 313

Trade promotion authority—85, 350

U.S. beef, importation—350

U.S. exports, expansion—78, 84, 349

U.S. international trade and investment policy—561

Commission. *See other part of subject*

Communications

*See also specific news organization, State, or country*

Interception. *See* Terrorism

News media

Presidential interviews—244, 253, 256, 258, 658, 669, 671, 673, 691, 837–841, 845, 850, 851, 854, 856, 857, 859, 864

Communications—Continued  
 News Media—Continued  
   Radio and Television Correspondents' Association—356  
   World Press Freedom Day—535  
 Communications Commission, Federal—863  
 Community Service, Corporation for National and—854  
 Comoros, U.S. Ambassador—847  
 Competitiveness Initiative, American—88, 97  
 Congo, Democratic Republic of the, U.S. Ambassador—859  
 Congress  
   Bipartisanship—2, 42, 141, 142  
   China, Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of—855  
   Congressional Black Caucus—841  
   Congressional Hispanic Caucus—852  
   Congressional Hispanic Conference—852  
   Congressional picnic—773  
   Global War on Terror Consultative Group, Congressional—862  
   House of Representatives  
     House Democratic Caucus—96, 99  
     House Republican Conference—68, 358, 778, 847  
     Speaker—42, 96, 356, 846  
   Iraq, congressional working group on—20  
   Members, meetings with President—11, 14, 425, 532, 559, 835–839, 842–844, 850, 855, 857  
   Republican Congressional Committee, National—317  
   Senate, Senate Republican Policy Committee—737, 862  
 Connecticut  
   Coast Guard Academy, U.S., in New London—606  
   Disaster assistance—856  
   President's visit—606, 858  
 Consumer Cooperative Bank, National—840  
 Consumer Product Safety Commission—843  
 Corporation. *See other part of subject*  
 Cote d'Ivoire, U.S. Ambassador—860  
 Cox Broadcasting—837  
 Crime. *See* Law enforcement and crime  
 Cuba  
   Anchorage and movement of vessels, emergency authority—194  
   Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996—35  
   Democracy efforts—828  
   Government, transfer of power—252  
   President—828

Cuban Independence Day—600  
 Czech Republic  
   Afghanistan and Iraq, role—682  
   Democracy advocates, meeting with President Bush—860  
   Democracy and Security Conference—685  
   President—681, 851, 860  
   President Bush's visit—681, 685, 851, 860  
   Prime Minister—681, 851  
   Relations with U.S.—682, 683  
   Social Democratic Party leader—860  
   U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—860  
   Visa policy, U.S.—682  
 Darfur. *See* Sudan  
 Deaths  
   Chanes de Armas, Mario—212  
   Eido, Walid, Parliament Member of Lebanon—741  
   Falwell, Jerry L., Sr.—584  
   Ford, former President Gerald R.—1, 835  
   France, William C., Jr.—690  
   Graham, Ruth Bell—756  
   Hussein, Saddam, former President of Iraq—8  
   Ivins, Mary Tyler "Molly"—89  
   Millender-McDonald, Rep. Juanita—464  
   Nasher, Raymond D.—328  
   Norwood, Rep. Charles W., Jr.—128  
   Orin-Eilbeck, Deborah—73  
   Robinson, Edward G.—393  
   Schirra, Walter M., Jr.—535  
   Thomas, Sen. Craig L.—691  
   Valenti, Jack J.—488  
   Yeltsin, Boris, former President of Russia—471, 852  
 Decorations, medals, and awards  
   Congressional Gold Medal—358  
   Congressional Medal of Honor—21, 24, 191  
   "E" Award and "E" Star Award for Export Achievement—858  
   FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competition winners—853  
   Ford's Theatre Lincoln Medal—840  
   Mathematics and Science Teaching, Presidential Award for Excellence in—857  
   Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor—854  
   Purple Heart Medal—848, 858  
   Teachers of the Year, National and State—485, 852  
   Volunteer Service Award, President's—560, 572

Defense and national security

*See also* Armed Forces, U.S.; Defense, Department of; Terrorism

Border security—119, 247, 258, 299, 301, 304, 315, 395, 398, 399, 849, 436, 623, 633, 635, 750, 751

Intelligence—163, 455, 522, 618

Maritime security policy—746

Missile defense—504, 602, 658, 659, 662, 670, 674, 683, 692, 696, 705, 709, 724, 732

Port and shipping security—119

War on terror—16, 19, 24, 27, 45, 46, 48, 69, 98, 119, 146, 154, 160, 163, 188, 189, 195, 221, 239, 246, 255, 318, 351, 377, 387, 389, 403, 416, 427, 428, 432, 451, 508, 509, 518, 541, 543, 546, 563, 593, 605, 607, 609, 611, 617, 621, 643, 644, 663, 666, 670, 675, 686, 691, 736, 743, 753, 760, 761, 862, 766, 768, 770, 787, 788, 809, 814, 816, 822, 823, 826, 831, 843, 858

Defense, Department of

*See also* Armed Forces, U.S.; Defense and national security; *specific military branch*

Africa, Unified Combatant Command for—108

Assistant Secretaries

Health Affairs—842

Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, and Interdependent Capabilities—849

Central Command, U.S.—11, 57, 120, 508, 841, 853

Combatant commanders, meeting with President—56

Funding—273

Inspector General—842

Joint Chiefs of Staff—56, 710, 719, 731, 814, 824, 838

Military leaders, meetings with President—67, 465, 554, 747, 853, 855

Operation Jump Start—399

Operation Noble Eagle—607

Pacific Command, U.S.—11

Secretary—11, 838, 848

Under Secretaries

Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics—863

Intelligence—838

Delaware

DuPont Experimental Station in Wilmington—838

President's visit—50, 838

Delaware River Basin Commission—852

Democratization. *See* Foreign policy, U.S.

Developing countries

*See also* Development banks and funds; *specific country or region*

Debt relief—649, 650

Democratic transformation—650

Doha Development Agenda—5, 13, 85, 244, 251, 267, 268, 278, 350, 364, 369, 374, 462, 501, 580, 649, 703

Educational development and reforms—651

Millennium Challenge Accounts—49, 199, 231, 249, 650

Trade and economic growth—649

U.S. assistance—648, 650

Development banks and funds

*See also* Developing countries; World Bank

African Development Bank—850

African Development Fund—850

Asian Development Bank—850

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development—850

Inter-American Development Bank—263, 850

Development, U.S. Agency for International—289, 305, 835–837, 855

Disability, National Council on—840

Disaster assistance

*See also* Natural disasters; *specific State, country, or executive branch agency*

Alabama—228, 838, 843, 848

California—845

Colorado—836

Florida—631, 835, 839, 840

Georgia—228, 631, 844, 848

Hurricane Katrina

Federal assistance—206, 209, 607

Private sector aid—31

Illinois—840

Indiana—845

Iowa—846, 848, 858

Kansas—836, 855, 863

Kentucky—858

Louisiana—842

Massachusetts—857

Missouri—228, 837, 862

Nebraska—836, 860

New York—842

Oklahoma—837, 839, 861

Oregon—842

Pennsylvania—842

Rhode Island—858

South Dakota—858

Texas—865

Washington—841



- Diseases
  - See also* HIV/AIDS
  - Cancer, research, prevention, and treatment—35, 444
  - Malaria—196, 364, 481, 482, 653, 703, 717, 739
- District of Columbia
  - DC Opportunity Scholarship Program—413
  - DC School Choice Incentive Act of 2003—412
  - DC School Choice Incentive Program—479
  - Ford's Theatre
    - Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration—122, 840
    - Gala—864
  - Holocaust Memorial Museum, U.S.—420, 850
  - Islamic Center of Washington—808
  - Judicial Disabilities and Tenure, District of Columbia Commission on—858
  - Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority—864
  - Victims of Communism Memorial—735
  - Walter Reed Army Medical Center—226, 237, 260, 359, 439, 848
  - YMCA Anthony Bowen—841
- Doha Development Agenda. *See* Developing countries
- Dominican Republic
  - Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, Dominican Republic- (DR-CAFTA). *See* Central America; Commerce, international
  - U.S. Ambassador—835
- DR-CAFTA. *See* Central America; Commerce, international
- Drug abuse and trafficking
  - See also specific country*
  - Foreign narcotics traffickers—679
  - Interdiction efforts—102
- Earth Day—463
- East Timor-Leste, U.S. Ambassador—846
- Easter—393, 395, 849
- Economic Advisers, Council of—864
- Economic Cooperation and Development, Organisation for—864
- Economy, international. *See* Commerce, international
- Economy, national
  - See also* Budget, Federal; Employment and unemployment; *specific State or country*
  - Financial literacy—485
  - Improvement—42, 69, 75, 81, 82, 94, 104, 319, 348, 363, 566, 646, 745, 790
- Economy, national—Continued
  - Strengthening efforts—75, 81, 103
- Ecuador, President—836
- Education
  - See also specific State or country*
  - Advanced Placement programs—217, 477, 803
  - Catholic schools—412
  - Charter schools—473
  - DC Opportunity Scholarship Program—413
  - DC School Choice Incentive Program—412, 479
  - Foreign exchange programs—267, 308, 734
  - High schools, improvement efforts—217
  - Local control of schools—214, 803
  - Math and science programs—217, 478, 803
  - Minority students—1254
  - No Child Left Behind Act—12, 14, 43, 80, 81, 88, 97, 142, 190, 198, 211, 214–216, 218, 219, 224, 229, 319, 410, 476–479, 486, 567, 801–804
  - Opportunity scholarships—218, 478, 804
  - Parental involvement—214, 475
  - Parochial education leaders, meeting with President—413
  - Postsecondary education
    - Community colleges—88
    - Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs—402
  - School safety—442, 475
  - Standards and school accountability—80, 211, 215, 216, 218, 475, 477, 801
  - Teacher Incentive Fund—478, 803
  - Teachers—213, 478, 486, 570
- Education, Department of
  - Assistant Secretaries
    - Elementary and Secondary Education—844
    - Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development—840
    - Postsecondary Education—857
  - Education Sciences, National Board for—840
  - Gulf Coast, funding for new schools—211
  - Higher Education Transformation Summit, National—847
- Egypt
  - Democracy efforts—460
  - President—846, 854
- El Salvador
  - Free trade agreement with U.S.—199
  - Government officials, assassination—199, 298
  - President—199, 841
- Election Assistance Commission, U.S.—862
- Elections
  - See also specific State or country*
  - 2008 Presidential election—139

- Emergency Management Agency, Federal. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
- Employment and unemployment  
*See also* Economy, national; *specific State*  
Income inequality, increase—87  
Job training programs—80, 84  
Minimum wage increase—92
- Energy  
*See also* Environment; *specific State or country*  
Alternative and renewable sources and technologies—44, 52, 53, 72, 79, 86, 97, 175, 177, 180, 181, 185, 191, 225, 260, 262, 320, 331, 332, 345, 346, 364, 370, 373, 489, 495, 506, 567, 654, 664, 665, 667–680, 699, 701, 702, 729, 784, 785, 842, 847  
Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction—612, 655  
Coal and clean coal technologies—177, 225, 332  
Developing countries, energy sources—80, 653, 655, 680, 704  
Domestic sources—55, 785  
Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs—51, 181, 383  
Greenhouse gas emissions, regulation—785  
National energy plan—45, 50, 51, 54, 55, 69, 72, 73, 80, 86, 87, 97, 120, 141, 156, 176, 180, 185, 190, 198, 245, 263, 267, 319, 329, 345, 346, 383, 385, 506, 567, 579, 581, 612, 664, 665, 694, 704, 780, 785, 842  
North American sources—251  
Nuclear energy—333, 489, 781–783  
Nuclear Power 2010 initiative—782  
“Recommendations to the Nation on Reducing U.S. Oil Dependence” report—73
- Energy, Department of  
Chief Financial Officer—840  
Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, Assistant Secretary for—862  
Energy Information Administration—612  
Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal—844  
Global Nuclear Energy Partnership—489, 783  
Nuclear Security Administration, National—835, 842, 857  
Strategic Petroleum Reserve—45, 55, 72, 87, 332, 785  
Under Secretaries  
Energy—863  
Energy, Acting—842  
Nuclear Security—857
- England. *See* United Kingdom
- Environment  
*See also* Energy
- Environment—Continued  
Bald eagle, removal from the list of endangered species—830  
Clean Air Act—785  
Climate change—5, 370, 495, 501, 581, 587, 653, 664, 669, 692, 703  
Conservation  
Pollution prevention and cleanup efforts—161  
Wetlands conservation and expansion—210  
Environmentally friendly technologies—5, 45, 495  
Kyoto Protocol—664, 669, 692, 694, 703
- Eritrea, U.S. Ambassador—863
- Estonia  
Afghanistan, Estonian military forces, casualties—799  
Cyber attacks—799  
President—799, 854, 864  
Visa policy, U.S.—799
- Europe  
*See also specific country*  
Energy, domestic sources—699
- European Union  
Commission President—13, 836  
Leaders, meetings with President Bush—501, 853  
Relations with U.S.—501  
Summit with U.S.—842  
Trade with U.S.—501  
TransAtlantic Business Dialogue—853  
Relations with U.S.—8  
Visa policy, U.S.—665  
Western Balkans, U.S. national emergency, continuation—797
- Export-Import Bank of the U.S.—841, 858
- Faith-Based and Community Initiative—805
- Faith-based and community organizations, Federal Government funding—805
- FBI. *See* Justice, Department of
- Federal. *See other part of subject*
- FEMA. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
- Flag, U.S., desecration ban, proposed constitutional amendment—238
- Florida  
Disaster assistance—835, 839, 840  
MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa—853  
President’s visit—497, 508, 853  
Tornadoes and storms, recovery efforts—96  
Wildfires—631

Foreign policy, U.S.

*See also specific country or region*

Democratization—19, 27, 46, 49, 70, 196, 221, 246, 386, 387, 389, 392, 403, 408, 428, 432, 453, 460, 530, 564, 578, 620, 627, 646, 662, 667, 680, 686, 687, 691, 695, 700, 744, 755, 790, 809, 810, 826–828

Economic sanctions—139

FOX News television—839, 845

France

Paris Air Show, 47th International—859

President—558, 854, 861

Freedom Corps, USA—571

Gabon, U.S. Ambassador—863

Georgia

Disaster assistance—844, 848

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco—632, 859

Fort Benning Army Base—837

Governor—843

President's visits—23, 632, 837, 843, 859

Tornadoes, damage and recovery efforts—843

Wildfires—631

Germany

Afghanistan, German military forces, deployment—4

Chancellor—4, 8, 504, 671, 700, 835, 860

European Union Presidency—4

Former Chancellor—671

G-8 Presidency—4

Musicians and activists, meeting with President Bush—860

President Bush's visit—669, 691, 700, 702, 705, 851, 860

Relations with U.S.—671

Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen—669

Ghana, 50th anniversary of independence—843

Global Leadership Campaign, U.S.—648

Government organization and employees

*See also Budget, Federal; specific agency or organization*

Faith-based and community organizations initiative. *See* Faith-based and community organizations

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board—853

Federal Service Impasses Panel—837, 856

National continuity policy—547

Governors Association, National—188

Great Britain. *See* United Kingdom

Great Lakes Fishery Commission—847

Greece

Afghanistan, role—342

Greece—Continued

Lebanon, role—342

U.S. Embassy in Athens, terrorist attack—343

Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy—341

Guard, National. *See* Armed Forces, U.S.; *specific State*

Guatemala

Child adoption policy—295

Crime and narcotrafficking—293, 298

Democracy efforts—291, 293

Education reform—294

Labradores Mayas association—235, 250, 280, 289, 295

President—291, 292, 295, 845

President Bush's visit—289, 290, 292, 840, 845

Relations with U.S.—291, 293

Santa Cruz Balanya

Dr. Richard Carroll Municipal Library—845

Mayor—845

Trade with U.S.—236, 294, 300

U.S. assistance—294

U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—845

Guinea-Bissau, U.S. Ambassador—1595, 846

Haiti

Haitian Study Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections—642

Peace and democracy efforts—545

President—545, 854

Trade with U.S.—329

U.S. assistance—545

Hawaii, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument—583

Health and Human Services, Department of

Cancer Institute, National—36

Deputy Secretary—854

Funding—36

Indian Health Service—857

Institutes of Health, National—35, 36, 837

Medicare and Medicaid Services, Centers for—854

Preparedness and Response, Assistant Secretary for—841

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)—40, 811

Surgeon General—625, 858

Health and medical care

*See also* Diseases; HIV/AIDS; Science and technology

Abortion—425, 738

Affordable Choices grants—44, 72, 86

Association health care plans—167

Bioethics. *See* Science and technology

Cost control reforms—40, 44, 57, 58, 79, 85, 164, 165, 186, 190, 197, 224, 320, 568, 749, 810, 811

Exercise—540

Health insurance, tax deductions—43, 59, 62, 65, 72, 86, 97, 158, 168, 171, 173, 187, 320, 375, 567, 811

Health savings accounts, tax-free—63, 64, 167, 174, 375

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine—36

Information technology—57, 60, 167

Medical liability reform—61, 167

Medicare and Medicaid—3, 40, 43, 95, 96, 107, 166, 186, 223, 224, 319, 320, 441, 467

