

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. in Kit Carson Park. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, USA, chief, National Guard Bureau; and Gen. Victor E.

Renuart, Jr., USAF, commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First-Responders in Escondido October 25, 2007

The President. Thank you all very much for letting us come by to say hello to you. I'm proud to be here with the Senator, the Terminator—[laughter]—do you still get called the Terminator?

Governor Arnold A. Schwarzenegger. Absolutely, especially my wife. [Laughter]

The President. You know why we're here—Brian Billbray, the Congressman from here—we're here to, hopefully, inspire you by thanking you from the bottom of our hearts for what you do. I'm telling you, there's a lot of folks that live up in these hills that have their houses because of you. And they're not in a position to thank you, but we are. And so we thank you for helping save lives and save property. We thank you for serving our country.

You know, one of the things I like to do is look in the eyes, to make sure you're getting rest, and I know you're not. [Laughter] I hope there's enough reinforcements coming to make sure that you get your shifts so you can get some sleep, because the citizens are going to count on you for you a while.

These fires are tough, but you know better than anybody how hard it is. And so we're here to compliment you on your courage and your compassion. I know you're working incredible hours, and you've got family members who wonder about you, and so one of the things that we can do is also hope you pass on our best regards to your family members. I'm confident they're inspired by you, but they're wondering about your health and your safety. And so please, when you talk to them, tell them the President, the Senator, the Governor, the Congressman, but most of all, the folks here in the San Diego area and around the State affected by the fires are really appreciative.

And finally, I'd like to ask God's blessings on you and to protect you and guard you. Thanks for being great Americans. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:56 p.m. in the Ray Love Picnic Area at Kit Carson Park. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo October 26, 2007

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome back to the Oval Office President Kabila. Thanks for coming, sir, the President of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. The last time the President was here, we talked about his desire to have free and fair elections in his country. Since that time, his country has had free and

fair elections. And my first order of business today was to congratulate the President for garnering 58 percent of the vote.

We talked about the need to work together to help consolidate the gains. We talked about the need to—for the United States to partner with the country to help on economic development. One of the things the President recognizes is the need for there to be investment in his country, so people can find work and the stability that comes with economic development. And I appreciate your recognition of the opportunity to work together.

We talked about the eastern part of his country. And he shared with me his strategy to make sure that the Government's reach extends throughout the entire country and that there is stability throughout the country. And I want to thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with me.

I did bring up my desire to help our friend deal with malaria. Malaria is a great concern to me and my wife and the Secretary of State. This is an issue that can be solved. We hurt when young babies are dying from a mosquito bite, knowing full well that a strategy can help save lives. And so the President shares the same sense of compassion I do for people all throughout the world who are being affected by malaria.

Mr. President, you are—you've said that you wanted there to be free and fair elections, and you delivered. And I appreciate

that and congratulate you on being a man of your word. And we look forward to continuing to work with you, sir, to bring peace and stability to the neighborhood. So, welcome.

President Kabila. Thanks a lot. Well, Mr. President, thanks a lot. Of course, this is the second time that we meet in the Oval Office. And way back, yes, elections was high on the agenda in 2003. We organized those elections. And basically, our priorities have now changed from elections; it's now stability, and with stability, peace and development. And I emphasized and insisted on the fact that we need continued support from the United States in order to achieve these two remaining goals, which is peace and stability throughout the whole country, and embark on a very, very long journey of development and really try to combat poverty, which is the biggest issue not only in the Congo but in the region and on the African Continent.

So thanks a lot for the continued support that we've always had from the United States Government and the administration. And together, let's move further and further ahead.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kabila. Thank you.

President Bush. Glad you're here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on Congressional Action on the Legislative Agenda October 26, 2007

Good morning. I went out to California yesterday to meet with families affected by the wildfires and to thank the State and local officials for their outstanding work in this difficult time. While I was there, I saw the terrible destruction and heartbreaking loss. Yet I was also encouraged

by the spirit I found: the families determined to rebuild, the volunteers who stepped forward to help neighbors in need, and the first-responders who have shown such courage in battling the flames and caring for those who were displaced.