

NOTE: The statement referred to President-elect Ma Ying-jeou of Taiwan.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll *March 24, 2008*

Laura and I welcome you to the White House for the Easter egg roll. How about the Jonas Brothers? Thanks for coming. We are sure glad you're here. We welcome you to the Easter egg roll.

Pretty soon, after a few remarks, I have the honor of blowing the whistle to start the Easter egg roll. But we've got a lot of other people who are going to make sure today is a special day. We want to thank all our volunteers who have made this event possible. We thank our—[*applause*]*—yes, there you are. [Laughter]* We thank our readers. For you Dallas Cowboy fans, it is a great honor to welcome Troy Aikman here to be one of the readers.

We want to remind you that we're dedicating today's Easter egg roll to our clean oceans. And there's a booth here where

you can find out how you can contribute to make sure that we're environmentally sound stewards of our oceans. Ocean conservation is an important aspect of good public service, and it's certainly something that Laura has on her mind, as she comes up to address you. And so now it's my honor to welcome the First Lady of the United States, my dear wife, Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 a.m. from the Blue Room balcony at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers the Jonas Brothers; and Troy Aikman, former quarterback, National Football League's Dallas Cowboys. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Department of State *March 24, 2008*

Madam Secretary, thank you very much for your hospitality. I just had a very interesting dialogue on how to strengthen the State Department's capacity to bring freedom and peace around the world, how to make sure the State Department works collaboratively with the Defense Department as we deal with some of the more difficult areas and really take advantage of some of the great opportunities that we're faced with.

And so I really want to thank you, Madam Secretary, and I thank the folks who work in this building. Our citizens have really no idea of how competent, cou-

rageous, and successful the people here who work at the State Department are. I do. After my—now my eighth year as President, I've gotten to know the people in the State Department well. And I'm impressed, and so should our citizens.

Obviously, we want to expand the reach of the State Department by increasing the size and its efficiencies and to make sure that there's interoperability. And along these lines, of course, I'm fully aware that folks who have worked in the State Department lost their lives and—in Iraq, along with our military folks. And on this day of reflection, I offer our deepest sympathies