Pricing transparency—167

Seniors and disabled persons, prescription drug benefits—467

Weapons of mass destruction, medical countermeasures—109

Heart Month, American—839

Higher M-Pact organization—126

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce—229

Hispanic Prayer Breakfast, National—757

HIV/AIDS

*See also specific country or region*

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, President's—49, 70, 99, 196, 222, 441, 462, 565, 587, 640, 642, 646, 652, 661, 680, 703, 717, 739, 826

Holocaust Memorial Council, U.S.—846, 849, 860

Holy See (Vatican City)

Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations—261

Pope Benedict XVI—658, 661, 717, 852, 861

President Bush's visit—658, 852, 861

Secretary of State—861

Homeland Security Council—860

Homeland Security, Department of

*See also* Defense and national security; Terrorism

Basic Pilot program—585, 856

Border Patrol, U.S.—396, 849

Coast Guard, U.S.—606, 607, 627

Customs and Border Protection, U.S.—633

Domestic Nuclear Detection, Office of—840

Homeland Security, Department of—Continued  
Emergency Management Agency, Federal (FEMA)—119, 849, 864

Employment Eligibility Verification System—585, 856

Funding—20, 118

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. (ICE)—634

Senior officials, briefing with President—118  
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)—21, 119

Housing, minority homeownership—758

Housing and Urban Development, Department of, General Counsel—849

Hurricanes. *See* Disaster assistance; Natural disasters; *specific State or country*

Illinois

Caterpillar, Inc., in East Peoria—839

Disaster assistance—840

President's visit—74, 75, 838

Immigration and naturalization

*See also* Defense and national security; *specific country or region*

American “melting pot”—401, 677, 752, 758  
Citizenship—141, 257, 297, 313, 400, 436, 438, 624, 637, 752

Illegal immigration—397, 399, 400, 437, 438, 585, 634, 636, 750, 751

Reform—44, 98, 190, 198, 199, 229, 248, 271, 276, 283, 295–297, 299, 302–304, 308, 311, 313, 314, 316, 395, 396, 401, 413, 436, 438, 496, 499, 518, 534, 539, 545, 575, 585, 597–599, 600, 614, 623, 624, 635–638, 676, 711, 712, 717, 730, 737, 749–751, 753, 758, 759, 797, 806, 829

Temporary-worker program, proposed—119, 141, 257, 297, 400, 437, 624, 637, 638, 752

Visa policy—52, 123, 665, 674, 682, 729, 799, 833

Visa Waiver Program—833

Independence Day—831, 832

India, Prime Minister—855

Indiana

Disaster assistance—845

Governor—213

President's visit—212, 213, 843

Silver Street Elementary School in New Albany—843

Indonesia

President—846

U.S. Ambassador—854

Intelligence. *See* Defense and national security; *specific Federal agency*

- Intelligence, Office of the Director of National, Director—9, 120, 162, 835
- Interior, Department of the
  - Fish and Wildlife, Assistant Secretary for—847
  - Land Management, Bureau of—859
  - Outer Continental Shelf—15
  - Park Service, National
    - 100th anniversary—115, 117
    - Centennial Initiative—115, 118
    - Education programs—118
    - Funding—115–117
    - Maintenance backlog reduction—115
    - Park rangers—118
  - Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Office of—864
- International. *See other part of subject*
- Investigation, Federal Bureau of. *See* Justice, Department of
- Iowa, disaster assistance—846, 848, 858
- Iran
  - Captives
    - British—370, 371
    - U.S.—678
  - Nuclear weapons development—4, 27, 48, 68, 133, 134, 137, 139, 143, 372, 383, 435, 456, 458, 489, 505, 558, 587, 615, 699, 771
  - Relations with Iraq—133, 135, 272, 288, 430, 435
  - Relations with Israel—771
  - Terrorism, sponsorship—18, 27, 46, 68, 74, 430, 456
  - U.S. national emergency, continuation—261
- Iraq
  - Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, terrorist attack—741
  - Christian minority—717
  - Compact for Iraq, International—512
  - Democracy efforts—16, 24, 98, 239, 272, 288, 325, 351, 355, 391, 429, 433, 435, 450, 458, 510, 523, 564, 610, 645, 655, 698, 753, 788, 820, 821
  - Development Fund and certain other property, U.S. national emergency, continuation—601
  - Former President, death—8
  - Former regime—428, 510, 609, 622
  - Government
    - Presidency Council—859
    - President—655, 863
    - Prime Minister—138, 157, 325, 451, 835, 841, 846, 850, 855, 857, 859, 863, 864
    - Vice Presidents—316, 859, 863
  - Iraq—Continued
    - Insurgency and terrorist attacks—16–19, 24–27, 30, 47, 130, 131, 133, 135, 136, 221, 239, 241, 242, 316, 351, 353, 355, 389, 390, 404, 406, 411, 429, 430, 434, 447, 449, 454, 465, 511, 514, 519–521, 523, 527, 554, 564, 610, 611, 614, 619, 698, 741, 744, 754, 755, 789, 817–819, 821, 822
    - International assistance—19, 30, 48, 70, 241, 272, 288, 435, 448, 458, 511, 523, 555
    - Iraq Study Group—138, 528
    - Iraqi military and security forces—17, 18, 25, 26, 30, 129, 147, 157, 239, 240, 324, 325, 352, 354, 382, 391, 405, 447–449, 454, 520, 522, 554, 754, 820
    - Multi-National Force-Iraq, commanding general—11, 57, 67, 851
    - NATO, role—511
    - Oil revenue legislation, proposed—131, 241, 382, 458
    - Operation Phantom Thunder—818
    - Provincial Reconstruction Teams—339, 451, 821
    - Reconciliation efforts—18, 241, 316, 325, 458, 820, 821
    - Reconstruction efforts—18, 26, 30, 131, 325, 352, 382, 391, 405, 430, 450, 528
    - U.S. Ambassador—156, 836
    - U.S. congressional resolution—130, 131, 138, 148, 318
    - U.S. congressional working group on Iraq—20
    - U.S. journalists, casualties—356
    - U.S. military forces
      - Casualties—20, 24, 34, 49, 50, 243, 418, 447, 526, 528, 574, 627–629, 823, 832, 848, 851, 853
      - Deployment—7, 16–19, 24, 25, 27, 30, 47, 70, 101, 129, 130, 136, 137, 140, 147, 189, 195, 222, 240–242, 256, 285, 316, 318, 323, 325, 351–353, 355, 362, 379, 380–382, 384–386, 390, 391, 404–407, 416, 429, 431, 434, 439, 443, 446, 447, 449, 452, 454, 457, 465, 472, 493, 500, 511, 513–515, 519–522, 524, 526, 528, 541, 554, 555, 557, 559, 564, 565, 610, 614–618, 620, 623, 645, 698, 744, 754, 755, 789, 817, 818, 822, 825, 832
      - Funding—318, 323–325, 340, 341, 344, 353, 354, 358, 362, 379, 380, 384, 386, 391, 394, 407, 408, 414, 416–418, 425, 431, 433, 451, 454, 471, 472, 493, 503, 513–515, 526, 527, 532, 541, 556, 559, 565, 590, 613, 626

- Iraq—Continued
  - U.S. military forces—Continued
    - Missing in action—615
- Ireland
  - Economic growth and development—323
  - Prime Minister—322, 844, 846
- Ireland, Northern. *See* United Kingdom
- Islamic Conference, Organization of the—808
- Israel
  - See also* Middle East
  - Prime Minister—766, 859, 863
  - Relations with Iran—771
  - Relations with U.S.—766
  - U.S. assistance—771
- Italy
  - Afghanistan, role—666, 715
  - Basilica of Santa Maria in Rome—861
  - Community of Sant'Egidio—713
  - Former Prime Minister—716, 862
  - Lebanon, role—715
  - President—852, 861
  - President Bush's visit—666, 713, 714, 852, 861
  - Prime Minister—659, 714, 716, 718, 852, 861
  - Relations with U.S.—715, 718
  - U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—861
- J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board—836
- Japan
  - Afghanistan and Iraq, role—489
  - Energy cooperation with U.S.—495, 702
  - North Korea, past abductions of Japanese citizens—492
  - Prime Minister—488, 495, 701, 848, 852, 853, 856
  - Relations with U.S.—488, 495, 826
  - Trade with U.S.—489
  - U.S. beef imports—489
  - World War II comfort women—494
- Jordan
  - King—842, 844
  - Queen—842, 844
- Judiciary, Federal court nominations and confirmations—45
- Justice, Department of
  - Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Bureau of (ATF)—847
  - Attorney General—310, 312, 336, 368, 465, 604, 730, 731, 846, 850, 851
  - Community Relations Service—857
  - Environment and Natural Resources Division, Assistant Attorney General for—859
- Justice, Department of—Continued
  - Identity Theft Task Force—471
  - Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, Special Counsel for—837
  - Institute of Justice, National—860
  - Investigation, Federal Bureau of (FBI)—277
  - Legislative Affairs, Acting Assistant Attorney General for—836
  - U.S. attorneys—310, 312, 334–337, 343, 356, 368, 381, 466, 619
- Kansas
  - Boys & Girls Clubs of South Central Kansas—760
  - Disaster assistance—836, 855, 863
  - General Motors Fairfax Assembly Plant in Fairfax—846
  - Greensburg, tornado damage and recovery efforts—542, 553, 855
  - President's visits—553, 759, 760, 846, 855, 862
  - Republican Party event—862
- Kentucky
  - Disaster assistance—858
  - McConnell Center in Louisville, students, meeting with President—843
  - President's visit—219, 843
  - Republican Party event—219
- Kosovo
  - Independence from Serbia, proposed—672, 693, 716, 718, 723, 725, 729, 734
  - KFOR international security force, U.S. military forces, deployment—762
- Kyoto Protocol. *See* Environment
- Labor, Department of
  - Assistant Secretaries
    - Pension and Welfare Benefits—854
    - Public Affairs—863
  - Deputy Secretary—838, 855
- Labor Relations Authority, Federal—844, 849, 865
- Laos, U.S. Ambassador—855
- Law enforcement and crime, law enforcement officers, memorial service—581
- Lebanon
  - Former President—840
  - Former Prime Minister, assassination—7, 145, 457, 715, 741
  - International assistance—74
  - March 14 coalition—842
  - Parliament
    - Assassination of Member—741
    - Member—860



- Lebanon—Continued  
  Support for Lebanon, International Conference on—74  
  Terrorist attacks—74, 145  
Legion, American—237, 401  
Legislation, enacted  
  Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006—29  
  National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act of 2007—444  
  Native American Home Ownership Opportunity Act of 2007—863  
  To designate the headquarters building of the Department of Education as the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building—847  
  U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007—513, 515  
Legislation, proposed  
  “Hope Offered through Principled and Ethical Stem Cell Research Act” (HOPE Act)—409  
  “Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007”—409, 775, 777  
Lesotho, U.S. Ambassador—849  
Liberia  
  Debt relief—144  
  President—144, 840  
Libya, Bulgarian nurses, imprisonment—675, 729, 731  
Line-item veto. *See* Presidency, U.S.  
Lithuania  
  Afghanistan and Iraq, role—123  
  President—123, 838  
  Visa policy, U.S.—123  
Louisiana  
  Disaster assistance—842  
  Elected officials and community leaders, meeting with President—207  
  Hurricane Katrina, recovery efforts—207–210  
  New Orleans  
    Charter schools, expansion—211  
    Law enforcement issues—210  
    Rebuilding efforts—210  
    Samuel J. Green Charter School—207, 843  
    School system, Federal funding—211  
  President's visit—207, 208, 843  
Madagascar  
  President—837  
  U.S. Ambassador—847  
Maine  
  Disaster assistance—851, 852  
  President's visit—864, 865  
Malaria Awareness Day—481  
Malaria Initiative, President's—483, 484, 653  
Malaria. *See* Diseases  
Malaysia, U.S. Ambassador—852  
Mali, President—860  
Management and Budget, Office of  
  Director—772, 839, 863  
  Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of—849  
March for Life—41  
Marine Corps, U.S. *See* Navy, Department of the  
Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Convention for the Protection and Development of the—161  
Maritime affairs  
  U.S. interests—583  
  U.S. piracy policy—746  
Maritime Organization, International—583  
Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday—31  
Maryland  
  National Institutes of Health in Bethesda—35, 837  
  National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda—626, 858  
  President's visits—35, 68, 259, 364, 372, 488, 626, 837, 838, 846–848, 850, 852–854, 858, 859  
Massachusetts, disaster assistance—857  
Mauritania, President—849, 850  
McClatchy Company—859  
Medal of Science, President's Committee on the National—864  
Medals. *See* Decorations, medals, and awards  
Medical liability reform. *See* Health and medical care  
Medicare and Medicaid Services, Centers for. *See* Health and Human Services, Department of  
Medicare and Medicaid. *See* Health and medical care  
Memorial Day—626–628, 859  
Mexico  
  Crime and narcotrafficking—247, 304, 308, 315  
  Economic growth and development—304, 308  
  Illegal immigrants to U.S.—301, 303, 315, 399  
  Mayan ruins at Uxmal—845  
  Oil supply and refining—252  
  President—248, 302, 303, 307, 314, 845, 862

Mexico—Continued

- President Bush's visit—300, 302, 303, 305, 307, 314, 840, 845
- Presidential election—304
- Relations with U.S.—301–303, 307, 314, 538
- Trade with U.S.—251, 259, 302, 304, 308, 315
- Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships (TIES) Program—305
- U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—845

Michigan

- President's visit—445, 851
- World Affairs Council of Western Michigan—445

Micronesia, U.S. Ambassador—848

Middle East

- See also* Palestinian Authority and Palestinians; *specific country*
- American interests, protection efforts—18, 19, 27
- Peace and democracy efforts—4, 7, 13, 46, 340, 460, 587, 767, 770, 810
- Quartet Representative—814
- Terrorism—38, 47, 587
- U.S. humanitarian assistance—809

Military Academy, U.S. *See* Army, Department of the

Military Spouse Day—572

Millennium Challenge Accounts. *See* Developing countries

Millennium Challenge Corporation—851, 854

Mississippi

- Elected officials and community leaders, meeting with President—206
- Hurricane Katrina, recovery efforts—205–207, 843
- President's visit—205, 206, 843

Missouri

- Disaster assistance—837, 862
- Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant—846
- Governor—843
- President's visits—57, 329, 838, 846
- Saint Luke's East-Lee's Summit Hospital in Lee's Summit—838

Montenegro, U.S. Ambassador—859

Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation—835, 855

Mozambique, U.S. Ambassador—835

Museum and Library Services Board, National—844

NAFTA. *See* Commerce, international

Namibia, U.S. Ambassador—862

NASA. *See* Space program

National Guard, U.S. *See* Armed Forces, U.S.; *specific State*

National security. *See* Defense and national security

National. *See other part of subject*

Native American rights and tribal sovereignty—933

NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Natural disasters

*See also* Disaster assistance; *specific State or country*

Alabama, tornadoes—212, 843

Florida

Hurricane Wilma—835

Tornadoes and storms—96

Georgia and Florida, wildfires—631

Georgia, tornadoes—212, 843

Kansas, Greensburg tornado—542, 553, 855

Missouri, tornadoes—843

Navy, Department of the

Blue Angels air demonstration team—858

Financial Management, Assistant Secretary for—860

Marine Corps, U.S.—21, 34

National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD—626, 858

Naval Academy, U.S.—376, 849

Naval War College in Newport, RI—816

NBC News—850

Nebraska, disaster assistance—836, 860

Nepal, U.S. Ambassador—852

New Hampshire, disaster assistance—853

New Jersey

Disaster assistance—852

President's visit—642, 859

Republican Party event—642

New Mexico, disaster assistance—848

New York

Charter schools, expansion—479

Disaster assistance—842, 852

New York City

Harlem Village Academy Charter School—851

New York Stock Exchange—839

President's visits—81, 473, 839, 851

September 11, 2001, first-responders, casualties—839

New Zealand

Prime Minister—338, 843, 847

Relations with U.S.—338

News media. *See* Communications

- Nicaragua
  - President—836
  - President-elect—836
- No Child Left Behind Act. *See* Education
- North American Competitiveness Council—1098, 1115
- North American Free Trade Agreement. *See* Commerce, international
- North American Leaders' Summit—862
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization—4, 132, 149–151, 510, 511, 587, 602, 661, 672, 722, 825, 838, 855, 857
- North Carolina
  - Novozymes North America, Inc., in Franklinton—842
  - President's visit—175, 842
- North Korea
  - Human rights issues—496
  - Japanese citizens, past abductions—493
  - Nuclear weapons development—129, 132, 134, 135, 143, 488, 491, 493
- North Korea Freedom Week—496
- Northern Ireland. *See* United Kingdom
- Nowruz—337
- Nuclear energy. *See* Energy; *specific country*
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission—783, 853
- Nuclear Security Administration, National. *See* Energy, Department of
- Nuclear weapons. *See* Arms and munitions; *specific country*
- Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission—863
- Office. *See other part of subject*
- Ohio, President's visit—426, 851
- Oklahoma, disaster assistance—837, 839, 861
- Oregon, disaster assistance—842
- Pakistan
  - Counterterrorism efforts—153, 694
  - Defense relationship with U.S.—153
  - Democracy efforts—695
  - President—695
  - Relations with Afghanistan—153
  - U.S. Ambassador—857
- Palestinian Authority and Palestinians
  - See also* Middle East
  - 2006 elections—461
  - Democracy and reform efforts—461
  - President—766, 770, 863
- Panama
  - Free trade agreement with U.S.—156, 362, 562
  - Panama Canal—156
  - President—155, 839
- Park Foundation, National—840
- Park Service, National. *See* Interior, Department of the
- Passover—378, 393
- Peace, U.S. Institute of—844
- Pennsylvania
  - Disaster assistance—842
  - President's visit—568, 856
- Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation—854, 858, 864
- People with Intellectual Disabilities, President's Committee for—853
- Personnel Management, Office of, Deputy Director—835
- Peru
  - Free trade agreement with U.S.—250, 466, 562
  - Opening Doors Program—233
  - President—466, 842, 848
  - U.S. Ambassador—850
  - Virginia Tech student, death—466
- Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National—540
- Physical Fitness and Sports, President's Council on—854
- Poland
  - Afghanistan and Iraq, role—709
  - Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw—862
  - President—707, 850, 852, 861
  - President Bush's visit—707, 852, 861
  - Relations with U.S.—661
- Prayer Breakfast, National—90
- Prayer, National Day of—532
- Presidency, U.S.
  - Agenda—69, 623, 667
  - Former President George Washington, 275th birthday—159
  - Former President Gerald R. Ford—1, 445, 835, 851
  - Line-item veto, proposed—83, 95, 106, 190
- President. *See other part of subject*
- Presidential Emergency Board No. 241—850
- Presidential Scholars—800
- Printing Office, U.S. Government, Public Printer—858
- Prisons Industries, Inc., Federal—851
- Proliferation Security Initiative—510
- Public Broadcasting System (PBS)
  - "Charlie Rose" program—851
  - "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer" program—837
- Public Policy Research, American Enterprise Institute for—146

