

I ask Congress to provide this essential funding to our troops before the Members leave on their Christmas vacation. And I thank the members of this Department for their hard work, their sacrifice, their courage, and their dedication to peace.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:59 p.m. at the Pentagon.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative Henry J. Hyde *November 29, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Congressman Henry Hyde. From his service in the Navy during World War II until his retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives last year, Henry Hyde led a life devoted to public service. During more than 30 years as a Congressman, he represented the people of Illinois with character and dignity and always stood for a strong and purposeful America. This fine man believed in the power of freedom,

and he was a tireless champion of the weak and forgotten. He used his talents to build a more hopeful America and promote a culture of life. Earlier this month, in recognition of his good and purposeful life, I was proud to award Henry Hyde the Medal of Freedom.

Congressman Hyde's passing represents a great loss to the people of Illinois and our Nation, and our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this sad hour.

Remarks on World AIDS Day in Mount Airy, Maryland *November 30, 2007*

Tomorrow is World's AIDS Day, and Laura and I are honored to commemorate the occasion here at the Calvary United Methodist Church. And we're honored to commemorate the day with people who have dedicated their lives to save lives.

I want to start by thanking Ambassador Mark Dybul, who is the Global AIDS Coordinator. His job is to make sure that America's great compassion is effective and widespread, that the goals we have set are met. And I—Mr. Ambassador, you're doing a fine job, and I want to thank you very much for serving.

I also want to thank Pastor Dennis Yocum, the pastor of this church. Dennis, I want to thank you for your hospitality; it's not easy to host the President and all those who follow the President. I want to

thank the members of your church who have so graciously made our stay here so comfortable.

I really want to thank the people standing behind me for not only joining Laura and me in discussions but for serving as such powerful examples of the human spirit. Behind me are folks who understand that the scourge of HIV/AIDS can be mitigated and that people's lives can be improved, who have seen hopelessness and have seen hope, people who are willing to act on the universal call to love a neighbor. People here come from, obviously, different backgrounds and different denominations, yet they share this timeless calling to heal the sick and comfort the lonely. And their stories are incredibly inspirational and touching.

I appreciate the fact that they live out their faith, just like hundreds of thousands of other people do who are involved with the HIV/AIDS crisis. And in so living out their faith, they better our world.

World AIDS Day is both a day of sadness and a day of hope. We remember with sadness all those lost to AIDS. We mourn their lives cut short, their dreams of future denied, and we ask for God's blessing on the loved ones they have left behind. We also mark this day with hope for the improving prospects of those living with the virus, for the unprecedented number of infections being prevented, and for new progress toward eradicating this disease. Above all, we rededicate ourselves to a great purpose: We will turn the tide against HIV/AIDS once and for all.

According to the most recent estimates by the United Nations, more than 33 million people around the world live with HIV. They are mothers; they are fathers, brothers and sisters, friends and teachers. And each day, some 5,700 lose their life.

When Americans witness this suffering, they feel a duty to respond. Some are motivated by conscience and a conviction that America should use its great influence to be a force for good. Many others are driven by faith, by the call to love your neighbor as yourself, even when that neighbor may live on the other side of the world. This spirit of brotherhood and generosity has long defined our country. And over the past 6 years, we have rallied that spirit in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Here at home, we've taken new measures to increase HIV/AIDS testing and expand treatment and improve care. We've worked with health care providers to make voluntary HIV screening a routine part of medical care, so all Americans can know their status. We've worked with Congress to renew the Ryan White Care Act, which helps HIV/AIDS patients receive lifesaving drugs.

Overseas, the scope of this challenge is much longer—much larger, and this Nation

is responding. In 2003, I proposed the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a 5-year, \$15 billion initiative to expand prevention, treatment, and care in the most heavily affected countries. Congress approved the plan with bipartisan support. And I want our fellow citizens to think about what this means. Every year, American taxpayers send billions of their hard-earned dollars overseas to save the lives of people they have never met.

In return for this extraordinary generosity, Americans expect results, so the emergency plan includes specific, measurable targets for progress. It demands honesty and accountability for all those involved. It puts local partners in the lead because they know the needs of their people best. With this strategy, we have pioneered a new model for public health. And so far, the results have been striking.

Five years ago, only 50,000 people with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral drugs. Today, thanks to the emergency plan and to the generosity of the American taxpayer, that number is nearly 1.4 million. Think about that. Over a 5-year period of time, the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa has increased from 50,000 people to 1.4 million thanks to the American taxpayer. Around the world, another 6.7 million people with HIV/AIDS have received compassionate care, including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children. Tens of millions have received prevention messages based on the proven principles of ABC, which is "Abstinence, Be faithful, and use Condoms."

The money that you have spent is being spent wisely and saving lives. Some call this a remarkable success. I call it a good start. So we have worked with the private sector and G-8 nations to increase their commitments. This May, I proposed to double our Nation's initial pledge to \$30 billion over the next 5 years. These American funds will help us support treatment for nearly 2.5 million people, prevent more than 12 million new infections, and support care for

12 million people, including more than 5 million orphans and vulnerable children. Now the time has come for the United States Congress to act again. I'm confident they will, and I call on the Congress to show America's leadership by reauthorizing the emergency plan and doubling our commitment to this urgent cause.

