

efforts to defend our Nation following the 9/11 attacks.

When Congress presents me with a bill, I will ask the Director of National Intelligence whether it meets these criteria. And if it does, I will sign it into law.

Today the House Intelligence and Judiciary Committees are considering a proposed bill that instead of making the Protect America Act permanent would take us backward. While the House bill is not final, my administration has serious concerns about some of its provisions, and I am hopeful that the deficiencies in the bill can be fixed.

Congress and the President have no higher responsibility than protecting the American people from enemies who attacked our country and who want to do so again. Terrorists in faraway lands are plotting and planning new ways to kill Americans. The security of our country and

the safety of our citizens depend on learning about their plans. The Protect America Act is a vital tool in stopping the terrorists, and it would be a grave mistake for Congress to weaken this tool.

On another issue before Congress, I urge Members to oppose the Armenian genocide resolution now being considered by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. We all deeply regret the tragic suffering of the Armenian people that began in 1915, but this resolution is not the right response to these historic mass killings, and its passage would do great harm to our relations with a key ally in NATO and in the global war on terror.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H. Res. 106.

## Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month October 10, 2007

*The President.* Thank you all. Please be seated. *Sientese. Gracias. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca, tambien el jardin de las rosas.* It's a beautiful day. I'm glad you're here. Thanks for coming as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Every year at this time, we recognize the rich cultural traditions of the Hispanic American community and the great contributions of Hispanic Americans to our country and our character. That's why we're here.

I appreciate so very much Ambassador Sue Schwab, who is the U.S. Trade Representative, for joining us. We're proud you're here, Madam Ambassador. I'm going to say something positive about trade, so I'm glad you came. I appreciate my friend—my dear friend former Attorney General of the United States Al Gonzales. I appreciate Anna Cabral, U.S. Treasurer,

and Victor. Thank you all for coming. I'm proud that other members of my administration have joined us. Sarah, it's good to see you; thank you for being here.

I thank my friend Emilio Estefan, who has provided the entertainment. I'm going to say something about the entertainment a little later, but Israel, we're glad you're here.

I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps. I appreciate the Ambassadors coming. We're proud you're here. Thanks for taking time.

I have just met a remarkable woman that I want to introduce to you. Yamile Llanes Labrada and her daughter Shirlen Garcia have joined me in the Oval Office. Yamile is the wife of a political prisoner in Cuba, Dr. Jose Luis Garcia Paneque. The doctor was a plastic surgeon. He did nothing more

than advocate for freedom, and he's now in prison. And not only is he in prison, he's ill. And so one of the messages I have for the Cuban leader is, free this man and free other political prisoners. He's not a threat to you. Let him be reunited with a woman who loves him dearly and his four children. So, Yamile, thanks for coming. We're proud you're here. Sure glad you're here. *Y que Dios les bendiga a su familia y tambien su esposo.*

Citizens of Hispanic descent are the fastest growing population in America. Hispanic Americans strengthen our Nation with their commitments to *familia y fe*. Hispanic Americans enrich our country with their talents and creativity and hard work. Hispanic Americans are living the dream that has drawn millions to our shores, and we must ensure that the American Dream remains available for all. It's an important part of our past, and it's a central part of our future that people from all walks of life feel welcomed and given the opportunity to realize the blessings of America.

Realizing the promise of this good country requires a good education. You know, I worked hard with Republicans and Democrats to pass what's called the No Child Left Behind Act. That's an important piece of legislation because it raises standards and it holds schools to account. And the law is working. It's a good piece of legislation. It's working because I can report to you that last month, we saw the results from what's called the Nation's Report Card. The Report Card showed record performance in fourth and eighth grade math and fourth grade reading. And the report showed that Hispanic students scored alltime highs in a number of areas. And so we need to build on that progress. It's good that we've got a good report card; we want excellent report cards for every child.

I met yesterday with civil rights leaders. See, I believe a good education is a civil right. And we talked about how we can

work together to make sure the No Child Left Behind Act is not only reauthorized but is made stronger. The Congress needs to make sure we don't lower standards. Congress needs to make sure we raise standards and hold people to account, so that every child, every child can learn in the United States of America.

Realizing the promise of America requires a growing economy. Last week, we got more good news on this front. The economy added 110,000 new jobs in September, giving us 49 straight months of job growth, and that's a new record. We are now enjoying the longest period of uninterrupted job creation in the history of the United States. The growing economy is the result of good policies, like low taxes, but it's also mainly the result of hard work of workers and entrepreneurs, including hundreds of thousands of Latino businessowners.

And so to keep the economy growing, we've got to make sure we don't raise your taxes. And to keep the economy growing, we've got to open new markets for goods and services. One of the most important markets is in our own hemisphere. Many Hispanic-owned businesses in our country depend on trade with Latin America. Trade with the region strengthens ties of friendship and commerce. Free trade helps our neighbors prosper.