- Public Radio, National—838
- Railroad Retirement Board—857, 858
- Reconstruction and Development, International Bank for. *See* World Bank
- Red Cross, American—862
- Religious Freedom, U.S. Commission on International—856
- Religious leaders. *See specific country, State, or position*
- Republican Party
  - See also specific State*
  - President's Dinner—742
  - Republican Governors Association—194
  - Republican National Committee—39, 563, 847, 848, 851, 853, 863
- Reserve System, Federal—856
- Reuters—857
- Rhode Island
  - Disaster assistance—858
  - Naval War College in Newport—816
  - President's visit—816, 829, 864
  - Tall Ships Rhode Island 2007—864
- Rolling Thunder leadership, meeting with President—859
- Roman Catholic Church
  - See also* Holy See (Vatican City)
  - Catholic Prayer Breakfast, National—411
- Russia
  - Democracy and human rights issues—693
  - Energy, oil sources—698
  - Former President—471, 852
  - Minister of Foreign Affairs—839
  - Nuclear weapons and material, risk of proliferation—774
  - President—132, 504, 670, 674, 697, 705, 724, 851, 855, 859
  - Relations with U.S.—132, 504, 660, 661, 670, 674, 675, 683, 692, 693, 696, 697, 705, 706, 724, 732
  - World Trade Organization, membership bid—698
- Saint Patrick's Day—322, 846
- Salary Council, Federal—840
- Sao Tome and Principe, U.S. Ambassador—863
- Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002—83
- Saudi Arabia
  - Democracy efforts—695
  - King—460, 695, 837, 846
  - U.S. Ambassador—841
- Science and technology
  - See also* Health and medical care
  - Bioethics issues—41, 409, 775, 776, 778
  - Genetic research—36
  - Science and technology—Continued
    - Human Genome Project, U.S.—36
    - Privacy issues—36
    - Research and development—54, 77, 88
    - Stem cell research—409, 707, 775–778
- Securing America's Future Energy (SAFE) organization—73
- Securities Investor Protection Corporation—836, 855
- Security Council, National—846, 857, 864
- Senegal, President—848
- Serbia, U.S. Ambassador—848
- Sierra Leone, U.S. Ambassador—853
- Sinclair Broadcasting—837
- Singapore
  - Afghanistan and Iraq, role—537
  - Prime Minister—536, 852
  - Relations with U.S.—536
  - Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trade-marks—536
- Slavery (historical) in U.S.—125, 578
- Social Security Administration, Deputy Commissioner—849
- Social Security reform—3, 43, 95, 96, 107, 223, 319
- Somalia, separatist conflict—357
- South America
  - President Bush's visit—244, 254, 258, 260, 269
  - U.S. assistance—828
- South Carolina, Charleston firefighters, deaths—773
- South Dakota, disaster assistance—858
- South Korea, free trade agreement with U.S.—374, 562, 833
- Southern Baptist Convention—738
- Space program
  - Aeronautics and Space Administration, National—856
  - Shuttle—126
- Space Station, International—126
- Special Olympics. *See* Sports
- Sports
  - Baseball—33, 126, 415, 839
  - Basketball—49, 202
  - Football—124, 376, 393, 468, 839
  - Hockey—92
  - NASCAR—690, 839
  - NCAA championship teams—326, 764
  - Soccer—859
  - Softball—864
  - Tee-ball—812
  - Women's athletics—813

- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). *See* Health and Human Services, Department of
- State, Department of
  - Ambassadors. *See specific country*
  - Chief of Protocol—840, 863
  - Civilian Reserve Corps, proposed—48
  - Counterterrorism Coordinator—841
  - Cultural Property Advisory Committee—854
  - Deputy Secretary—9, 200, 835
  - Foreign Service
    - Chairman of the Board—862
    - Director General—862
    - Officers, meeting with President—844
  - Holocaust Issues, Special Envoy for—859
  - Human Rights Defenders Fund—687
  - Public Diplomacy, U.S. Advisory Commission on—855
  - Secretary—339, 838, 840
  - Trafficking in Persons, Office to Monitor and Combat—840
  - Under Secretaries
    - Arms Control and International Security—839
    - Economic, Energy, and Agricultural Affairs—850
- State of the Union Address—42, 838
- States, Organization of American—846
- Sudan
  - African Union, peacekeeping efforts—32, 422, 423, 631
  - Darfur, conflict and human rights crisis—4, 13, 32, 422–424, 587, 630, 680, 696, 703, 739
  - Peace efforts—422
  - President—423, 630
  - Sanctions, U.S.—423, 630, 739
  - Transitional Darfur Regional Authority—424
  - U.S. assistance—424, 631
- Susquehanna River Basin Commission—852
- Swaziland, U.S. Ambassador—853
- Sweden
  - Prime Minister—580, 851
  - Sweden-U.S. Social Security Agreement—337
- Syria
  - Blocking property of certain persons, U.S. national emergency—553
  - President—380
  - Relations with Iraq—272, 288
  - Relations with Lebanon—457
  - Terrorism, sponsorship—18, 27, 74, 380, 435, 456, 457
- Tanzania, U.S. Ambassador—860
- Taxation, tax relief—76, 77, 83, 92, 94, 104, 105, 189, 197, 223, 319, 348, 440, 518, 566, 623, 647, 745, 748, 749, 763, 791
- Tennessee
  - Erlanger Hospital-Baroness Campus in Chattanooga—841
  - President's visit—165, 841
- Terrorism
  - See also* Defense and national security; *specific country or region*
  - Al Qaida terrorist group—18, 46, 136, 242, 351, 353, 390, 404, 428, 430, 434, 448, 449, 455, 509, 511, 514, 521, 523, 557, 564, 608, 610, 611, 617, 618, 620, 621, 645, 656, 698, 741, 744, 754, 761, 789, 817, 819, 822
  - Communications, interception—593
  - Counterterrorism efforts—239, 357, 387, 509, 608, 618
  - Global threat—147, 427, 509, 608
  - Hamas terrorist group—770
  - Hizballah terrorist group—46, 74
  - September 11, 2001, attacks—24, 82, 89, 91, 148, 238, 343, 351, 386, 389, 402, 427, 563, 596, 607, 808, 839
- Texas
  - Disaster assistance—853, 865
  - Fort Hood Army Base—849
  - President's visits—395, 602, 835, 848, 849, 855, 857, 862
- Thailand, U.S. Ambassador—857
- Trade. *See* Business and industry; Commerce, international
- Trade agreements or negotiations. *See* Commerce, international; *specific country or region*
- Trade and Investment, White House Forum on International—1461
- Trade Policy and Negotiations, Advisory Committee for—849, 852
- Transportation, Department of
  - Deputy Secretary—842, 861
  - General Counsel—836
  - Research and Innovative Technology Administration—863
- Treasury, Department of the
  - Assistant Secretaries
    - Financial Institutions—843
    - Management—849
  - Chief Financial Officer—849
  - International Affairs, Under Secretary for—843, 859
- Tribune Broadcasting—837
- TSA. *See* Homeland Security, Department of

- Turkmenistan
  - Normal trade relations status—830
  - U.S. Ambassador—847
- United Kingdom
  - Afghanistan, British military forces, deployment—455
  - British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)—854
  - British captives in Iran—370, 381
  - Defense cooperation with U.S.—587, 792
  - Duke of Edinburgh—855
  - Former Prime Minister—814, 824
  - Glasgow, Scotland, attempted terrorist attacks—865
  - Iraq, British military forces, deployment—455
  - London, attempted terrorist attacks—865
  - Northern Ireland
    - Peace efforts—322
    - Political institutions, restoration—546, 854
  - Prime Minister—455, 557, 586, 591–593, 702, 792, 824, 849, 855–857, 861, 863
  - Queen—542, 544, 546, 855
  - Relations with U.S.—543, 544, 546, 557, 578, 593, 824
  - The Sun newspaper—856
- United Nations
  - Biofuels Forum, International—264
  - General Assembly—836
  - Haiti, role—364, 374
  - Iraq, International Compact for—512
  - Kyoto Protocol. *See* Environment
  - Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on the—583
  - Reform—374
  - Relations with U.S.—8
  - Secretary-General—32, 837
  - Security Council—836
  - Sudan, role—422, 423, 631
  - U.S. Permanent Representative—836
- World Health Organization—856
- Univision—256
- Uruguay
  - Democracy efforts—275
  - Democratic Republic of the Congo, role—276
  - Economic growth and development—276
  - Education reform—276
  - Haiti, role—276
  - President—245, 274, 845
  - President Bush's visit—274, 840, 845
  - Relations with U.S.—275, 276
  - Software exports—276
  - Trade with U.S.—277
  - U.S. Embassy staff, meeting with President Bush—845
- U.S. *See* other part of subject
- USA Freedom Corps. *See* Freedom Corps, USA
- USA Today newspaper—837
- USAID. *See* Development, U.S. Agency for International
- Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission—856
- Uzbekistan, U.S. Ambassador—851
- Valles Caldera Trust—856
- Vatican. *See* Holy See (Vatican City)
- Venezuela, U.S. Ambassador—843
- Vermont, disaster assistance—854
- Veterans Affairs, Department of
  - Funding—237
  - General Counsel—865
  - Global War on Terror Heroes, Interagency Task Force on Returning—361, 480, 851
  - Medical care system, funding—227, 237
  - Operations, Preparedness, Security and Law Enforcement, Assistant Secretary for—850
  - Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center—1075
- Veterans Day—1436, 1485, 1491
- Veterans of Foreign Wars—1107
- Vice President. *See* White House Office
- Victims of the Holocaust, International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the—71
- Vietnam
  - Democracy and human rights activists, meeting with President—859
  - President—793, 861, 864
  - Relations with U.S.—793
  - U.S. Ambassador—858
  - U.S. humanitarian assistance—793
  - U.S. servicemembers' remains, recovery efforts—793
  - Vietnam war—191
- Virginia
  - Arlington National Cemetery—628, 859
  - Jamestown Settlement, 400th anniversary—576, 856
  - Micron Technology, Inc., in Manassas—840
  - President George Washington's estate in Mount Vernon—841
  - President's visits—96, 99, 103, 115, 117, 159, 401, 419, 554, 576, 628, 839–841, 849, 850, 855–857, 859
  - Republican Party event—857
  - Shenandoah National Park in Luray—840
- Virginia Tech
  - Commencement ceremonies—575
  - President, meeting with President Bush—850



Virginia—Continued

Virginia Tech—Continued

Shootings—419–421, 425, 426, 442, 463, 466, 475, 487, 497, 517, 561, 575, 742, 850

Visa policy, U.S. *See* Immigration and naturalization; *specific country*

Voluntarism—127, 128, 204, 500, 570

Wall Street Journal—839, 859

Washington, disaster assistance—841

Washington, DC. *See* District of Columbia

Washington Examiner—864

Weapons of mass destruction. *See* Arms and munitions

Weekly Standard—840

West Virginia, disaster assistance—853

Western Hemisphere

Alliance for Progress—230

Debt relief—235

Democracy and economic development efforts—229, 230, 247, 248, 280

Developing countries, relations with U.S.—230, 270

Foreign investment—248, 270

Trade with U.S.—235, 245, 256

U.S. assistance—231, 233–235, 244, 247, 248, 250, 254, 256, 258, 270, 280, 278, 309

White House Situation Room, renovation—857

White House Conference on the Americas—863

White House Correspondents' Association—851

White House Fellowships, President's Commission on—859

White House News Photographers Association—847

White House Office

Assistants to the President

Counsel to the President—15, 838

Counsel to the President, Associate—839, 861

Counsel to the President, Deputy—861

Counselor to the President—679, 740

Domestic Policy—847

Economic Policy—857

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Office of, Deputy Director—857

Homeland Security and Counterterrorism—847, 851, 865

Homeland Security, Deputy Assistant—839

Intergovernmental Affairs—851, 856

International Economic Affairs, Deputy National Security Adviser for—859

White House Office—Continued

Assistants to the President—Continued

Iraq and Afghanistan, Deputy National Security Adviser for—584

Legislative Affairs—839, 847

Legislative Affairs, Deputy Assistant—846, 864

Media Affairs Director—839

National Security Adviser—842, 864

National Security Adviser, Deputy—539

Political Affairs Director—860

Preparedness Policy Senior Director—851

Press Secretary—347, 357, 847

Public Liaison Director—846

Response Policy Senior Director—847

Special Counsel to the President—861

Speechwriting—847

Staff Secretary, Deputy—846

Strategic Communications and Global Outreach, Deputy National Security Adviser for—835

White House Photographer—851

Chief Usher and Executive Residence Director—838, 843

Chief Usher and Deputy Executive Residence Director, Deputy—843

Drug Control Policy, Office of National—864

Economic Council, National—857

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Office of—571

Vice President—356, 835, 846

Vice President, Office of the, former Chief of Staff—256, 260, 697, 844, 860

White House Summit on Malaria, 2006—484

World Bank—506, 591, 639, 805, 841, 850

World Radio Communication Conference—835

World Trade Organization—698

World War II

Comfort women—494

Coral Sea, Battle of the, 65th anniversary—853

Wounded Warriors, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning—271, 261, 321, 361, 844

