

All Americans have a responsibility to encourage people to turn away from the losing spiral of addiction and to make good choices in life. But the great thing about our country and the reason I'm so optimistic is there are thousands and thousands of people willing to take the lead in their own communities, people who have seen a problem and said, "We're going to do something about it." Like this good woman right here from eastern Kentucky. She said, "We live in rural America, and we got a significant prescription drug problem that's affecting every family in that area." And so instead of wringing her hands, she said, "I think I'm going to do something about it," and has led the charge. We can help, but it's her initiative, along with thousands of others who have stepped up and said, "We're going to save lives one soul at a time." Why? Because they love America, and they love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

This mission of dealing with drug abuse is worthy of a great people and a great nation. It's a worthy mission. It is a struggle

that requires us to confront torment with patience, weakness with understanding, and evil with resolve, hope, and love.

I want to thank you all for being a part of this great effort. I thank John and all those in the grassroots for accomplishing an important goal. I urge you to continue staying in this battle. I say to our young folks: Make the right choice in life, and you can realize your dreams here in the United States of America.

Thank you for being here. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Nora D. Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse; Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson and President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia; and Karen Engle, executive director, Operation UNITE.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy *December 11, 2007*

President Bush. Mr. President, it's my honor to welcome you to the Oval Office. Our—we just had a very substantive meeting. And it will be my honor to feed you a lunch. I doubt it is going to be—the food will be as good as the food I had when I visited your beautiful country.

Bilateral relations with the United States and Italy are very good. We have a lot of interchange between our countries, with business as well as travel. And there are millions of Italian Americans who will be pleased, Mr. President, to know we've got good relations.

Secondly, we just had a really around-the-world trip as we discussed problem

areas and our mutual desire to work together to help solve those problems.

We discussed Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kosovo. I briefed the President on the recent Annapolis Conference that we hosted to help get the peace process started between the Palestinians and Israelis. We had a very compatible relation—discussion because by and large, we're in agreement on how to advance the solutions to these issues.

And finally, I'm—have expressed and will continue to dialog with the President about my deep concern about Iran. Iran is dangerous. Iran—we believe Iran had a secret military weapons program. And Iran must

explain to the world why they had a program. Iran has an obligation to explain to the IAEA why they hid this program from them. Iran is dangerous, and they'll be even more dangerous if they learn how to enrich uranium.

And so I look forward to working with the President to explain our strategy and figure out ways we can work together to prevent this from happening for the sake of world peace.

So I'm sure proud to have you here, Mr. President, and welcome.

President Napolitano. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It has been a great pleasure for me to accept your invitation. You kindly addressed me 6 months ago when you were in Rome, and we had already then very positive talks.

And in the past few months, there have been important and rather positive developments in the international situation. First of all, I wanted to express to President Bush my deep appreciation for the responsibility he wanted to take to foster negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian authorities in view of a peace treaty.

Italy is present in several areas of crisis. In this moment, it is an Italian general who is taking the command of the Kabul region in Afghanistan. In Iraq, we give our contribution to the stabilization of the country, participating in NATO training activities. And as a matter of fact, there has been an undeniable improvement in the security conditions in Iraq in the past few months.

In fact, generally speaking, we share the same concerns, and we express a common commitment. And speaking particularly of Kosovo, we could verify how close are our positions on the way to deal with the independence of Kosovo, taking into account the difficult overall situation in the region.

We want to discuss constructively our positions on all questions and all threats. We just want to give our contribution and our idea how to face successfully all threats, including the relative threat of nuclear weaponization of Iran.

I just want to add a word about Europe, because in the past few months, there has been something important. Europe was able—European Union was able to overcome a stalemate, a very dangerous institutional stalemate. The constitutional treaty has been put aside, but a new treaty has been outlined unanimously, and the day after tomorrow it will be signed in Lisbon. And on the basis of this new treaty, which has to be ratified by the signed—I am sure it will be ratified by all 27 member states—we'll have new figures; we'll have new institutions more capable to affirm the role of a united Europe on the international scene.

Italy and Europe both must take their responsibilities for international security and peace for the cause of liberty and democracy. And the more Europe will be united and will be effective, I think the better we can reach these goals. We cannot ask the United States to take care of our security. International security is a common duty, and Europe must be up to this challenge.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Napolitano referred to Brig. Gen. Federico Bonato, Italian Army, commander, Regional Command Capital, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan.

Statement on the Situation in Burma *December 11, 2007*

I am deeply disturbed by the report that U.N. Special Rapporteur Paulo Pinheiro released today in Geneva documenting his findings from his trip to Burma last month. It provides further alarming details about the Burmese authorities' crackdown on demonstrations by monks and democracy activists and the severe reprisals that continue today.

He describes how the regime harassed, detained, and killed many peaceful demonstrators. The Special Rapporteur received reports, for example, that a large number of bodies were burned September 27–30 at the Ye Way Crematorium.

I strongly condemn these actions and the junta's refusal to accept the need for real change in Burma. Even while Mr. Pinheiro was in Burma, the regime continued to arrest and harass monks and democracy activists. The regime has also closed down monasteries, including the Maggin Monastery in Rangoon that served as a hospice and treatment center for HIV/AIDS patients.

Mr. Pinheiro's report demonstrates why the world cannot go back to business as usual with General Than Shwe and his junta. I call on all members of the international community to condemn the atrocities detailed in Mr. Pinheiro's report in the strongest possible terms. Last month, I announced new sanctions on the leaders of the regime and their cronies. Should the regime continue to ignore calls for a true democratic transition and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, the United States is prepared to lead international efforts to place more sanctions on the regime. Laura and I will continue to stand with the Burmese people as they seek the freedom they deserve.

NOTE: The President referred to Senior Gen. Than Shwe, Chairman, State Peace and Development Council of Burma; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma.

Remarks on Presenting the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor *December 12, 2007*

You know, one of the wonderful experiences of being a President is to welcome citizens who have served their communities with valor and compassion. And I—General and I are surrounded by four such gentlemen who have been heroic in their duties. They will tell you they were just doing their job; I'm telling you they did their job with extraordinary courage. And

so it's been an honor to award them this precious medal. And I want to thank you all very much for joining us. Proud to call you fellow citizens.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.