One reason for the effectiveness of our efforts is the leading role of faith-based organizations. Last summer, volunteers from this church traveled to Namibia to serve at a home for AIDS orphans. Think about that. People from this part of Maryland took it upon themselves to travel to a far-away land to help orphans, to say we love you, to inspire through their compassion. With me today is a fellow named Chris Dominick from the McLean Bible Church. He briefed Laura and me and the others on the training that he had received in order to go to Zambia tomorrow. Faith-based groups like these are the foot soldiers in the armies of compassion. They are changing behavior by changing hearts, and they are helping to defeat this epidemic one soul at a time.

This morning I also met a woman a—named Martha Chilufya—was afraid you left. [*Laughter*] Eight years ago, she established Mututa Memorial Center in Zambia to honor her husband, who had died of AIDS. Today, the center partners with the emergency plan and faith-based caregivers to serve more than 150 patients. Martha hosted Laura and Jenna on their recent trip to Africa. And they listened to a choir of orphans who had received loving care at the center. The children sang these inspiring words: “God, you are really there . . . when I pray, when I cry, when I am ill, you are there.”

Stories like these bring pride to our country, and they should bring something

more. When we support nations seeking to replace chaos and despair with progress and hope, we reduce the appeal of extremism. When we replace despair with progress, when we replace hopelessness with hope, we add to the security of our Nation. As well, we make friends who will always remember that America stood with them in their hour of need.

The new relationships that America has forged in Africa are a high priority for our Nation. I'm pleased to announce that Laura and I will travel to sub-Saharan Africa early next year. I look forward to seeing the results of America's generosity and to assure our friends that they have a steady partner in the United States of America.

The Scriptures tell us: “I have set before you life and death . . . therefore, choose life.” All who wage the battle against AIDS have made the choice for life. Because of their compassion and courage, millions who once saw the disease as a death sentence now look to the future with hope. This World AIDS Day is a day of importance because it's a day we resolve to continue the work of healing and redemption. It's a day to strive for the day when the scourge of AIDS is a part of history.

Laura and I are honored to be here with you all. May God bless your work; may God bless those who suffer from HIV/AIDS; may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church. In his remarks, he referred to Martha Chilufya, director, Mututa Memorial Center, Lusaka, Zambia. The World AIDS Day proclamation of November 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address *December 1, 2007*

Good morning. Next week, Congress returns from its Thanksgiving recess. Members are coming back to a lot of unfinished business. And the clock will be ticking because they have only a few weeks to get their work done before leaving again for Christmas.

Congress must address four critical priorities. First, Congress needs to pass a bill to fund our troops in combat. Second, Congress needs to make sure our intelligence professionals can continue to monitor terrorist communications so we can prevent attacks against our people. Third, Congress needs to pass a bill to protect middle class families from higher taxes. And fourth, Congress needs to pass all the remaining appropriations bills to keep the Federal Government running.

Congress's first priority should be to provide the funds and flexibility to keep our troops safe and help them protect our Nation. Beginning in February, I submitted detailed funding requests to Congress to fund operations in the war on terror. Our military has waited on these funds for months. The funds include money to carry out combat operations against the enemy in Afghanistan and Iraq. They include money to train the Afghan and Iraqi security forces to take on more responsibility for the defense of their countries. And they include money for intelligence operations to protect our troops on the battlefield.

Pentagon officials recently warned Congress that continued delay in funding our troops will soon begin to have a damaging impact on the operations of our military. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has already notified Congress that he will transfer money from accounts used to fund other activities of the military services to pay for current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and no more money can be moved. So he has directed the Army and Marine

Corps to develop a plan to lay off civilian employees, terminate contracts, and prepare our military bases across the country for reduced operations. Military leaders have told us what they need to do their job. It is time for the Congress to do its job and give our troops what they need to protect America.

Another priority Congress must address is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. FISA provides a critical legal framework 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. In August, Congress passed legislation to help modernize FISA. That bill closed critical intelligence gaps, allowing us to collect important foreign intelligence. The problem is, this new law expires on February 1st, while the threat from our terrorist enemies does not.

Congress must take action now to keep the intelligence gaps closed and make certain our national security professionals do not lose a critical tool for keeping America safe. As part of these efforts, Congress also needs to provide meaningful liability protection to those companies now facing multibillion dollar lawsuits only because they are believed to have assisted in the efforts to defend our Nation following the 9/11 attacks.

Congress's third priority should be to fix the Alternative Minimum Tax. The AMT was designed to ensure that the wealthy paid their fair share of taxes. But when Congress passed the AMT decades ago, it was not indexed for inflation. As a result, the AMT's higher tax burden is creeping up on more and more middle class families. If Congress fails to pass legislation to fix the AMT, as many as 25 million Americans would be subject to the AMT. On average, these taxpayers would have to send an extra