Yemen

President—531, 852, 854

U.S. Ambassador—852

Zimbabwe, U.S. national emergency, continuation—204

## Name Index

- Abbas, Mahmoud—766–768, 770, 863  
 Abd Al-Mahdi, Adil—316, 859, 863  
 Abdallahi, Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh—849, 850  
 Abdiriyim, Ablikim—687  
 Abdiriyim, Alim—687  
 Abe, Akie—488, 852  
 Abe, Shinzo—408, 482, 488, 495, 525, 645, 646, 667, 701, 744, 756, 790, 826, 848, 852, 853, 856  
 Abizaid, John P.—11, 24  
 Adamkiene, Alma—123  
 Adamkus, Valdas—123, 838  
 Addai, Joseph—469  
 Addison, Linda Leuchter—858  
 Adelson, Miriam—846  
 Adolphson, Ryan—182, 183  
 Aguilar, David V.—397  
 Agwunobi, John O.—856  
 Ahern, Bertie—322, 844, 846  
 Ahmadi-nejad, Mahmud—135, 421, 456, 771, 822  
 Ahmed, Shihab—448  
 Ahtisaari, Martti—693, 718, 721, 729, 737  
 Aigner-Clark, Julie—49  
 Ajami, Fouad—451  
 Albright, Clarence H. “Bud”—863, 883  
 Alexander, Lamar—165  
 Alito, Samuel A., Jr.—225, 411, 738  
 Alizai, Haji Azizullah—679  
 Allen, Jimmie—498  
 Allen, Susan Davis—864  
 Allen, Thad W.—606  
 Almquist, Katherine—868  
 Anderson, Dixie—445  
 Anderson, Joshua M.—486  
 Appleton, Steven R.—103, 108  
 Ardis, Jim—76  
 Arison, Madeleine—202  
 Arison, Micky—202  
 Arison, Nicholas—202  
 Armel, Vicky—582  
 Armitage, Richard L.—201  
 Artman, Carl J.—868  
 Asad, Bashar al- —380, 435, 436, 458, 741  
 Ashcroft, John D.—33  
 Ashe, Victor H.—862  
 Ashley, W. Ross, III—864, 883  
 Astrue, Michael J.—868  
 Aung San Suu Kyi—687  
 Austin, Patti—795  
 Autrey, Shuqui—49  
 Autrey, Syshe—49  
 Autrey, Wesley—49, 125  
 Auxiliadora Delgado de Vazquez, Maria—845  
 Aycock, Sharion—876  
 Azdi, Abu Bakr al- —608  
 Azima, Parnaz—678  
 Aznar, Jose Maria—685  
 Bagnol, Joel—839  
 Bailey, John P.—867  
 Baker, James A., III—16, 439, 454, 457, 528, 615, 618, 620  
 Baker, Valerie L.—867  
 Bakoyannis, Dora—341, 342  
 Balde, Demba—483  
 Baldwin, Tammy—444  
 Ballard, Adam J.—377  
 Ballard, Reginald—31  
 Ban Ki-moon—32, 423, 631, 697, 837  
 Barber, Brad T.—856  
 Barbour, Haley R.—205, 206  
 Barbour, Marsha D.—206  
 Barnum, Harvey C. “Barney,” Jr.—21, 192  
 Baroody, Michael E.—843, 875, 881  
 Barraza, Ricardo, Jr.—853  
 Barrera, Michael L.—230  
 Barrett, Thomas J.—842, 861, 882  
 Barth, Frederik Heinz—679  
 Bartlett, Daniel J.—679, 740  
 Bartman, Cindy—446  
 Barton, Joe L.—842  
 Basham, W. Ralph—119, 397  
 Bashir, Umar Hassan Ahmad al- —4, 32, 423, 424, 630, 631, 696, 703  
 Bathgate, Lawrence E., II—643  
 Battle, Calvin—412, 413  
 Battle, Carlos—412, 413  
 Battle, Pamela—412, 413  
 Baxter, Blaise—166  
 Bayh, Beau—469  
 Bayh, Evan—469  
 Bayh, Nick—469  
 Bayh, Susan—469

- Beauregard, Thomas R.—65, 66  
 Beck, Thomas M.—865, 884  
 Bee, Timothy S.—397  
 Beehler, Alex A.—869, 878  
 Behrens, William L.—856  
 Bejtja, Andi—671  
 Belfon, Gwen—499  
 Bell, Phillip J.—851  
 Bell, Warren—869  
 Berger Perdomo, Oscar—290–292, 845  
 Berisha, Sali—720, 726, 852, 862  
 Berlusconi, Silvio—716, 862  
 Bernstein, Tom A.—846  
 Bertone, Tarcisio Cardinal—861  
 Bettman, Gary B.—92  
 Beyer, Wayne C.—869  
 Biggs, Andrew G.—849, 869, 880  
 Bilirakis, Gus—327, 342  
 Bingaman, Jesse F. “Jeff,” Jr.—842  
 bin Laden, Usama—46, 242, 390, 430, 608, 610, 611, 619, 621  
 Biscet Gonzalez, Oscar Elias—687  
 Bishop, Sanford D., Jr.—23  
 Bjerke, Cindy—573  
 Blackwood, Ann S.—856  
 Blair, Anita K.—869  
 Blair, Michael—412  
 Blair, Tony—370, 381, 455, 459, 557, 586, 675, 702, 792, 814, 824, 849, 856, 857, 861, 863  
 Bloom, Ava—357  
 Bloom, Christine—357  
 Bloom, Nicole—357  
 Bloom, Ronald H.—858  
 Bloomberg, Michael R.—81, 82, 479, 779  
 Bloomfield, Sara J.—420  
 Blum, H. Steven—397  
 Blunt, Abigail—743  
 Blunt, Matt—189, 194, 817, 843  
 Blunt, Melanie Anderson—194  
 Blunt, Roy—69, 90, 317, 319, 320, 743, 778  
 Blyden, Josh—853  
 Bocelli, Andrea—795  
 Bodman, Samuel W.—50, 346, 648, 781  
 Boehner, John A.—11, 69, 219, 317, 319, 320, 358, 426, 431, 433, 436, 438, 443, 479, 581, 742, 778  
 Bolanos, Enrique—836  
 Boldrey, Robert L.—855, 880  
 Bolling, Bill—577  
 Bolten, Joshua B.—164, 532, 541, 556, 590  
 Bomar, Mary A.—115, 116  
 Bond, Christopher S. “Kit”—57  
 Bonicelli, Paul J.—837, 872  
 Bonilla, Henry—846, 876, 882  
 Bonner, Janee—787  
 Bonner, Josiah R., Jr.—781, 785–787  
 Boozman, Cathy—486  
 Boozman, John—486  
 Borissova, Olga—734  
 Borja, Ceasar, Jr.—839  
 Borja, Eva—839  
 Borja, Evan—839  
 Borja, Nhia—839  
 Bossert, Thomas P.—851  
 Boswell, Kenneth W.—226, 228  
 Boyer, David—847  
 Boyink, Kim D.—388  
 Bradbury, Steven G.—869  
 Bransby, David—186  
 Brauer, Stephen—34  
 Bredesen, Philip N., Jr.—165, 168–170, 172, 174, 175  
 Brewer, Cam—328  
 Brexler, Jim—165, 170  
 Bridge, Charles C.—801  
 Bridgewater, Pamela E.—843  
 Briggs, Kerri L.—844, 875  
 Brind’Amour, Rod—92, 93  
 Brinker, Nancy Goodman—863, 883  
 Brock, Roslyn McCallister—125, 795  
 Broidy, Elliott—563  
 Brook, Douglas A.—860, 882  
 Brooks, Dennis—214  
 Broussard, Aaron F.—207, 208  
 Brown, Bryan D. “Doug”—508, 853  
 Brown, Corrine—327  
 Brown, Gordon—557, 558, 590, 824  
 Brown, Janice Rogers—125  
 Brown, Leanna—859  
 Brown, Robert C.—864, 883  
 Brown, Rodney J.—864  
 Brownfield, William R.—846, 876  
 Brubaker, Paul R.—863, 883  
 Bruin, Barbara—856  
 Bruininks, Robert H.—836  
 Brunilda Rodriguez, Juana—233  
 Bruns, Steve—426  
 Bryant, Vanessa L.—867  
 Bulani, Jawad al—821  
 Bunning, James P.D.—33, 237  
 Burck, William—861  
 Burhoe, J. Scott—606  
 Burns, Alison—837  
 Burns, Michael J.—869, 882  
 Burns, R. Nicholas—342, 771  
 Burns, Scott M.—864, 883  
 Burns, William J.—852  
 Burr, Richard M.—93, 176

- Burt, Robert F.—21  
 Burton, Danny L.—469  
 Bush, Barbara—1, 172, 237, 317, 356, 395, 476, 498, 576, 705  
 Bush, Barbara P.—159, 181  
 Bush, George H.W.—1, 297, 358, 395, 408, 432, 453, 517, 525, 533, 544, 560, 646, 667, 697, 705, 744, 745, 756, 790, 826, 852  
 Bush, Jeb—194, 202, 497, 498  
 Bush, Jenna—159, 181, 259  
 Bush, Laura—1, 2, 4, 14, 15, 23, 57, 68, 73, 89–91, 115–118, 123, 127–129, 159, 165, 168, 175, 188, 193, 194, 196, 198, 208, 212, 213, 220, 229, 262, 273, 279, 281, 283, 289, 291, 293, 296, 302, 303, 307, 309, 317, 329, 337, 343, 347, 356, 357, 364, 378, 393, 395, 411, 412, 419, 426, 427, 440, 441, 444, 445, 462–464, 471, 481, 483–486, 488, 498, 516, 529, 532, 535, 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 563, 570, 574–577, 582, 584, 601, 602, 629, 641, 643, 648, 649, 673, 679, 682, 685, 690, 691, 709, 715, 720, 726, 728, 733, 742, 747, 772, 773, 786, 793, 795, 800, 804, 826, 831, 832, 855–857, 861, 862  
 Butler, Grace L.—38  
 Butler, John S.—836  
 Butterfield, George K., Jr.—176  
 Byrd, Robert C.—3  
 Cabaniss, Dale—844, 875, 884  
 Cade, Gregory B.—869  
 Cahn, Anne—844, 875  
 Calderon Hinojosa, Felipe de Jesus—248, 252, 298, 300–303, 307, 314–316, 845, 862  
 Cameron, David—594  
 Campaneria, Miguel—856, 880  
 Campbell, Bradford P.—854, 879  
 Canterbury, Chuck—581  
 Cantor, Eric—317  
 Canu, Mariano—235, 236, 280, 295, 649  
 Carcieri, Donald L.—816, 817  
 Carcieri, Suzanne Owren—817  
 Carlson, Daniel—418  
 Carlson, Merrilee—418  
 Carlton, Dennis W.—841  
 Carper, Martha A.—50  
 Carper, Thomas R.—50–52  
 Carson, Julia M.—469  
 Carter, James E., Jr.—1  
 Carter, John R.—69, 317  
 Carter, Phillip, III—846, 876  
 Carter, Rosalynn—1  
 Cartwright, Chas—116, 117  
 Cartwright, James E. “Hoss”—814, 824  
 Cartwright, Sandee—814  
 Casey, George W., Jr.—11, 26, 57, 120, 573, 596  
 Casey, Sheila—573  
 Casscells, S. Ward—842, 874  
 Cassidy, David—837  
 Castle, Michael N.—50–53, 801  
 Castro Ruz, Fidel—252, 633, 752, 828  
 Castro Ruz, Raul—252  
 Caswell, James L.—859, 882  
 Cavuto, Neil P.—839  
 Cazarez Salazar, Victor Emilio—679  
 Chadwick, Debbie—841  
 Chambliss, Saxby—631, 633, 635  
 Chanes de Armas, Mario—212  
 Chao, Elaine L.—219, 220, 230, 560, 848  
 Chavez, Andy—534  
 Cheney, Dick—9, 21, 42, 146, 356, 558, 835, 838, 846, 855  
 Cheney, Lynne V.—855  
 Chertoff, Michael—119, 120, 313, 397, 399, 400, 585, 597, 631, 633, 635, 676, 678, 749, 806  
 Chiccehitto, Eva Mae—772  
 Chiccehitto, Karen—772  
 Childers, Amy—172, 173  
 Chilton, Bartholomew H.—854, 879  
 Chin, Curtis S.—869  
 Ching-Wu Chu—864  
 Christiansen, Don A.—856  
 Christoff, David R., Sr.—627  
 Christopher, Michael—849  
 Chu, Steven—186  
 Cianchette, Peter E.—869  
 Clapper, James R., Jr.—838, 873  
 Clark, Aliza—581  
 Clark, Aspen—49  
 Clark, Don—863  
 Clark, Helen—338, 843, 847  
 Cleaver, Emanuel, II—90  
 Clements, Andy—242  
 Clinton, Hillary Rodham—1  
 Clinton, William J.—1, 253, 356, 533, 852  
 Clyburn, James E.—96  
 Coble, Howard—93  
 Cochran, W. Thad—206  
 Cofer, Joe—169, 170, 175  
 Coffina, Scott A.—861  
 Cohen, Carol B.—846  
 Colburn, Ronald S.—395, 396, 399  
 Cole, Tom—69, 317, 742  
 Coleman, Norm—124, 230, 776  
 Coles, Leona Rogers—533  
 Coles, Neavelle A., Sr.—533  
 Collins, Francis S.—36, 90

- Commodore, Mike—92  
Cone, Jill—388  
Cone, Robert W.—388  
Connelly, Joan Breton—854  
Connor, Reed C.—884  
Conway, Annette—21, 573  
Conway, James T.—21, 376, 573  
Cook, Frederick B.—851, 878  
Copeland, Charles L.—51  
Corker, Robert—165, 742  
Cornelius, Jemalle—328  
Correa Delgado, Rafael Vicente—836  
Correll, John R.—869, 884  
Cortes, Luis, Jr.—757, 758  
Couch, Robert M.—849, 877  
Couric, Katie—850  
Cox, Christopher—83  
Cox, J. David, Sr.—840  
Cox, Michael—446  
Cram, Julie—846  
Cramer, Robert E. “Bud,” Jr.—781, 785  
Crandall, Arlene—191  
Crandall, Bruce P.—191  
Craner, Lorne W.—854, 880  
Credo, Michael D.—872  
Crenshaw, Ander—202, 327  
Cripe, Meredith—813  
Criss, Timothy E.—75  
Crist, Charles J., Jr.—96, 194  
Crocker, Ryan C.—156, 528, 584, 620, 656, 799, 817, 832, 836, 873  
Cromartie, Michael L.—856  
Cronin, JoAnn—237  
Croom, Sylvester—124  
Crouch, Jack D., III—539  
Csorba, Les T.—859  
Cunningham, Joan—574  
Cunningham, Wendy—413  
Curbeam, Robert L., Jr.—126  
D’Agostino, Thomas P.—835, 857, 881  
Dailey, Dell L.—841, 876  
Dale, Bruce E.—186  
Dale, Lawrence—388  
Dalton, Carol A.—867  
Daly, William—93  
Dames, Margaret A.—414  
D’Amico, Carol—840, 873  
Daniels, Cheri Herman—213  
Daniels, Mitchell E., Jr.—213, 215, 218  
Danilovich, John J.—648, 651, 836, 843  
Davidson, Jo Ann—39  
Davis, Jo Ann—90  
Davis, Kevin—207, 208  
Davis, Morgan W.—860  
de Hoop Scheffer, Jakob Gijsbert “Jaap”—587, 602, 855, 857  
de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschoot, Jeannine—602, 855, 857  
Dean, Ralph H.—813  
Debevoise, Eli W., II—841, 874  
DeCamp, Paul—869  
DeCroce, Alex—643  
Dedrick, James R.—879  
DeGiusti, Timothy D.—874  
Del Raso, Joseph V.—859  
Dempsey, Deanie—747  
Dempsey, Martin E.—747  
DeMuth, Christopher—146  
Dennis, Sharman W.—853  
Devlin, Thomas—166  
DeWitt, William O., Jr.—33, 34  
Dial, Elizabeth H.—851  
Diaz-Balart, Lincoln—497  
Diaz-Balart, Mario—146, 497  
Dicks, Norman D.—191  
Dillmann, Karl—606  
Dingell, John D., Jr.—842  
Dinkins, David N.—82  
Dobriansky, Lev E.—735  
Dobriansky, Paula J.—735, 854  
Dobson, James C.—532  
Dobson, Shirley—532, 533  
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford—93  
Dole, Robert J.—238, 253, 261, 321, 361, 440  
Domenici, Pete V.—842  
Donald, David H.—122, 840  
Donnelly, Joe—469  
Donohue, Mary O.—867  
Dooley, Calvin M.—849  
Dowd, Daniel—382  
Dowd, Matthew J.—382, 383  
Downing, Wayne A.—864  
Draper, Eric—851  
du Pont, Peter—51  
Duddy, Patrick D.—843, 875  
Dudley, Susan E.—849, 869, 880  
Duehring, Craig W.—864  
Duffy, John G.—89  
Duffy, Michael F.—869  
Duffy, Tony—213, 216  
Dugas, David R.—876  
Duke, Elizabeth A.—856, 880  
Dunathan, Amy F.—861  
Duncan, Dave—33  
Duncan, Michael—563  
Duncan, Robert M. “Mike”—39, 220, 743, 787  
Dungy, Lauren—468

