

*Prime Minister Socrates.* Thank you, Mr. President. It was a very sympathetic conversation with you. And thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to present to you what are the priorities for Europe in the months ahead. In particular, we had the opportunity to discuss the transatlantic relation and importance to Europe on the relation with the United States. As a matter of fact, I don't see any strategic question for the world that don't demands, requires the most—the better relations between Europe and United States.

And thank you also for the opportunity to discuss some of our more delicate matters in the international agenda, mainly the question of Kosovo and the Middle West problem. I had the opportunity to tell the President how Europe has viewed with good eyes the declaration on Middle East of the President Bush, the nomination of Tony Blair. And we are feeling that the

peace process is moving, and it's very good for Middle East, of course, for Europe, and for the world.

Also, our discussions about Kosovo show that the cooperation between Europe and the United States is very important for safety and for stability in the world. And I guaranteed to the President that the first priority I have in my mind regarding Kosovo is, keep Europe united. And we will do my best in order to face the delicate problem, but important for Europe in order to show a strong and united Europe.

Well, thank you very much.

*President Bush.* Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Socrates referred to former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, Quartet Representative in the Middle East.

## Remarks to Members of Military Support Organizations September 18, 2007

*The President.* Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the South Lawn. Welcome to the people's house. First, I'd like to thank Katy Benko for singing the national anthem. It's not only a beautiful morning to sing the national anthem, it's a beautiful setting in which to sing the national anthem. Katy's husband Ryan is deployed to Iraq. Katy, make sure you e-mail him and tell him how appreciative we are of your service, and tell him how appreciative all of us are of your voice.

Laura and I want to thank the members of our—my administration for joining us. Mr. Vice President, we're really thrilled you're here. Thank you for coming, sir. Secretary of State Condi Rice is with us today. Madam Secretary, appreciate you being here. Secretary Jim Nicholson of the

Veterans Affairs Administration; thanks for coming, Jim.

For you veterans who are here, there is no more solemn obligation by your Government to make sure you have all it takes to—for your health care and for your support. I feel a very strong obligation, since it was my decision that committed young men and women into combat, to make sure our veterans who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan get all the help this Government can possibly provide.

I appreciate the Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, for joining us; the Secretary of the Navy, Don Winter; General Hoss Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife Sandee. By the way, General Cartwright is a marine.

*Audience members.* Hooah!

*The President.* I'm not playing to the crowd or anything. [Laughter]

I want to welcome members of this crowd who have lost a loved one in this war against terror. Our hearts go out to you. We love you. The best way to honor the sacrifices that your loved one made, as well as the sacrifice you have made, is to accomplish the mission, is to achieve the peace.

Laura and I welcome the families who have got a loved one overseas, whether it be in Iraq or Afghanistan, fighting these extremists and terrorists. The best way to honor your loved one is to make sure that he or she has the full support of the United States Government as you accomplish the mission that we have set out. By the way, for the loved ones here, I fully understand the best way to sustain a volunteer army is to make sure you're happy—[laughter]—is to make sure you've got good housing; to make sure that you've got good health care; to make sure that you understand that we know that you're in this fight along with your husband or wife or son or daughter. And that's exactly how this administration feels.

For the veterans who are here, for those of you who are veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan, thank you for volunteering in the face of danger. And for the people who aren't veterans yet, still remain on active duty, thanks for wearing the uniform of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. We're proud of you.

I want to thank our service organizations and those who have come together to support our families and our troops. I can't tell you how important it is for organizations like the Vets for Freedom or the VFW or the American Legion and other groups, two of you—Gold Star Mothers, got you, okay, thank you—Blue Star Mothers, Gold Star Mothers, all the mothers, yes. Every day is Mother's Day as far as you're concerned, isn't it? [Laughter]

*Audience member.* Don't forget the dads.

*The President.* And the dads, yes. I knew this was going to happen. [Laughter] Yes, the wives, okay, fine. [Laughter] Everybody's supporting our troops. I want to thank you for doing it.

It's important people hear from you. It's important people hear your voice. And I want to thank you for organizing. I want to thank you not only for the grassroots support of our families, I want to thank you for going up to Capitol Hill. And here's the message I hope you deliver: The Commander in Chief wants to succeed, and the Commander in Chief takes seriously the recommendations of our military commanders. General Petraeus came back to the United States to deliver the recommendations he made to me. Inherent in his recommendations is, one, his belief we're succeeding, his belief we will succeed. And I ask the United States Congress to support the troop levels and the strategies I have embraced.

*Audience members.* U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

*The President.* Thank you all. When the history books are finally written about this chapter in the war against extremists and radicals, they will recognize certain truths: One, that we recognize that if we were to retreat from the Middle East, the enemy would not be content to remain where they are, but they would follow us here. We recognize that the best way to protect our homeland is to defeat an enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here on the streets of America. And we recognized that liberty is powerful, that liberty will yield the peace that we want for generations to come. They will recognize that this generation of Americans did the hard work now, so that future generations could live in security and peace.

And so on this beautiful morning, we thank you for your steadfast resolve; we appreciate your support of those brave souls who have volunteered in the face of the danger. We ask for God's blessings on the families and our troops in harm's way.

And we thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 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 Following a Visit to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland

*September 19, 2007*

Good morning. I have just received a briefing from Director McConnell and Lieutenant General Alexander as well as other members of my national security team. I first want to thank the men and women who work out here for their dedication and their hard work. The work they're doing here is necessary to protect our country from an enemy who would like to attack us again. The people who work out here understand that the Federal Government has no more urgent responsibility than to protect the American people.

Every day, our intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security professionals confront enemies who are smart, who are ruthless, and who are determined to murder innocent people to achieve their objectives. It is the job of Congress to give the professionals the tools they need to do their work as effectively as possible.

You don't have to worry about the motivation of the people out here; what we do have to worry about is to make sure that they have all the tools they need to do their job. One of the most important tools they use is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. The law provides a critical legal foundation that allows our intelligence community to monitor terrorist communications while protecting the freedoms of the American people. Unfortunately, the law is dangerously out of date.

When FISA was passed nearly 30 years ago, the legal protections were based on differences in the way that domestic and

overseas communications were transmitted. New technologies have come into being since the law was written. Technologies like the disposable cell phone or the Internet eliminated many of the differences. So one of the consequences of the way the law was originally drafted is that when technology changed, legal protections meant only for the people in the United States began applying to terrorists on foreign soil. As a result, our intelligence professionals reported that they were missing a significant amount of real-time intelligence needed to protect the American people. So earlier this year, Director McConnell sent Congress legislation to fix the problem.

In August, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed the Protect America Act. This law has helped close a critical intelligence gap, allowing us to collect important foreign intelligence and information about terrorist plots. The problem is, the law expires on February 1st; that's 135 days from today. The threat from Al Qaida is not going to expire in 135 days.

So I call on Congress to make the Protect America Act permanent. The need for action is clear. Director McConnell has warned that unless the FISA reforms in the Act are made permanent, our national security professionals will lose critical tools they need to protect our country. Without these tools, it'll be harder to figure out what our enemies are doing to train, recruit, and infiltrate operatives into America.