

Remarks Following a Meeting With Afghanistan Provincial Governors *April 8, 2008*

I've just had a fascinating opportunity to discuss Afghanistan with eight Governors. I started off the meeting by telling them I was a Governor once. And I—and they were then telling me their stories, their concerns. First of all, they universally thanked the American people for standing with them as this new democracy takes hold.

Secondly, there's concerns about unemployment, about economic development. Some Provinces are quiet. And the Governor wondered whether or not, because it's quiet, people remember the people in the Province exist. Other Provinces have got some difficult security problems.

They shared with me very candidly their concerns about different types of operations, their desire to see to it that the police get better training and better equipment.

And I shared with them our desire to help them succeed, because one of the

things that really matters in democracy is that local governance is strong and good and honest, that the people are being able to see the benefits of democracy. And it's hard work in Afghanistan, but I told these leaders I think it's necessary work.

And I want to thank them for coming to America. They've got a very busy schedule. They've been to several States. And I think it's going to be very important for our fellow citizens to meet these good men and to understand the problems they face, and their desire to have their families live in peace, and young girls go to school, and be people treated with dignity.

So I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for the wonderful gift, and I'm proud you're here.

I'm now going to show them the Oval Office, a shrine to democracy. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Message to the Senate Transmitting Amendments to the International Telecommunication Union Constitution and Convention *April 8, 2008*

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the amendments to the Constitution and Convention of the International Telecommunication Union (Geneva, 1992), as amended by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) and the Plenipotentiary Conference (Marrakesh, 2002), together with the declarations and reservations by the United States, all as contained in the Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006). I transmit also, for the information of the

Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning the amendments.

The Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006) adopted amendments that, among other things: clarify the functions of certain International Telecommunication Union (ITU) officials and bodies; reduce the frequency of certain ITU conferences; clarify eligibility for re-election to certain ITU positions; enhance oversight of the ITU budget and provide for results-based (as well as cost-based) budget proposals; expand the scale of available contribution levels for Member States and Sector Members; and,

clarify the definition of and role of observers participating in ITU proceedings.

Consistent with longstanding practice in the ITU, the United States, in signing the 2006 amendments, made certain declarations and reservations. Subject to those declarations and reservations, I believe the United States should ratify the 2006 amendments to the International Telecommunication Union Constitution and Convention. These amendments will contribute to the ITU's ability to adapt to

changes in the global telecommunications sector and, in so doing, serve the needs of the United States Government and United States industry. It is my hope that the Senate will take early action on this matter and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
April 8, 2008.

Remarks on Signing the Second Chance Act of 2007 April 9, 2008

The President. Please be seated. Thank you. Please sit down. Thanks for coming. I'm about to sign a piece of legislation that will help give prisoners across America a second chance for a better life. This bill is going to support the caring men and women who help America's prisoners find renewal and hope.

I can't thank the folks who care enough about a fellow citizen to offer their love and compassion. It's through the acts of mercy that compassionate Americans are making the Nation a more hopeful place, and I want to thank you all for joining us today.

And I thank the Members of Congress who have joined us as well: Senator Arlen Specter, ranking member of the Judiciary Committee; Chairman Joe Biden, not of the Judiciary Committee—

Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Thank God. [Laughter]

The President. —but of Foreign Relations; but a key member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Sam Brownback, as well. So we've got three United States Senators here, and I'm honored they are here. Members of the United States Congress—chairman of the House Judiciary, John

Conyers, and Ranking Member Lamar Smith: I want to thank you all for coming.

I appreciate very much Danny Davis joining us as well—bill sponsor. I want to thank Jim Sensenbrenner and Bobby Scott and Howard Coble and Chris Cannon, all good Members and all Members who worked hard to get this piece of legislation here in timely fashion.

I thank the Attorney General, Judge Michael Mukasey, for joining us as well. Elaine Chao—thank you for coming, Madam Secretary; Rob Portman, former Director of the OMB; and all the supporters of the Second Chance legislation. Thanks for caring about your country; thanks for working on this piece of legislation.

The country was built on the belief that each human being has limitless potential and worth. Everybody matters. We believe that even those who have struggled with a dark past can find brighter days ahead. One way we act on that belief is by helping former prisoners who've paid for their crimes. We help them build new lives as productive members of our society.

The work of redemption reflects our values; it also reflects our national interests. Each year, approximately 650,000 prisoners