- Dungy, Anthony K.—124, 468–470, 839  
Dunham, Dan—21, 22  
Dunham, Deb—21, 22  
Dunham, Justin—21, 22  
Dunham, Katie—21, 22  
Dunham, Kyle—21, 22  
Dunn, Jennifer—852  
Durao Barroso, Jose Manuel—5, 13, 501, 664, 836, 853  
Dybul, Mark R.—640  
Eaton, Perry R.—840, 873  
Eccles, Thomas J.—817  
Eckenhoff, Edward A.—321, 322, 844  
Eckstein, David M.—34  
Edi, Talil—856  
Edwards, Chet—573  
Edwards, Elizabeth A.—357  
Edwards, Jenny—176  
Edwards, Lee—735, 737  
Edwards, Tammy L.—321, 322, 844  
Egan, Christopher—864, 884  
Ehlers, Vernon J.—446  
Eido, Walid—741  
Eikenberry, Karl W.—151  
Eilbeck, Neville—73  
Eisenberg, Judy—643  
Eisenberg, Lewis M.—643  
Eliasson, Jan—424  
Ellsworth, Brad—469  
Elrod, Jennifer Walker—877  
Emanuel, Rahm I.—96, 99  
Emling, John G.—864  
Emma, Edward C.—849  
Endlich, Cathi—823  
Endlich, Randy—823  
England, Charles R.—858  
England, Gordon—339, 465, 628  
Engler, John—849  
English, Charles L.—848, 877  
Ensenat, Donald B.—840  
Ensign, John E.—742  
Enzi, Michael B.—14, 573  
Epifani, Lisa E.—862, 882  
Epstein, Amy S.—858  
Epstein, Anthony C.—868  
Ereli, Joseph A.—851, 878  
Escobar, Damien—796  
Escobar, Tourie—796  
Esfandiari, Haleh—678  
Estefan, Emilio, Jr.—538  
Estes, Sherrill—864  
Estrada, John L.—21  
Evans, Michael—453  
Evans, Susan W.—487  
Everett, Earl—327  
Evers, Williamson—840, 873  
Fadhil, Mohammed—353  
Fadhil, Omar—353  
Fahner, Tyrone—858  
Fallon, William J. “Fox”—11, 57, 120, 508, 584, 825, 841, 853  
Falwell, Jerry L., Sr.—584  
Falwell, Macel—584  
Fang, Sabrina—837  
Fannin, P. Robert—835, 872  
Farr, Thomas A.—867  
Farrell, Diane G.—858, 881  
Farren, J. Michael—861  
Favela, Steve—582  
Fayyad, Salam—767  
Fechner, Laura—533  
Fechner, Mike—532  
Fee, Jenny—445  
Felts, Jonathan D.—860  
Fenty, Adrian M.—218, 532  
Fernandez, Manny A.—327  
Fielding, Fred F.—15  
Filner, Bob—573  
Fine, Glenn A.—277  
Fischbach, Lea—843  
Fischer, Nora Barry—867  
Fisher, Kenneth—321, 322, 844  
Fisher, Larry—445  
Fisher, Rebecca—37  
Fiumara, Anthony—571  
Flake, Jeff—397  
Flood, Emmet—861  
Flowers, Renee—126  
Flowers, Tyrone J.—126  
Floyd, Samuel—575  
Foley, Jeremy N.—327  
Foley, Robert F.—21, 192  
Foley, Thomas C.—854  
Fong, Justin—478  
Ford, Elizabeth A.—1, 2, 835  
Ford, Gerald R.—1, 835  
Ford, John G.—1  
Ford, Michael G.—1  
Ford, Steven M.—1  
Ford, Susan E.—1  
Fore, Henrietta Holzman—648, 855, 881  
Fortuno, Luis G.—757  
Fossella, Vito J.—82, 474  
Fouty, Byron—615  
Fox, Sam—849, 869, 877  
Fox Quesada, Vicente—310



- Fraker, Ford M.—841, 873  
France, William C., Jr.—690  
Francisco, Noel J.—858  
Franks, Trent—146, 397  
Franz, Carol—775  
Frazer, Jendayi E.—843, 850  
Freeman, Ed W.—192, 193  
Freeman, Krystal—476  
Freeman, Vanessa—476  
Freemyer, Dennis—842  
Frenzel, William E.—849  
Friedrich, Dabney L.—867  
Frizzell, Gregory K.—867  
Fuentes Alcocer, Manuel Jesus—303  
Furlan, Luiz Fernando—278  
Gabrielli de Azevedo, Jose Sergio—262  
Gagnier, Geoffrey—193  
Gaines, Gay Hart—159  
Gale, Franklin G.—851  
Gambar, Abboud—129, 352, 382, 391, 405  
Garbarino, Michael—582  
Garcia Perez, Alan—466, 842, 848  
Gardenhire, R. Todd—864  
Gardner, Debbie—863  
Garner, Debbie—214  
Garner, James E., Sr.—214  
Garvelink, William J.—859, 882  
Garvey, Janet E.—847, 877  
Gates, Becky—596  
Gates, Robert M.—11, 21, 56, 67, 68, 108, 142, 153, 162, 191, 227, 238, 285, 324, 325, 341, 344, 360, 361, 379, 391, 402, 417, 439, 440, 504, 527, 554–556, 559, 573, 596, 597, 602, 615, 659, 670, 674, 692, 719, 732, 814, 825, 838, 848, 855  
Geary, David C.—840, 873  
Geiderman, Joel M.—846  
Geldof, Robert—860  
Gelencher, Martha—63, 64  
Gemayel, Amine—840  
Gerberding, Julie L.—856  
Geren, Preston M. “Pete,” III—573, 596, 858, 881  
Gerson, Michael J.—846  
Giambastiani, Cathy—816  
Giambastiani, Cindy—816  
Giambastiani, Edmund P., Jr.—376, 815, 816  
Giambastiani, Pete—816  
Giammatteo, Marc A.—321, 322, 844  
Gibbons, James A.—194  
Gibson, Charles—850  
Gibson, Trent—21  
Gillespie, Edward W.—740  
Gilmore, George—643  
Ginn, Martha “Marty”—171–173  
Ginn, Ted, Jr.—327  
Giordano, Nicholas—849  
Gitelman, Zvi—846  
Glassman, James K.—852, 878  
Golczynski, Christian—629  
Gonsalves, Marc—255, 288  
Gonzales, Alberto R.—31, 210, 277, 310, 312, 334–336, 343, 368, 465, 471, 538, 604, 619, 730, 731, 742, 846, 850, 851  
Gonzales, Carmela Vargas—853  
Gonzales, Rebecca Turner—836  
Gonzalez, Emilio T.—534, 538  
Gonzalez, Gloria—538  
Goodwin, Doris Kearns—122, 124, 840  
Gorbachev, Mikhail S.—795  
Graham, Lindsey O.—237, 518, 850  
Graham, Ruth Bell—756  
Graham, William F.—756  
Granger, Kay—317  
Grant, Jim “Mudcat”—126  
Gratas, Enrique—256  
Graves, Samuel—330  
Gray, C. Boyden—869  
Gray, Gregory—497  
Gray, Nellie J.—41  
Green, Mark—860, 882  
Green, Shirley M.—836  
Green-Jefferson, Andrea—208  
Greenway, Douglas—23  
Greenway, JoAnn—23  
Greenwood, Lee—582  
Gregg, Judd A.—219, 479  
Gribbin, David J., IV—836, 872  
Griffin, Michael—577  
Grim, Charles W.—857, 881  
Growcock, Terry D.—852  
Gruevski, Nikola—726  
Gupta, Rajat—640  
Gustavus, Adolphus Puryear, IV—883  
Gutierrez, Carlos M.—230, 313, 538, 585, 597, 632, 633, 635, 648, 676, 678, 748, 749, 752, 806, 836  
Gutierrez, Edilia—538  
Gutierrez, Philip S.—867  
Hackman, John R.—872  
Hadley, Stephen J.—67, 532, 539, 541, 584, 842, 865  
Hagee, Michael W.—243  
Hagy, David W.—860, 882  
Hall, Adele C.—836  
Hall, Blake G.—843

- Hall, Floyd—869  
 Hall, James R.—876  
 Halpern, Cheryl Feldman—862  
 Hamilton, Lee H.—16, 439, 454, 528, 615, 618, 620  
 Hampton, Brian C.—377  
 Hampton, William—22  
 Hanser, Frederick O.—34  
 Hanushek, Eric A.—840, 873  
 Hardiman, Thomas M.—867  
 Hardin, Jeff—23  
 Hariri, Saad—860  
 Harman, Jane F.—201  
 Harper, Stephen—862  
 Harris, C. Martin—321, 322, 844  
 Harris, Ondray T.—857, 881  
 Harris, Paul C., Sr.—864  
 Harrison, Marvin—469  
 Harvey, Francis J.—192, 238  
 Harvey, Thomas E.—869  
 Hashimi, Tariq al—859, 863  
 Hassan, Samir—689  
 Hastert, J. Dennis—356  
 Hastings, Alcee L.—202  
 Hastings, G. Richard—57, 58, 60  
 Hatch, Orrin G.—237  
 Havel, Vaclav—658, 685, 686, 690, 828  
 Hayden, Michael V.—162  
 Hayes, Stephen F.—840  
 Heartwell, George—446  
 Height, Dorothy I.—125, 795  
 Henderson, Jim—61, 62, 63  
 Henry, Stephen E.—856  
 Herring, James H.—842  
 Herschkowitz, Janis—840, 873  
 Hertling, Richard A.—836  
 Hester, Devin—469  
 Hewson, Paul D. “Bono”—860  
 Heyman, William H.—836, 873, 875, 876  
 Hickam, Homer—464  
 Hickey, Shannon—91  
 Hicks, David—192  
 Higginbotham, Joan E.—126  
 Hill, Baron P.—214, 215, 218, 469  
 Hill, Christopher R.—129  
 Hill, Richard A.—869  
 Hillman, Gracia M.—862, 882  
 Hillman, Reed V.—884  
 Hinken, Chuck—851  
 Hirschberg, D. Jeffrey—869  
 Hoagland, Richard E.—869  
 Hoang, Francis Q.—861  
 Hoekstra, Peter—446  
 Hoffman, Darleane Christian—864  
 Hogan, Amy—627  
 Hogarth, William—852  
 Hohman, David E.—856  
 Holen, Arlene—870  
 Holladay, Winton S.—854  
 Holland, Steve—857  
 Holliday, Charles O. “Chad”—50, 51  
 Hollin, Harris N.—853  
 Hollopeter, Cameron—49, 125  
 Holloway, A.J.—206  
 Holsinger, James W., Jr.—625, 858, 881  
 Holton, Anne—577  
 Homsí, Mamoun—687  
 Honaker, Richard H.—876  
 Hopkins, Charles L., III—850, 877  
 Hoskins, Susan—838  
 Houhoulis, Adam—839  
 Houts, Ashley—582  
 Houts, Keith—582  
 Howard, Marcia Morales—867  
 Howard, Robert G., Jr.—872  
 Howard, Robert L.—21  
 Howe, Marylyn A.—840, 873  
 Howell, Beryl A.—867  
 Howell, William J.—577  
 Howes, Thomas—255, 288  
 Hoyer, Steny H.—90, 96, 100, 581  
 Hu Jintao—615, 616, 861  
 Hubbard, Allan B.—469  
 Hubbard, Kathryn—836  
 Hughes, Karen P.—481  
 Hughes, Miriam K.—848, 877  
 Hume, Cameron R.—854, 879  
 Hunter, Caroline C.—870  
 Hunter, Duncan L.—21  
 Hurlbut, William B.—775, 777  
 Huso, Ravic Rolf—855, 880  
 Hussein, Saddam—7  
 Hutcheson, Ron—859  
 Hutchison, Kathryn A. “Kay” Bailey—69  
 Hutter, Paul J.—865, 884  
 Ihsanoglu, Ekmeleddin—809  
 Ilves, Toomas—685, 799, 854, 864  
 Impagliazzo, Marco—713  
 Ingram, George—648  
 Ingram, Lonnie O.—186  
 Inslee, Jay R.—486  
 Irsay, Carlie—468  
 Irsay, Casey—468  
 Irsay, James—468, 470, 839  
 Irsay, Kalen—468  
 Irsay, Meg Coyle—468  
 Isakowitz, Steven J.—840, 873

- Isakson, Johnny—776  
Ivey, Kay—787  
Ivins, Mary Tyler “Molly”—89  
Ivy, Ciera—760  
Jackson, Alphonso R.—33, 468, 469, 485, 795, 843  
Jackson, Bruce P.—844, 875, 882  
Jackson, David—838  
Jackson, Marcia—795  
Jacobs, Jack H.—192  
Jacobs, Janice L.—848  
Jaeger, Erin M.—801  
Jaffe, Ira F.—850  
James, David W.—863, 883  
James, Kathleen A.—854  
Janney, Dorian Wood—217, 803  
Jarvey, John A.—867  
Jarvis, Robin—208  
Jasien, William S.—855, 880  
Jefferson, William J.—207, 208  
Jeffery, Reuben, III—850, 878  
Jenkins, Ferguson A.—126  
Jennings, Danny—170, 171, 173, 187  
Jensen, Dallin W.—856  
Jewell, Linda—836  
Jimenez, Alex—615  
Jockey, Walt—34  
Johanns, Michael O.—188, 348, 579, 837, 860  
John, Eric G.—857, 881  
Johnson, Herbert F.—852  
Johnson, Jimmie—839  
Johnson, Paul—376, 377  
Johnson, Robert L.—795  
Johnson, Stephen L.—579, 648  
Johnson, Timothy P.—42  
Johnson Sirleaf, Ellen—144, 840  
Jonas, Joseph A.—812  
Jonas, P. Kevin, II—812  
Jonas, Nicholas J.—812  
Jones, Dan—64, 65, 66  
Jones, Diane Auer—857, 881  
Jones, Morris—837  
Jones, R.G.—781  
Jones, Richard A.—876  
Jonker, Robert J.—876  
Jordan, Kenneth—582  
Juarez, Raymundo—845  
Kaczynska, Ewa—709  
Kaczynska, Maria—709, 861  
Kaczynski, Lech—707, 850, 852, 861  
Kadeer, Rebiya—687  
Kaheaku-Enhada, Kaipo-Noa Hiwahiwa Akahi—377  
Kahn, Adeel—561  
Kaine, Kathy—577  
Kaine, Timothy M.—419, 577  
Kaiser, Michael M.—862  
Kakouris, Andreas S.—342  
Kakouris, Kareen Farrell—342  
Kaniewski, Daniel J.—847  
Kapala, Frederick J.—867  
Karloutsos, Alex—342  
Karmanos, Jason—92  
Karmanos, Peter, Jr.—92  
Karpowitz, James F.—856  
Karzai, Hamid—123, 149–154, 403, 510, 851  
Kasparov, Garry—693  
Katehi, Linda P.B.—864  
Kato, Ryo—482  
Kazulin, Alyaksandr—687  
Keefe, Thomas—49  
Keisler, Peter D.—867  
Keith, James R.—852, 878  
Kellar, Robert—193  
Keller, Scott A.—870  
Kelliher, Joseph T.—844, 875  
Kelliher-Combs, Sonya—840, 873  
Kelly, James B.—60, 61  
Kelly, James D.—853  
Kempthorne, Dirk—115–118, 188, 577, 853  
Kennedy, Edward M.—14, 219, 297, 314, 479, 518, 730, 757, 854  
Kennedy, J. Christian—859, 882  
Kennedy, Mark R.—849  
Kenny, Deborah—473, 474, 477  
Ketchum, Ben—413  
Kethledge, Raymond M.—876  
Kever, Jerome F.—858, 881  
Keys, Alicia—795  
Khalilzad, Zalmay—325, 421, 836, 873  
Khan, Abdul Qadeer—609  
Khan, Shahbaz—679  
Khazali, Qais—353, 514, 521  
Khouj, Abdullah—808  
Kicklighter, Claude M.—842, 874  
Kiir Mayardit, Salva—424  
Kildee, Dale E.—801, 802, 804  
Kilgore, Tom—781  
Kilroy, Pat—803  
Kim Hyun-chong—833  
Kim Jong Il—143, 491, 492, 525, 745  
Kinder, Peter D.—33  
King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud—435, 458, 460, 695, 837, 846  
King Abdullah II—460, 842, 844  
King, Peter T.—82, 146, 474  
King, Riley B. “B.B.”—795

- Kingery, Brenda L.—840, 874  
 Kirsanow, Peter N.—870  
 Kitka, Julie E.—840, 874  
 Kitt, Eartha—795  
 Klane, Larry A.—856, 880  
 Klaus, Vaclav—658, 681, 851, 860  
 Klausova, Livia—860  
 Klein, Andrew M.—858  
 Klein, Dale E.—781, 783  
 Klein, Joel I.—474, 477, 479  
 Klein, Ron—202  
 Klemm, Hans G.—846, 876  
 Kline, John—21  
 Klobuchar, Amy—850  
 Klug, Scott—849  
 Koch, Edward I.—82  
 Koizumi, Junichiro—432, 453, 525, 645, 667, 744, 790, 826  
 Kolevar, Kevin M.—870  
 Kono, Yohei—494  
 Korver, Robert B.—854  
 Krol, George A.—847, 883  
 Kroszner, Randall S.—856, 880  
 Kuhl, John R. “Randy,” Jr.—21  
 Kunder, James R.—870  
 Kundera, Milan—736  
 Kussman, Michael J.—849, 877  
 Kyl, Jon L.—397, 518  
  
 Lagon, Mark P.—840, 876  
 LaHood, Raymond H.—75, 76  
 Laird, Paul M.—854  
 Lambert, Al—861  
 Lamping, Mark—34  
 Lance, Leonard—643  
 Land, Richard—739  
 Land, Terri L.—446  
 Landrieu, Mitchell J.—207–209  
 Landry, Donald W.—775, 777  
 Langford, Michele—573  
 Lantos, Tom—735  
 Laplante, Joseph N., Jr.—883  
 Lara, Francisco—534  
 Larsen, Richard R.—486  
 Larson, John B.—96  
 La Russa, Tony—33  
 LaSorda, Thomas W.—345, 346  
 Lathan, Jamie—842  
 Latimer, Matt—847  
 Lavery, R. Lyle—847, 877  
 Laviolette, Peter—92, 94  
 Lavrov, Sergey V.—839  
 Leahy, Patrick R.—854  
 Leahy, Patrick J.—581  
  