And so to expand trade with Latin America, we negotiated—and Congress approved—a free trade agreement with five Central American countries as well as the Dominican Republic. And this agreement is working. It's helped American workers. It's new markets for products made here, right here in the United States. And it's helped our neighbors. We want everybody to do well in our neighborhood. We want prosperity to abound.

And that's why we've negotiated new free trade agreements with Peru and Colombia and Panama. For the sake of our businesses and sake of our workers and for the sake of prosperity in the neighborhood, the

United States Congress needs to approve these three very important trade agreements.

Realizing the promise of the country requires strong communities where people care for each other in times of need. Yamile found help in the United States from people who care about the condition of her husband. A total stranger that didn't know Yamile before she came to the United States said, how can I help you; what can I do? That happens all across our country when Hispanic Americans run soup kitchens and drug treatment clinics and hear the call—God's call—to love our neighbors as we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We see this spirit in Hispanic Americans who volunteer as Little League coaches or serve as Big Brothers and Big Sisters or give their time and energy to improve the lives of people that live across the street from them. By caring for others, Hispanic Americans make ours a better and more compassionate nation, and America appreciates the example they set.

Finally, realizing the promise of America requires a secure country. We honor the many Hispanic Americans who wear the uniform here at home, the police and firefighters and emergency rescue personnel who risk their lives each day to protect our homeland and our communities. And we honor the 200,000 Hispanic Americans who serve in our Armed Forces, who are working to spread liberty so we can be secure here in America, who are doing the hard work today so our children and grandchildren can grow up in peace. I appreciate the fact that they have volunteered in a time of danger, and I'm proud to welcome members of the United States military with us today. Thank you all for coming.

So during Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the diversity that makes our country stronger and the heritage and the spirit

that Hispanic Americans bring to this great democracy. To help us celebrate the heritage and spirit, we have an incredible talent, Cachao. He was born in Havana only in 1918. That was before my time. During the late 1930s, he helped popularize the mambo, and over the past half century, he has won a lot of Grammy Awards—most recently in 2005, believe it or not. So if you do the math, you can figure out this man hasn't stopped working. [Laughter] He's still clicking, and he's still making good music. And so we're proud to welcome Israel Lopez, better known as Cachao, to here—to the White House. Thank you for coming, sir.

[At this point, Israel Lopez performed.]

*The President.* I know you'll join me in thanking Cachao for coming. Guess when the first he was here; 1948 he played for President Harry Truman. Welcome back. We're sure glad you're here.

Thank you all for coming. I want you to say hello to Yamile again *una mas vez*. We certainly pray for the speedy release of your husband, and we're glad you're here at the White House. No better place to come and recognize the great beauty of freedom. And we want to thank you all for joining us as we celebrate the great diversity and freedom of the United States.

*Que Dios les bendiga.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Victor G. Cabral, husband of U.S. Treasurer Anna Escobedo Cabral; Emilio Estefan, Jr., president, Estefan Enterprises, Inc.; and President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The National Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation of September 12 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr *October 1, 2007*

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking the Fast.

The great faith of Islam has enhanced our society and brought comfort and strength to generations in America and around the world. The three day festival of Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan and is a time to look forward with a spirit of renewal and hope, and celebrate the rich Islamic tradition of charity and giving. During this holiday, Muslims gather with family and friends to share in traditional food, thank God for His blessings, and reach out to the less fortunate.

Our Nation is proud to be a land of many beliefs, and our society is enriched by our Muslim citizens. On the first day of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic calendar, may people of all faiths reflect on the values we hold in common, including love of family, the importance of community, and gratitude to God.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyful celebration. Eid Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 11. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

## Remarks Following a Meeting on the National Economy *October 11, 2007*

I just had a meeting with members of my economic team, and I thank you all for coming. I particularly want to thank Director of the OMB Jim Nussle for his briefing on the newest numbers regarding our deficit.

You know, last February, it was projected that our deficit would be \$244 billion, and today the Director informed us that the deficit—actual deficit is \$163 billion. In other words, as a result of the hard work of the American people, this economy is growing; the growing economy has yielded more tax revenues than anticipated. And because of fiscal restraint, those tax revenues went to reduce our deficit.

The deficit today is at 1.2 percent of GDP, which is lower than the average of the last 40 years. In other words, we have told the American people that by keeping taxes low, we can grow the economy, and

by working with Congress to set priorities, we can be fiscally responsible and we can head toward balance. And that's exactly where we're headed.

Now the fundamental question is whether the United States Congress will work constructively with the administration to keep taxes low and to keep spending sound. I look forward to working with members of both parties to continue keeping this—keeping our fiscal house in order, to continue to head for a balanced budget. But it's going to require the Congress to show fiscal restraint, fiscal discipline. One of the reasons why the Constitution wisely gave the President the veto is to help them exercise fiscal discipline and fiscal constraint.

It's very important for Congress to also understand that they should not be trying to take money out of the pockets of the small-business owners and working people.