

That's the railroad bridge that's up and running. The private sector is responding here in southern Mississippi. The State of Mississippi—it's interesting—I want to tell our fellow citizens about what they have done here in 2 years' period. One, they've helped move 31,000 families out of temporary housing into permanent homes. I don't think we would have been that optimistic 2 years ago when we were recovering from the storms that it would be possible to make those kind of moves that quickly.

This is a State that opened virtually every public school that was damaged in the storm, a State that understands that education is part of the—an important part of the recovery effort. There's a billion dollars have gone out to help homeowners with repairs and rebuilding. The State is active in trying to help the citizens regain their footing. Tax revenues are up.

Now, that's positive, but that doesn't mean there's not more work to be done and more efforts made to help ground zero recover. The interesting thing about the folks who live in this part of the world, they may have lost their building, but they never lost their soul or their spirit. I think the Senator called them—resilience is what he'd like to define people. I call them optimistic about life.

And one such person is Kay Gough, who is with us today. Kay is somewhere—there she is, right there. Here's an interesting story. First of all, she's a—she loves Bay St. Louis. She recognizes the uniqueness of the community. She's a lifelong reader.

She was concerned about what happened to her community. So what did she do? She opened a bookstore on Main Street, Bay St. Louis. First business up, right? One of the first, yes. And it's an interesting example of the entrepreneurial spirit and a—combined with a civic duty. She said there's still a lot of work that needs to be done to get people back in these communities so that they can be buying her books. She said, "We want people to know that we want to be a part of the recovery and we want to be a part of the community."

It's that community spirit that has been very impressive to me and Laura. It's that can-do attitude. It's the attitude that said, "Okay, a storm came. We understand it, we don't like it, but we're going to deal with it." That's the Mississippi spirit.

And so we're glad to be back. We're glad to be back in a part of our country that is going to be better than it was before. It's—there's still work. We understand that. There's work in Louisiana to be done; there's work in Mississippi to be done. But the progress that has been made really speaks to the coordination of Government effort, but it really speaks to the great spirit of the people who live down here.

May God bless them, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. at Our Lady of the Gulf Parish Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi and his wife Marsha.

Statement on the 15th Anniversary of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

August 29, 2007

Today is the 15th anniversary of the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, established in 1992 under the leadership of President George H.W. Bush and

Senators Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn. CTR programs are a critical tool used to address one of the gravest threats we face: the danger that terrorists and proliferators

could gain access to weapons or materials of mass destruction.

Under the CTR Program, thousands of nuclear warheads have been deactivated, and thousands of delivery systems—including missiles, strategic bombers, and strategic ballistic nuclear submarines—have been eliminated. Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine are free of nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems. The CTR Program is working to complete security upgrades to Russian nuclear warhead storage sites under the Bratislava Nuclear Security Cooperation Initiative announced by President Putin and me in 2005. To date, over 75 percent of the Russian warhead sites and 160 buildings containing hundreds of metric tons of weapons-usable nuclear material have been secured. Work is underway at the balance of the warhead and material sites, to be completed on an accelerated basis by the end of 2008 under the Bratislava Initiative.

We have also achieved nearly 75 percent completion toward our goal of shutting down two of the last three remaining Russian weapons-grade plutonium production reactors by the end of 2008 and nearly one-third completion toward shutting down the last reactor by the end of 2010, thus eliminating approximately 1.2 metric tons

of weapons-grade plutonium per year. Through the CTR Program, several large-scale Soviet biological and chemical production facilities have been safely dismantled in Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia.

By working to secure, eliminate, and account for weapons and materials of mass destruction, the CTR Program supports the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction and remains the cornerstone for U.S. funding of the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Another important accomplishment of CTR is the redirection of thousands of former weapons scientists in the former Soviet Union, Libya, and Iraq into commercial or other nonmilitary pursuits. In addition, the CTR Program has helped Albania destroy all of its chemical weapons.

As the threat continues to evolve elsewhere, U.S. CTR efforts are expanding to include the work of securing dangerous biological pathogens, rapidly detecting disease outbreaks, and improving export controls and border security to stop the movement of materials of mass destruction worldwide.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

Statement on the Situation in Burma *August 30, 2007*

I strongly condemn the ongoing actions of the Burmese regime in arresting, harassing, and assaulting prodemocracy activists for organizing or participating in peaceful demonstrations. These activists were voicing concerns about recent dramatic increases in the price of fuel, and their concerns should be listened to by the regime rather than silenced through force.

The Burmese regime should heed the international calls to release these activists

immediately and stop its intimidation of those Burmese citizens who are promoting democracy and human rights. I also call on the regime to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and to lift restrictions on humanitarian organizations that seek to help the people of Burma.