 Leak, Chris—327  
 Leal-Cardenas, Eduardo—227  
 Leavitt, Michael O.—35–37, 38, 40, 44, 57–59, 60, 62, 64, 91, 142, 158, 165, 169, 174, 175, 188, 190, 197, 230, 233, 444, 464, 467, 481, 540, 641, 648, 742, 775, 777, 810, 812, 836, 856  
 Lee Hsien Loong—536, 852  
 Leffall, LaSalle D., Jr.—863  
 Lehrer, Jim—837  
 Lemonick, Charles “Chick”—851  
 Lenhard, Robert D.—870  
 Leo, Leonard A.—411, 856  
 Leonard, Mary Beth—860  
 Levin, Carl—358  
 Levine, William S.—846  
 Levinson, Robert—678  
 Lewis, Charles J. “Jerry”—388  
 Lewis, Edward—474  
 Liang, Ping—445  
 Libby, I. Lewis “Scooter”—256, 260, 697, 844, 860  
 Libi, Abu Faraj al—611  
 Lieberman, Joseph I.—20, 517, 527, 801  
 Liles, Kevin—795  
 Lilja, Ryan M.—470  
 Lioi, Sara E.—867  
 Little, Keenan O.—377  
 Littlefield, Ron—166  
 Littleton, Ulay W., Jr.—396  
 Littrell, Gary L.—21  
 Livingston, Debra A.—868  
 Lizarraga, David C.—230  
 Locke, Hannah—848  
 Lofthus, Lee J.—851  
 Long, Stephen P.—186  
 Lopez, Frank—230  
 Lopez, Juan Carlos—258  
 Lopez Ruiz, Victor—233, 305, 306  
 Lott, C. Trent—206  
 Lovejoy, Carol—23  
 Lovejoy, Keith R.—23  
 Lovett, George—426  
 Lowe, Caitlin F.—813  
 Lowery, Clay—841  
 Lugar, Richard G.—230  
 Lula da Silva, Luiz Inacio—244, 245, 251, 260, 262–264, 278, 350, 364, 372, 481, 506, 580, 843, 844, 848, 855  
 Lundsager, Margrethe—870  
 Lute, Douglas—584  
 Luxton, Jane C.—870, 879  
 Maass, Stacie—847

- Machen, Chris—326  
Machen, J. Bernard—326, 327  
Mahoney, Tim—202  
Majoras, Deborah P.—471  
Maliki, Nuri al- —6, 8, 17, 25, 26, 30, 98, 129–131, 138, 147, 157, 272, 325, 352, 382, 385, 391, 405, 406, 418, 429–431, 450, 451, 454, 458, 459, 509, 523, 626, 741, 789, 799, 820, 821, 835, 841, 846, 850, 855, 857, 859, 863, 864  
Mallias, Alexandros P.—342  
Mallias, Francoise A.—342  
Maloney, Carolyn Bosher—82, 342  
Maloney, Paul L.—876  
Mamo, Jean Staton—839  
Mancuso, Mario—837, 872  
Mandelson, Peter—501  
Manka, Richard A.—864  
Manning, Catherine—546  
Manning, David—546  
Manning, Peyton W.—469, 839  
Mansfield, Gordon H.—376  
Mansur, Bernadette—93  
Mares, Marc A.—625, 638, 677, 807  
Mari, Ali Salih al- —608  
Marm, Walter J. “Joe,” Jr.—192  
Marquardt, R. Niels—847, 877  
Marr, Paul R.—330  
Marron, Donald B.—864, 884  
Marshall, Jim—192  
Martella, Roger R., Jr.—870  
Martin, Eddie L., Jr.—377  
Martinez, Kathleen—844, 875  
Martinez, Kathryn “Kitty”—743  
Martinez, Melquiades R.—39, 202, 497, 518, 563, 632, 633, 635, 743, 752, 757, 758  
Mashhadani, Mahmud al- —434, 450  
Mason, David M.—870  
Massie, Steve L.—517, 528  
Mathes, Patricia—870  
Mathieu, Gail D.—862, 883  
Mauskopf, Roslynn R.—868  
Mavriqi, Ismet—726  
Maxwell, Shannon—574  
Maxwell, Tim—574  
Mayfield, Irwin—795  
McCain, John—21, 850  
McCallum, Robert D., Jr.—853  
McCarthy, Peter B.—849, 877  
McCarthy, Thomas—22  
McCaul, Michael T.—146  
McConnell, Addison M. “Mitch”—11, 219, 433, 742  
McConnell, J. Michael—9, 120, 162, 835, 873  
McConnell, Terry—162  
McCormick, David H.—859, 882  
McCotter, Thaddeus G.—69, 317  
McDermott, Jeanine—572  
McDonald, Ray—327  
McDonnell, Robert F.—577  
McElveen-Hunter, Bonnie—862  
McGee, James D.—837  
McGuinness, Martin E.—839  
McIntosh, Brent—846  
McKenna, Andrew J., Jr.—870  
McKeon, Howard P. “Buck”—14, 388, 801, 802, 804  
McKinley, Peter M.—850, 877  
McKinnon, Mark—870  
McMullen, Ronald K.—863, 883  
McNamara, Kaitlyne—775, 776  
McNeill, Dan K.—838  
Medefind, Jedd—857  
Meek, Kendrick B.—202  
Mehlman, Kenneth B.—860  
Menarchik, Douglas—835, 836, 872  
Menis, Michael A.—858  
Mercer, William W.—870, 883  
Merkel, Angela—4, 501, 658–661, 664, 667, 669–671, 692, 694, 700, 756, 835, 853, 860  
Meron, Daniel—870  
Meyer, Dan—846  
Meyer, David R.—747, 749  
Meyer, Shelley—326  
Meyer, Urban—326–328  
Meyers, Mary Jo—573  
Meyers, Richard B.—573  
Mica, John L.—327  
Michalak, Michael W.—858, 881  
Middaugh, Daniel—853  
Miers, Harriet E.—15, 356, 838  
Mikulski, Barbara A.—444  
Miles, Christopher—497  
Millard, Charles E.F.—854, 858, 879  
Millender-McDonald, Juanita—464  
Miller, George—14, 219, 479  
Miller, Jefferson B.—202, 327  
Miller, Kelly D.—22  
Miller, Kristine M.—840, 874  
Miller, Michael W.—856  
Miller, Warren L.—858  
Mims Simpson, Rhonda—486  
Mineta, Norman Y.—560  
Minkel, Justin—486  
Minner, Ruth Ann—51  
Minor, Erica—813  
Mitchell, Harry E.—397  
Mitnick, Barbara Jacobs—836

Mohammed, Khalid Sheikh—608, 621  
 Moisiu, Alfred—723, 852, 862  
 Moore, Dennis—486  
 Moore, Lonnie C.—840, 874  
 Moore, Roderick W.—859, 882  
 Moore, Stephen—486  
 Moose, George E.—844, 875  
 Morales, Hector E.—870  
 Moreno de Uribe, Lina Maria—516, 845  
 Morin, Paul A.—237, 408  
 Morrison, James W.—849  
 Morse, H. Gary—846  
 Mosbacher, Robert, Jr.—648, 651  
 Motaki, Manuchehr—505  
 Mourning, Alonzo—203  
 Mowatt, Taryne L.—813  
 Moyer, Ellen O.—376  
 Mroz, Richard S.—859  
 Mubarak, Mohamed Hosni—460, 846, 855  
 Mucci, Dan, Jr.—90  
 Mucci, Kathy—90  
 Mueller, Robert S., III—162, 277  
 Mufriji, Abd al-Qadir al- —821  
 Mulally, Alan—329, 330, 345, 346  
 Mullen, Deborah—573, 814  
 Mullen, John—814  
 Mullen, Michael—814  
 Mullen, Michael G.—376, 573, 814, 824  
 Mullen, Nicole C.—90  
 Mullin, Rob, Jr.—846  
 Munter, Cameron P.—848, 877  
 Murdock, Steven H.—863, 883  
 Murkowski, Lisa—850  
 Murphy, Patrick—192  
 Murphy, Stephen J., III—876  
 Musa, Said—90  
 Musgrave, Marilyn N.—347  
 Musharraf, Pervez—153, 154, 694, 695  
 Musial, Stanley F.—34  
 Mutombo, Dikembe—49  
 Myers, Douglas G.—844, 875  
 Myers, Julie L.—870  
 Myers, Mateo—474  
 Myrick, Sue—444  
 Nadeau, Christopher—353  
 Nagin, C. Ray—207–210  
 Nagy, Thomas—175, 178, 179  
 Napolitano, Giorgio—852, 861  
 Napolitano, Grace Flores—757  
 Napolitano, Janet A.—188, 397  
 Nasher, Ray—328  
 Nason, David G.—840, 843, 874, 875  
 Natsios, Andrew S.—421

N'Dour, Youssou—860  
 Neff, Janet T.—876  
 Negroponte, Diana—200, 201  
 Negroponte, John D.—9, 163, 200, 424, 641, 835, 850, 873  
 Nelson, Clarence W. “Bill”—327  
 Nelson, Earl B. “Ben”—71, 596  
 Nelson, Lawrence K.—397, 399  
 Nesbitt, Wanda L.—860, 882  
 Neville, Aaron—795  
 Newman, Andrea Fisher—837  
 Nguyen Van Ly—687  
 Nicholson, R. James—191, 237, 238, 361, 411, 480, 573, 851  
 Nicholson, Suzanne M.—411, 573  
 Niederhuber, John E.—35–38  
 Nigh, Patrick—582  
 Nkadori, Evelyn—652  
 Nolan, Robert B.—849, 877  
 Norland, Richard B.—851, 878  
 Norris, Mike—126  
 Norwood, Charles W., Jr.—42, 128  
 Norwood, Gloria—129, 317  
 Nour, Ayman—687  
 Nowicki, Douglas R.—568  
 Nunes, Devin—317  
 Nungesser, Billy—207, 208  
 Nussle, James A.—772, 863, 883  
 Nussle, Lori—772  
 Nussle, Mark—772  
 Obama, Barack H.—71, 356  
 Obey, David R.—3  
 O'Connor, Sandra Day—576, 577, 579  
 Odierno, Raymond T.—129, 817, 832  
 O'Gara, James F.X.—870  
 O'Grady, Brian—781  
 O'Grady, Liam—868  
 O'Halloran, Casey P.—853  
 Olmert, Ehud—766, 771, 859, 863  
 Olsen, Josephine K.—860  
 Omvig, James H.—854  
 O'Neal, Shaquille—203  
 O'Neill, Lawrence J.—868  
 Ongole, John R.—653  
 Orin-Eilbeck, Deborah—73  
 Orozco, Natalia—253  
 Ortega Saavedra, Jose Daniel—836  
 Osborn, John E.—855, 880  
 Osteen, William L., Jr.—868  
 Ostendorff, William C.—842, 874  
 O'Sullivan, Meghan L.—656  
 Otte, Patrick T.—103  
 Otter, C.L. “Butch”—194



- Owens, James W.—76, 852  
Owens, Kem—796  
Owens, Kimberly A.—842  
Oxford, Vayl—840  
Ozerden, Halil Suleyman—868  
Pace, Lynne—573, 815  
Pace, Peter—21, 67, 189, 192, 285, 376, 379, 391, 394, 407, 465, 554, 573, 596, 628, 719, 731, 815, 816, 855  
Pace, Peter, Jr.—815  
Pace, Tiffany M.—815  
Pacheco, Michael—180–182  
Padron, Eduardo J.—497, 499  
Page, Frank S.—738  
Pagels, George A.—57  
Palin, Sarah—194  
Palmer, Cory L.—526  
Palmer, David—870  
Palmer, James—854, 879  
Palmer, John L.—870, 871  
Pape, Jean W.—642, 652  
Paredes Cordova, Jorge Mario—679  
Parker, Dewey—125  
Parker, Maurice S.—853, 879  
Parker, Robert—498  
Parks, Megan—228  
Paroubek, Jiri—860  
Parvanov, Georgi—675, 727, 733, 852, 862  
Parvanova, Zorka Petrova—733, 734  
Pasco, James O., Jr.—581  
Pasian, Karina—795  
Pasichow, Heidi M.—868  
Patchen, Jeffrey—844, 875  
Patrick, Connie L.—632  
Patricof, Alan J.—851, 880  
Patriota, Antonio de Aguiar—844  
Patron Laviada, Patricio Jose—303  
Patterson, Anne Woods—857, 881  
Patterson, Lotsee—844, 875  
Patterson, Robert M.—192  
Paulison, R. David—119  
Paulson, Henry M., Jr.—81, 83, 235, 485, 616, 639, 764  
Pawlenty, Timothy J.—188  
Payne, Donald M.—481  
Pelley, Scott—837  
Pelosi, Alexandra—96  
Pelosi, Nancy—11, 42, 90, 96, 98–100, 356, 358, 433, 532, 581, 590, 626, 773, 846  
Pence, Mike—237, 469  
Pence, Stephen B.—220  
Perdue, Mary—194  
Perdue, Sonny—194, 212, 843  
Perez Cueva, Daniel—466  
Perlman, Itzhak—855  
Perry, Anita—195  
Perry, June Carter—853, 879  
Perry, Rick—195  
Peters, Mary E.—579  
Petersen, Friis Arne—176  
Peterson, Andrea—486, 487  
Peterson, Faith—487  
Peterson, Joel—486, 487  
Petraeus, David H.—11, 57, 67, 70, 101, 129–131, 138, 140, 147, 148, 157, 195, 222, 240, 241, 318, 323–325, 326, 341, 352, 353, 382, 384, 390, 405, 406, 415, 446, 449, 451, 454, 465, 466, 472, 508, 511, 513, 514, 519–521, 524, 527, 528, 541, 554–559, 564, 584, 615, 619, 620, 645, 656, 744, 754, 789, 799, 817, 819, 820, 824, 825, 832, 851, 853  
Petrov, Vassilev—673  
Petz, Alan—843  
Pfeifle, Mark D.—835  
Pfund, Randy—202  
Phillips, Stanley D.—871  
Phillips, Steven—860  
Picard, Gaylen David—208  
Piltz, Eberhard—669  
Pimenta, Flavio—273, 844  
Pinkert, Dean A.—871  
Pirinski, Georgi Georgiev—733  
Pittman, Bobby, Jr.—848, 850  
Pittman, Howard D.—854  
Pitts, Shirley—125  
Platt, Jonathan—795  
Platts, Todd R.—748  
Poleo, J. Anthony—841  
Polian, Bill—468, 469  
Pope Benedict XVI—412, 569, 658, 661, 717, 852, 861  
Pope, Carol Waller—844, 849, 875, 880  
Port, Linda—573  
Porter, Stephen W.—846, 876  
Portman, Jane—772, 773  
Portman, Robert J.—33, 69, 96, 100, 189, 532, 541, 772, 773, 839  
Powe, Mary—787  
Powell, Alvy R.—533  
Powell, Colin L.—358  
Powell, Donald E.—206, 208  
Powell, Nancy J.—852, 878  
Powell, William J.—882  
Powers, Richard F., III—854  
Preval, Rene Garcia—545, 780, 854  
Price, Daniel M.—859  
Prince Philip—542, 544, 546, 547, 855

- Prodi, Romano—659, 714, 852, 861  
 Propes, Barbara—445  
 Prudhomme, Paul—773  
 Pullman, Rodrick “Rocky”—206  
 Purpura, Michael—861  
 Putin, Vladimir V.—132, 133, 504, 602, 615,  
   658–660, 670, 672, 674, 683, 692, 693, 696–  
   698, 705, 709, 710, 718, 724, 732, 737, 851,  
   855, 859  
 Putnam, Adam—69, 317, 327  
 Qadhafi, Muammar Abu Minyar al—609  
 Queen Elizabeth II—542, 544, 546, 855  
 Queen Rania—842, 844  
 Queen, John M., III—347  
 Rabium, Ramzi al—621  
 Rabkin, Jeremy A.—844, 875  
 Radosh, Ronald—850  
 Radzely, Howard—838, 855, 880  
 Rafiekian, Bijan R.—841, 874  
 Rahn, Darlene—486  
 Rahn, Victor—486  
 Rainer, Rick—228  
 Rainey, John S.—843  
 Ramos, Jose R.—321, 322, 844  
 Rampolla, Denise—574  
 Ramsey, Claude—166  
 Ramsey, Ron—165  
 Range, James D.—856  
 Rangel, Charles B.—124, 125, 358, 379, 473,  
   474, 479  
 Rascon, Alfred—21, 192  
 Rataczak, David P.—397  
 Ravalomanana, Marc—837  
 Recasner, Anthony—207, 210–212  
 Reddick, Eunice S.—863, 883  
 Reed, Suellen K.—214  
 Rees, Jim—159  
 Rehmert, Bob—851  
 Reid, Harry—11, 386, 433, 532, 590, 598, 626,  
   712  
 Reid, Katharine L.—854  
 Reidinger, Martin K.—868  
 Reilly, Thomas J.—853  
 Reinfeldt, Fredrik—580, 851  
 Rell, M. Jodi—817  
 Rempt, Rodney P.—376  
 Reynolds, Mercer—34  
 Reynolds, Thomas M.—82  
 Rhatigan, Steve C.—853  
 Rhodes, Dominic D.—469  
 Rice, Condoleezza—4, 9, 10, 18, 19, 30, 124,  
   129, 144, 200–202, 235, 241, 267, 288, 289,  
   312, 325, 339–341, 421, 424, 436, 450, 457,  
   459, 469, 505, 512, 524, 545, 555, 587, 615,  
   630, 672, 680, 687, 724, 739, 838, 840  
 Rieman, Tommy—50  
 Riisgaard, Steen—175, 176  
 Riley, Bob—212, 226, 843  
 Riley, Pat—202, 203  
 Rizzo, John A.—871  
 Roberts, Andrew—843  
 Roberts, Carolyn K.—327  
 Roberts, Charles P. “Pat”—542, 759, 862  
 Roberts, Gordon R.—192  
 Roberts, John G., Jr.—225, 411, 579, 738  
 Robinson, Alex—862  
 Robinson, Brian—21  
 Robinson, Edward G.—393  
 Robyn, Williams—220  
 Rochon, Stephen W.—842  
 Rodriguez, Henry—207, 208  
 Rodriguez, Rosemary E.—871  
 Rodriguez-Velez, Rosa E.—872  
 Rogan, James E.—868  
 Rohrabacher, Dana—735  
 Romano, Neil—853  
 Roncska, Robert A.—561  
 Rood, John C.—839, 877  
 Rordam, Mary—532  
 Rordam, Ron—532  
 Rose, Charlie—851  
 Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana—202, 497  
 Rossi, James M.—377  
 Rotter, Harriet—858  
 Rowe, Julia—94  
 Rubaie, Mowaffak al—508  
 Rudin, William C.—82  
 Ruffins, Kermit—773, 774  
 Ruiz Esparaza, Marcela—306  
 Ruse, Terry—183, 184, 185  
 Russell, Gail—220  
 Russell, Richard M.—835  
 Rutherford, Jim—92  
 Ruttkofsky, Beverly—237  
 Ruttkofsky, Earl—237  
 Ryan, T. Timothy—843  
 Saca Gonzalez, Elias Antonio—199, 842  
 Sakel, Don—214  
 Salazar, Kenneth L.—518  
 Salih, Ali Abdallah—531, 852, 854  
 Salim, Salim Ahmed—424  
 Sambì, Pietro—411  
 Sammartino, Janis L.—876

- Sammon, Bill—864  
 Samora, Joseph E., Jr.—859  
 Sampson, David A.—560  
 Sanader, Ivo—726  
 Sanchez, Alejandro M.—853, 879  
 Sandberg, Annette M.—850  
 Sanderson, Janet A.—545  
 Sanford, Mark—189, 817  
 Sanger, Stephen W.—849  
 Sansom, William B.—780, 781  
 Sarabi, Habiba—149  
 Sarbanes, John—342  
 Sarkozy, Nicolas—558, 700, 724, 855, 861  
 Sarukhan Casamitjana, Arturo—538  
 Sauer, Joachim—860  
 Sauerbrey, Ellen R.—871  
 Saul, Andrew—853, 879  
 Saving, Thomas R.—871  
 Saxton, Hugh J. “Jim”—237  
 Sayfie, Justin J.—859  
 Schirra, Walter M., Jr.—535  
 Schminke, Angela—856  
 Schoomaker, Peter J.—11, 192, 360, 380, 391, 394, 407, 414  
 Schrader, Dennis R.—849, 878  
 Schrepferman, Rachel—220  
 Schroeder, Gerhard—671  
 Schroeder, Thomas D.—868  
 Schwab, Susan C.—278, 370, 501, 580, 833  
 Schwartz, Michael—857, 881  
 Schwarzenberg, Karel—685  
 Schwarzenegger, Arnold A.—194  
 Schweich, Thomas A.—847  
 Scribante, A.J.—846  
 Scudder, Michael Y., Jr.—839  
 Scully, Steven—841  
 Sebelius, Kathleen—542, 554  
 Secchia, Peter F.—445  
 Seche, Stephen A.—852, 878  
 Sell, Clay—579  
 Semonite, Todd T.—852  
 Sequeira, Leon R.—871  
 Sessions, Abbie—787  
 Sessions, Jefferson B., III—781, 785, 786  
 Sessions, Mary—787  
 Settle, Benjamin H.—868  
 Shadegg, John B.—397  
 Shaheen, Gerald L.—76  
 Shakeri, Ali—678  
 Shalala, Donna E.—238, 253, 261, 321, 361, 440  
 Shannon, Thomas A., Jr.—230, 836  
 Sharansky, Natan Anatoly—685, 686  
 Sharma, Ratna—181, 182  
 Shays, Christopher H.—606  
 Shelton, Mark S.—855, 880  
 Shen, Patrick P.—837, 872  
 Shimari, Haytham Kazim Abdallah Al- —353, 406, 521  
 Shirley, Kara—571, 572  
 Shubel, Sara M.—445  
 Shuford, Cathy—817  
 Shuford, Jacob L.—817  
 Siegel, Michael—532  
 Siegel, Ned L.—855, 880  
 Silberstein, Stephen—108  
 Silver, Ron—871  
 Simpson, Michael K.—103  
 Singh, Manmohan—580, 855  
 Siniora, Fuad—4, 662, 715  
 Skellie, William J.—205  
 Smith, Andrea—174  
 Smith, Christopher H.—482  
 Smith, Jeanetta—88  
 Smith, Kevin—477  
 Smith, Lovie—124  
 Smith, Michele M.—812, 813  
 Smith, Norman R.—868, 872  
 Smith, Rachel—794  
 Smith, Will—166, 173, 174  
 Snelling, Charles D.—871  
 Snow, Tony—313, 347, 357, 847  
 Sobel, Clifford M.—844  
 Sodrel, Keta—214  
 Sodrel, Michael E.—214  
 Soloway, Stan Z.—854, 879  
 Some, Steven E.—858  
 Sommers, Jill E.—854, 879  
 Sondland, Gordon D.—859  
 Sosa, Enrique J.—871, 878  
 Soto, Esteban, III—879  
 Souder, Mark E.—469  
 Southwick, Leslie—868  
 Space, Zack—342  
 Sparger, Kathy—498  
 Speakman, Virgil M., Jr.—858, 881  
 Specter, Arlen—518  
 Spellings, Margaret—190, 217, 218, 230, 232, 413, 474, 475, 479, 485, 486, 742, 801, 803, 804  
 Spence, Terry R.—51  
 Spitzer, Eliot—479, 851  
 Spoehel, Ronald—856, 881  
 Spogli, Ronald P.—718  
 Spurgeon, Dennis R.—842  
 Stanishev, Sergei—733, 852, 862  
 Stankov, Stanko—734, 735  
 Stann, Brian M.—378  
 Stansell, Keith—255, 288

- Stark, Betsy—838  
 Stearns, Clifford B.—327  
 Stecher, Joe W.—879  
 Steer, John R.—868  
 Steger, Charles W.—419, 850  
 Steiger, William R.—835, 856, 872  
 Stern, Marc I.—836  
 Stevens, Theodore F.—21, 191, 859  
 Stickler, Richard—871  
 St. John, Bonnie—125, 126  
 Storm, Hannah—813, 864  
 Stoufer, Jim—330  
 Strassel, Kim—859  
 Sullivan, Louis W.—848  
 Sullivan, Michael J.—847, 877  
 Sullivan, Richard—874  
 Sununu, John E.—850  
 Sussan, Bob—401, 402  
 Sutton, William G., Jr.—854, 880  
 Svinicki, Kristine L.—853, 879  
 Swindoll, Charles R.—532  
 Swindoll, Cynthia—532  
 Tajbakhsh, Kian—678  
 Talabani, Jalal—655, 863  
 Tankersley, Michael W.—871  
 Tantoh, Baron Mosima Loyiso—642, 652, 653  
 Tantoh, Manyongo “Kunene” Mosima—642, 652, 653  
 Tapella, Robert C.—858, 882  
 Tardif, Timothy C.—243  
 Tate, Deborah T.—863, 883  
 Taurel, Sidney—852  
 Tawil, Samia E.—469  
 Taylor, Jeffrey A.—875  
 Taylor, M.E.—207, 208  
 Taylor, Pat—839  
 Tebow, Tim—327  
 Tenpas, Ronald J.—859, 882  
 Thacker, Brian M.—21, 192  
 Thackeray, Michael M.—186  
 Thapar, Amul R.—882  
 Thatcher, Margaret—686  
 Thomas, Craig L.—21, 347, 573, 691  
 Thomas, Harry K., Jr.—862  
 Thomas, Helen—356  
 Thomas, Jason—857  
 Thomas, Oliver M., Jr.—207–209  
 Thomas, Susan—691  
 Thompson, Alan S.—854  
 Thompson, Horace A.—863  
 Thompson, John, Jr.—49  
 Tiaht, Vicki—759  
 Tichenor, Warren W.—856  
 Timpone, Nick—474  
 Tinsley, Edward R., III—856  
 Tiong, Tamara—486  
 Tobias, Randall L.—230, 441, 468, 481  
 Todd, Kate—861  
 Topolanek, Mirek—658, 681, 851  
 Torrijos Espino, Martin—155, 839  
 Toure, Amadou Toumani—860  
 Towey, H. James—568, 569, 571  
 Towey, Mary—568  
 Townsend, Frances Fragos—342, 865  
 Trakatellis, Archbishop Demetrios—341–343  
 Treanor, Mark C.—849  
 Tredick, Peter W.—850  
 Triet, Nguyen Minh—793, 861, 864  
 Trilikis, Louis—75  
 Trilikis, Pano—75  
 Trivelli, Paul A.—836  
 Troxler, Steven—176  
 Troy, Tevi D.—854, 862, 879  
 Tschetter, Ronald A.—837, 843  
 Tucker, Michael S.—360  
 Tynan, Ronan—188, 842  
 Udall, Bradley—835, 872  
 Udin, Jamal “Rambo”—154  
 Uribe Velez, Alvaro—246, 250, 253–255, 281, 289, 516, 827, 845, 852, 854  
 Valdez, Mary Lou—856  
 Valenti, Alexandra—488  
 Valenti, Courtenay—488  
 Valenti, Jack J.—488  
 Valenti, John—488  
 Valenti, Mary M. Wiley—488  
 Van Bokkelen, Joseph S.—868  
 Vanderwagen, W. Craig—841, 874  
 Van Hanh, Nguyen—840, 874  
 Van Rest, Judy—860, 871  
 Van Susteren, Greta—845  
 Vazquez, Tabare—274, 845  
 Veneman, Ann M.—482  
 Veroneau, John K.—230  
 Veteto, Greg M.—377  
 Vickers, Michael G.—849, 877  
 Villamil, Jose A.—849  
 Villarreal, Massey—230  
 Vinatieri, Adam M.—470  
 Vinatieri, Allison—470  
 Vinatieri, Valerie—470  
 Vitter, David—207, 208, 210  
 von Spakovsky, Hans—871  
 Vos, Paul M.—96, 100  
 Vytas, Memenas—581  
 Wade, Abdoulaye—848

- Wade, Dwyane—202, 203  
Wade, Rebekah—856  
Wagoner, G. Richard, Jr.—345, 346  
Wahlquist, Brent T.—864, 884  
Wainscott, Cynthia Allen—840, 874  
Waldron, Douglas S.—103  
Waldron, Thomas P.—486  
Walesa, Lech—686  
Walker, Antoine—203  
Walsh, Dennis P.—871  
Walsh, John—49  
Walter, William G.—852  
Walters, Edward W., III—854  
Walters, Gary J.—427, 838  
Walther, Steven T.—871  
Wamp, Zachary P.—165, 171  
Ward, Cam—93  
Ward, Ken—330  
Ward, Ruby—93  
Ward, William E.—850  
Warner, John W.—517, 527, 573  
Watson, Chad M.—34  
Watson, Gina—34  
Wayne, Reginald—469  
Weaver, Maxwell G.—801  
Weems, Kerry N.—854, 879  
Wehrum, William L., Jr.—872, 878  
Weightman, George W.—227, 238  
Weitzel-O'Neill, Patricia—413  
Weizmann, Howard C.—835, 872  
Welch, Jenna—395, 444  
Welden, Louise—787  
Welden, W. Edgar—787  
Weller, Gerald C.—230  
Wenger, Kevin—179, 180  
Wergin, Esmerelda—66, 72  
Wesley, Glen—93  
West, Catherine G.—872  
West, Togo D., Jr.—159  
Westine, Lezlee J.—855, 880  
Westmoreland, Lynn A.—23  
Wetherington, William J. “Jim”—23  
Wexler, Robert—202  
Whitaker, Joseph C.—837  
Whitehouse, Sheldon—850  
Whiting, Gordon J.—853, 879  
Widmann de Berger, Wendy—291–294, 845  
Wiemer, Chuck—859  
Wiesel, Elie—421  
Wiesman, Dan—856  
Wilensky, Gail R.—321, 322, 844  
Wilhoit, Gene—486  
Williams, Brian—850  
Williams, David L.—220  
Williams, Dyana—795  
Williams, Ellen C.—872, 874  
Williams, Juan—838  
Williams, Robert T.—76  
Williamson, Irving A.—872  
Willis, Dontrelle W.—126  
Wilpon, Jeffrey S.—849  
Wilson, Addison G. “Joe”—237, 743  
Wilson, Brian—356  
Wilson, Roxanne—743  
Wilson, Tom—642  
Winter, Donald C.—21, 376, 606  
Winton, Michael—574  
Withers, John L., II—849, 877  
Wojdakowski, Candy—23  
Wojdakowski, Walter—23, 26  
Wolfowitz, Paul D.—482, 506, 591, 640  
Wonder, Stevie—795  
Wood, John—872  
Wood, Lisa Godbey—868  
Wood, William B.—289, 584, 837, 873  
Woodruff, Bob—356, 357  
Woodward, Cheryl—205  
Woodward, Ernie—205  
Wray, Chuck—426, 442  
Wright, Otis D., II—868  
Wu, George H.—868  
Wuerl, Donald W.—411, 568  
Wu Yi—616  
Yeltsin, Boris—471, 852  
Yepsen, Gary—832  
Yokota, Megumi—490, 493  
Yokota, Sakie—490, 493  
Young, Beverly Angello—21  
Young, C. William—21  
Young, John J., Jr.—863, 883  
Yowakim, Paules—642, 652  
Yu, Eun-Jae “Houston”—533  
Yuan, Caterina—801  
Yudhoyono, Susilo Bambang—846  
Zantzing, Amy Swartz—839  
Zapata, Jimmy—500  
Zarnegin, Robert—858  
Zavala Gomez del Campo, Margarita Esther—  
301–303, 309, 845  
Zawahiri, Ayman Al—390, 611, 622  
Zeidman, Fred S.—420, 846  
Zerhouni, Elias A.—35, 36  
Ziemer, James L.—849  
Ziemer, R. Timothy—481, 483, 837, 843, 848  
Zoellick, Robert B.—201, 639, 805

## Document Categories List

### *Addresses to the Nation*

- State of the Union—42
- Military operations in Iraq—16

### *Addresses and Remarks*

*See also* Addresses to the Nation; Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings and Vetoes; Interviews With the News Media; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials; Resignations and Retirements

- African American History Month celebration—124
- Albania, small-business owners, meeting in Fushe-Kruje—726
- Alternative fuel sources, discussion in Franklinton, NC—175
- American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research—146
- American Legion
  - Post 177 in Fairfax, VA—401
  - Washington, DC—237
- America's 400th anniversary celebration in Williamsburg, VA—576
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and presentation of President's Volunteer Service Awards—560
- Associated Builders and Contractors—747
- Associated General Contractors of America, remarks and a question-and-answer session—517
- Biloxi, MS, elected officials and community leaders, meeting—206
- Black Music Month, reception—794
- Boys & Girls Clubs of South Central Kansas—21st Street in Wichita, KS—760
- Bulgaria, American University in Bulgaria in Sofia—734
- Cabinet meetings—2, 100
- Cancer prevention advances, discussion in Bethesda, MD—35
- Childhood obesity, meeting—91
- Cinco de Mayo celebration—538
- Colombia, Afro-Colombian outreach program, discussion in Bogota—289
- Commander in Chief's Trophy, presentation to U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen—376

### *Addresses and Remarks—Continued*

#### Congress

- Congressional leaders, meetings—425, 532
- Congressional picnic—773
- House Democratic Caucus issues conference in Williamsburg, VA—96
- House Democratic Caucus, meeting in Williamsburg, VA—99
- House Republican Conference, meetings—68, 358, 778
- National Republican Congressional Committee dinner—317
- Republican Senate Policy Committee, meeting—737
- Congressional Gold Medal, Tuskegee Airmen, presentation—358
- Congressional Medal of Honor
  - Crandall, Bruce P., presentation—191
  - Dunham, Cpl. Jason, posthumous award—21
- Czech Republic, Democracy and Security Conference in Prague—685
- Defense Department
  - Joint Chiefs of Staff and combatant commanders, meeting—56
  - Military leaders, meetings—67, 465, 747
- Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte, swearing-in ceremony—200
- Director of National Intelligence J. Michael McConnell, swearing-in ceremony—162
- Easter—395
- Economy, national
  - East Peoria, IL—75
  - New York City—81
- Emergency supplemental appropriations
  - Congressional action—471
  - House of Representatives passage—340
- Employment Eligibility Verification System—585
- Energy
  - Athens, AL—780
  - Claycomo, MO—329
  - Wilmington, DE—50
- Enterprise, AL
  - Briefing on tornado damage—226
  - Enterprise High School—228



*Addresses and Remarks—Continued*

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, GA—632  
Financial literacy, meeting—485  
Ford, former President Gerald R., funeral services—1  
Ford's Theatre Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration dinner—122  
Fort Hood, TX, remarks to reporters—395  
Fuel economy and alternative fuel standards—579  
Greek Independence Day celebration—341  
Greensburg, KS  
    Tornado damage, remarks in Washington, DC—542  
    Tour of tornado damage—553  
Guatemala, tour of Labradores Mayas in Iximche—289  
Gulf coast grant recipients, visit in Long Beach, MS—205  
Harlem Village Academy Charter School in New York City—473  
Health care  
    Chattanooga, TN—165  
    Lee's Summit, MO—57  
    Washington, DC—164, 810  
Health savings accounts, meeting—375  
Homeland Security Department, briefing—119  
Immigration reform  
    Newport, RI—829  
    Washington, DC—534, 597, 676, 806  
    Yuma, AZ—396  
Iraq  
    Invasion, fourth anniversary—324  
    Provincial Reconstruction Teams, meeting with leaders—339  
    U.S. Ambassador-designate, meeting—156  
Islamic Center of Washington, rededication ceremony—808  
Italy, meeting with members of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome—713  
Joint Reserve Officer Training Corps commissioning ceremony—595  
Justice Department—334  
Large vehicle fleet operations, meeting with executives—346  
MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL—508  
Malaria Awareness Day—523  
March for Life, telephone remarks—41  
Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, volunteer event—31  
Medicare prescription drug benefits, meeting—467

*Addresses and Remarks—Continued*

Memorial Day ceremony in Arlington, VA—628  
Mexico, Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships Program recipients, discussion in Merida—305  
Miami Dade College—Kendall Campus in Miami, FL, commencement address—497  
Micron Technology, Inc., in Manassas, VA—103  
Military Spouse Day and presentation of President's Volunteer Service Awards—572  
Military support organizations, meetings—204, 416  
National Basketball Association champion Miami Heat—202  
National Catholic Prayer Breakfast—411  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association—347  
National Day of Prayer—532  
National Governors Association conference—188  
National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast—757  
National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, visit with wounded troops—626  
National Parks Centennial Initiative in Luray, VA—115  
National Peace Officers Memorial Service—581  
National Prayer Breakfast—90  
Naval War College in Newport, RI, remarks and a question-and-answer session—816  
NCAA championship teams—764  
NCAA football champion University of Florida Gators—326  
New Albany, IN  
    Departure for—212  
    Silver Street Elementary School—213  
New Jersey Republican Committee, reception in Edison, NJ—642  
New Orleans, LA  
    Elected officials and community leaders, meeting—207  
    Samuel J. Green Charter School—207  
No Child Left Behind Act  
    Fifth anniversary, meeting with Members of Congress—14  
    Reauthorization legislation, meeting—410  
Parochial education leaders and parents, meeting—413  
Peoria, IL, small-business leaders, breakfast—74  
Physical Fitness Month, remarks in Beltsville, MD—540

*Addresses and Remarks—Continued*

President George Washington's 275th birthday in Mount Vernon, VA—159  
Presidential Scholars—800  
President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, meetings—253, 321  
President's Dinner—742  
President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—640  
Radio addresses—11, 29, 39, 71, 94, 120, 157, 186, 226, 279, 323, 343, 362, 393, 414, 463, 496, 541, 575, 599, 627, 680, 711, 763, 797, 831  
Radio and Television Correspondents' Association dinner—356  
Republican Governors Association gala—194  
Republican National Committee gala—563  
Saint Patrick's Day shamrock presentation ceremony—322  
Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA, commencement address—568  
Sao Paulo, Brazil  
    Community members, discussion—273  
    Petrobras Transporte S.A. Facility—262  
Securing America's Future Energy organization, meeting—73  
Senatorial candidates  
    McConnell, Sen. Addison M. "Mitch," dinner in Louisville, KY—219  
    Sessions, Sen. Jefferson B., III, reception in Mobile, AL—786  
Shenandoah National Park in Luray, VA—117  
Southern Baptist Convention, satellite remarks—738  
Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes—92  
Sudan, Darfur situation—630  
Super Bowl champion Indianapolis Colts—468  
Teachers of the Year, 2007 National and State—485  
Tippecanoe High School in Tipp City, OH, remarks and a question-and-answer session—426  
Tornadoes in Alabama, Georgia, and Missouri—212  
Transportation fuel experts and researchers, meeting—185  
U.S. automobile makers, meeting—345  
U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, commencement address—606  
U.S. Global Leadership Campaign—648

*Addresses and Remarks—Continued*

U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce legislative conference—229  
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum—420  
U.S. military personnel  
    Fort Benning, GA—23  
    Fort Irwin, CA—388  
Victims of Communism Memorial, dedication—735  
Virginia Tech  
    Memorial convocation in Blacksburg, VA—419  
    Shootings in Blacksburg, VA—419  
Voluntarism, meeting—127  
Walter Reed Army Medical Center, visit—359  
White House Office, Press Secretary Tony Snow—347  
White House tee-ball—812  
Wichita, KS, arrival—759  
Wildfires in Georgia and Florida, briefing in Brunswick, GA—631  
World Affairs Council of Western Michigan in East Grand Rapids, MI, remarks and a question-and-answer session—445  
World Series champion St. Louis Cardinals—33  
YMCA Anthony Bowen, tour—128  
Yuma, AZ, border tour—395

*Appointments and Nominations*

*See also* Digest (Appendix A), Nominations Submitted (Appendix B), and Checklist (Appendix C)  
Defense Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman and Vice Chairman  
    Remarks—814  
    Statement—710  
Health and Human Services Department, Surgeon General, statement—625  
Intelligence, Director of National, remarks—9  
Management and Budget, Office of, Director, remarks—772  
State Department, Deputy Secretary, remarks—9  
White House Office  
    Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan, statement—584  
    Counsel to the President, statement—15  
    Counselor to the President, remarks—740  
World Bank, President, remarks—639

## *Administration of George W. Bush, 2007*

### *Bill Signings and Vetoes*

- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, statement—29
- National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act, remarks—444
- “Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007,” veto  
Message—777  
Remarks—775
- “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007,” veto  
Message—515  
Remarks—513

### *Communications to Congress*

- Belarus, blocking property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—757
- Belgium-U.S. Taxation Convention, message transmitting protocol amending—792
- Burma, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—599
- Caribbean Region, Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider, message transmitting protocols—161
- China, messages certifying U.S. exports—122, 585
- Cote d’Ivoire, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—102
- Cuba, U.S. national emergency relating to the anchorage and movement of vessels, letter on continuation—194
- Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, review of title III, letter—35
- Defense Department, supplemental budget revisions, letter transmitting request—273
- Drug trafficking, interdiction of aircraft, message transmitting report—102
- Federal budget  
Amendments, letter transmitting—727  
Proposed cancellations, letter transmitting—274
- Haiti, message on trade—329
- Homeland Security, Department of, letter transmitting request for funding—20
- Iran, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—261

### *Communications to Congress—Continued*

- Iraq, Development Fund for Iraq and certain other property, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—601
- Kingpin Act, letter transmitting designations—679
- Middle East, terrorists who threaten to disrupt the peace process, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—38
- Panama, letter transmitting notification of intention to enter into a free trade agreement—362
- Russian Federation, U.S. national emergency with respect to weapons-usable fissile material, message on continuation—774
- Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks, message transmitting—536
- Somalia, letter transmitting report—357
- South Korea, letter transmitting notification of intention to enter into a free trade agreement—374
- Sweden-U.S. Social Security Agreement, message transmitting—337
- Syria, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—553
- Turkmenistan, normal trade relations status, letter transmitting waiver on extension—830
- U.S. Combat-Equipped Armed Forces, letter reporting on deployments—760
- Western Balkans, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—797

### *Communications to Federal Agencies*

- See also* Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register* (Appendix D)
- Maritime Security (Piracy) Policy, memorandum—746
- U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, withdrawal of certain areas from leasing disposition, memorandum—15

### *Directives*

- National Continuity Policy—547
- Weapons of mass destruction, medical countermeasures against—109

### *Interviews With the News Media*

- Exchanges with reporters  
Enterprise, AL—228  
Heiligendamm, Germany—702, 705  
White House—67, 100, 334, 465, 766, 778  
Yuma, AZ—395
- Interviews  
ABC News—838, 850

*Interviews With the News Media—Continued*

Interviews—Continued  
Belo Television—837  
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) of the United Kingdom—854  
Bulgarian National Television—673  
C-SPAN—841  
CBS, “60 Minutes” program—837  
CBS, “The Early Show”—864  
CBS News—850  
CNN *En Espanol*—258  
Cox Broadcasting—837  
Foreign print journalists—244, 658  
FOX News—839, 845  
McClatchy Company—859  
National Public Radio—838  
NBC News—850  
PBS, “Charlie Rose” program—851  
PBS, “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” program—837  
RCN TV of Colombia—253  
Reuters—857  
Sinclair Broadcasting—837  
The Sun newspaper of the United Kingdom—856  
Tribune Broadcasting—837  
Univision—256  
USA Today newspaper—838  
Vizion Plus TV of Albania—671  
Wall Street Journal—839, 859  
Washington Examiner—864  
Weekly Standard—840  
White House press pool in Heiligendamm, Germany—691  
Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen of Germany—669  
Joint news conferences  
Albania, Prime Minister Berisha—720  
Brazil, President Lula da Silva—264, 364  
Bulgaria, President Parvanov—727  
Colombia, President Uribe Velez—281  
European Union leaders—501  
Germany, Chancellor Merkel—4  
Guatemala, President Berger Perdomo—292  
Italy, Prime Minister Prodi—714  
Japan, Prime Minister Abe—488  
Mexico, President Calderon Hinojosa—307  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer—602  
United Kingdom, Prime Minister Blair—586  
Uruguay, President Vazquez—274

*Interviews With the News Media—Continued*

News conferences  
January 4—4  
February 14—129  
March 9—264  
March 10—274  
March 11—281  
March 12—292  
March 14—307  
April 3—379  
April 27—488  
April 30—501  
May 10—554  
May 17—586  
May 21—602  
May 24—613  
June 9—714  
June 11—727

*Joint Statements*

Brazil, President Lula da Silva—372  
Caribbean heads of Government—779  
Japan, Prime Minister Abe, energy security, clean development, and climate change—495  
Mexico, President Calderon Hinojosa—314  
United Kingdom, Prime Minister Blair, Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty—792

*Letters and Messages*

*See also* Communications to Congress  
Armenian Remembrance Day, message—480  
Cinco de Mayo, message—540  
Cuban Independence Day, message—600  
Easter, message—393  
Independence Day, message—831  
Nowruz, message—337  
Passover, message—378

*Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials*

*See also* Interviews With the News Media;  
Joint Statements  
Afghanistan, President Karzai—851  
Albania  
President Moisiu—862  
Prime Minister Berisha—720, 726, 862  
Brazil  
Ambassador Patriota—844  
President Lula da Silva—264, 364, 372, 844, 848, 855  
Bulgaria  
President Parvanov—727, 733, 862  
Prime Minister Stanishev—862

*Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials—Continued*

- China, President Hu—861
- Colombia, President Uribe Velez—281, 516, 845, 854
- Croatia, Prime Minister Sanader—726
- Czech Republic
  - President Klaus—681, 860
  - Prime Minister Topolánek—681
  - Social Democratic Party leader Paroubek—860
- Egypt, President Mubarak—846, 855
- El Salvador, President Saca Gonzalez—199
- Estonia, President Ilves—799, 864
- European Union
  - Commission President Durao Barroso—13, 501, 836, 853
  - Council President Merkel—501, 853
- France, President Sarkozy—854, 861
- Germany, Chancellor Merkel—4, 700, 835, 860
- Guatemala, President Berger Perdomo—290, 292, 845
- Haiti, President Preval—545
- Holy See (Vatican City)
  - Pope Benedict XVI—861
  - Secretary of State Cardinal Bertone—861
- India, Prime Minister Singh—855
- Indonesia, President Yudhoyono—846
- Iraq
  - President Talabani—655, 851
  - Prime Minister Maliki—835, 841, 846, 850, 855, 857, 859, 863, 864
  - Vice President Abd Al-Mahdi—316, 859, 863
  - Vice President al-Hashimi—859, 863
- Ireland, Prime Minister Ahern—322, 846,
- Israel, Prime Minister Olmert—766, 863
- Italy
  - Former Prime Minister Berlusconi—862
  - President Napolitano—861
  - Prime Minister Prodi—714, 861
- Japan, Prime Minister Abe—488, 495, 701, 852, 856
- Jordan, King Abdullah II—844
- Lebanon
  - Former President Gemayel—840
  - Parliament Member al-Hariri—860
- Liberia, President Johnson Sirleaf—144
- Lithuania, President Adamkus—123
- Macedonia, Prime Minister Gruevski—726
- Mauritania, President-elect Abdellahi—849
- Mexico, President Calderon Hinojosa—300, 302, 303, 307, 314, 845

*Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials—Continued*

- New Zealand, Prime Minister Clark—338, 847
- Nicaragua
  - President Bolanos—836
  - President-elect Ortega Saavedra—836
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer—602, 857
- Palestinian Authority, President Abbas—863
- Panama, President Torrijos Espino—155
- Peru, President Garcia Perez—466, 842,
- Poland, President Kaczynski—707, 861
- Russia
  - Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov—839
  - President Putin—705, 851, 855
- Saudi Arabia, King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud—837, 846
- Singapore, Prime Minister Lee—536
- Sweden, Prime Minister Reinfeldt—580
- United Kingdom
  - Prime Minister Blair—586, 702, 792, 849, 856, 857, 861, 863
  - Queen Elizabeth II—542, 544, 546, 855
- United Nations, Secretary-General Ban—32
- Uruguay, President Vazquez—274, 845
- Vietnam, President Triet—793, 864
- Yemen, President Salih—531, 854

*Resignations and Retirements*

- White House Office
  - Counselor to the President, resignation, statement—679
  - Deputy National Security Adviser, resignation, statement—539

*Statements by the President*

- See also* Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings and Vetoes; Joint Statements; Resignations and Retirements
- Bald eagle, removal from the list of endangered species—830
- Blair, Tony, appointment as Quartet Representative in the Middle East—814
- Deaths
  - Chanes de Armas, Mario—212
  - Eido, Walid, Parliament Member of Lebanon—741
  - Falwell, Jerry L., Sr.—584
  - Firefighters in Charleston, SC—773
  - France, William C., Jr.—690
  - Graham, Ruth Bell—756
  - Ivins, Mary Tyler “Molly”—89
  - Millender-McDonald, Rep. Juanita—464

*Statements by the President—Continued*

Deaths—Continued

- Nasher, Raymond D.—328
- Norwood, Rep. Charles W., Jr.—128
- Orin-Eilbeck, Deborah—73
- Robinson, Edward G.—393
- Schirra, Walter M. Jr.—535
- Thomas, Sen. Craig L.—691
- Valenti, Jack J.—488
- Yeltsin, Boris, former President of Russia—471
- Earth Day—463
- Emergency supplemental appropriations, congressional passage—626
- Energy Information Administration, reports—612
- Faith-Based and Community Initiative, Supreme Court decision—805
- Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations legislation, congressional action—155
- Free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea—562
- Holocaust, International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the—71
- Identity Theft Task Force, report—471
- Immigration reform, Senate action—598
- International trade and investment policy—561
- Iran, detention of American citizens—678
- Iraq, bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra—741
- Israel, U.S. assistance—771
- Lebanon
  - Hariri, former Prime Minister Rafiq, second anniversary of death—145
  - Situation—74
- Libby, I. Lewis “Scooter,” granting executive clemency—901

*Statements by the President—Continued*

Maritime interests, U.S.—583

- Minimum wage and tax relief legislation, Senate passage—92
- National security leaders, Senate confirmation—120
- North Korea Freedom Week—496
- North Korea, six-party talks—129
- Partial-birth abortion, Supreme Court decision—425
- Republican National Committee, leadership—39
- Returning Global War on Terror Heroes, Interagency Task Force on—480
- Robinson, Jackie—415
- South Korea, free trade agreement with U.S.—833
- “Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007” and “Hope Offered through Principled and Ethical Stem Cell Research Act,” Senate passage—409
- Stem cell research legislation, House of Representatives action—707
- U.S. military personnel, recommendations from Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates—11
- Unified Combatant Command for Africa, Department of Defense, establishment—108
- Virginia Tech
  - “Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy”—742
  - Commencement ceremonies in Blacksburg, VA—575
- Visa Waiver Program, modifications—833
- World Press Freedom Day—535
- Zoellick, Robert B., approval as World Bank President—805