

supported by the reentry initiative. When I visited the program, I tried to remind them that the least shall be first. I also reminded him I was a product of a faith-based program. I quit drinking, and it wasn't because of a government program. It required a little more powerful force than a government program in my case.

And he told me that he appreciates the love and compassion he felt—feels on a regular basis. He's working; he's back with his family; he's a good guy. And I want to thank you for coming, Thomas.

I want to thank you for coming, Thomas.

Thomas Boyd. Yes, sir, thank you.

The President. There's a lot of other Thomases out there that we're going to

help with this bill. And so I thank the Members of Congress for joining us. Thanks for your hard work. I thank the members of my administration who are going to see to it that the bill is implemented properly.

And now it is my honor to sign this important piece of legislation. May God bless the country, and may God bless those who are trying to help. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 1593, approved April 9, was assigned Public Law No. 110-199.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore

April 9, 2008

President Bush. Welcome the Senior Minister from our very close ally, Singapore, back to the Oval Office. Gosh, I think we must have met, seems like a half a dozen, at least, times since I've been the President.

Senior Minister Goh. Yes.

President Bush. And every time I meet with you, I come away with a better understanding of a lot of issues, particularly in your part of the world. I thank you very much for briefing me and sharing your wisdom.

We spent a lot of time talking about the neighborhood. But before I get to a couple of countries in the neighborhood, I do want to say, one, how much I appreciate your firm stance against extremists and radicals who use the tactics of murder and intimidation to advance their ideologies. Singapore is a very strong ally in the war against the extremists.

And I also am so pleased that the trade agreement that we negotiated during our

respective times has kicked in. I'm a believer in free and fair trade, as are you, sir, and our FTA with Singapore was a very positive accomplishment for our two countries.

We did spend time talking about the countries in the neighborhood. We spent time on Burma and the need for the military regime there to understand that they shouldn't fear the voices of people. And yet they do. I'm disappointed with the progress made to date there and would urge the military leadership there to open up and respond to the will of the people.

And the other issue is China and its relations with Tibet. We both agree that it would stand the Chinese Government in good stead if they would begin a dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama. They'll find—if they ever were to reach out to the Dalai Lama, they'd find him to be a really fine man, a peaceful man, a man who is antiviolence, a man who is

not for independence but for the cultural identity of the Tibetans being maintained.

And so I want to thank you, sir. You got good knowledge, and you've had a lot of experience, and you're kind to share it with me.

Senior Minister Goh. Well, thank you very much, President, for welcoming me back to Oval Office. It's a joy coming back here and to see you. I was very interested in developments in the Middle East. And the President briefed me on the developments in Iraq, on concerns which he has over Iran, which is still a very big problem, not just for the U.S. but for the region and for the world.

Then President was interested in developments in Asia, so I was able to add some value to his knowledge—[laughter]—on Southeast Asia and on Asia.

On Tibet, I agree with the President that the way forward will be for the Chinese leaders to talk to some representatives of the Dalai Lama. And that is to—if they

can—to talk directly to the Dalai Lama. I think that's the only way for them to contain this problem.

On Myanmar, I told the President that while the army is the problem, the army has to be part of the solution. Without the army playing a part in solving problems in Myanmar, there will be no solution. So these are the issues which we discussed.

And of course, I emphasized the importance of keeping the world—having this free trade regime. The Doha round should be encouraged to move forward. It's moving too slowly, but it should move forward.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Senior Minister Goh. Thank you.

President Bush. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.

Remarks on the War on Terror April 10, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. Good morning. Fifteen months ago, I announced the surge. And this week, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker gave Congress a detailed report on the results.

The immediate goal of the surge was to bring down the sectarian violence that threatened to overwhelm the Government in Baghdad, restore basic security to Iraqi communities, and drive the terrorists out of their safe havens. As General Petraeus told Congress, American and Iraqi forces have made significant progress in all these areas. While there is more to be done, sectarian violence is down dramatically. Civilian deaths and military deaths are also down. Many neighborhoods once controlled

by Al Qaida have been liberated. And cooperation from Iraqis is stronger than ever, with more tips from residents, more Iraqis joining their security forces, and a growing movement against Al Qaida called the Sons of Iraq.

Improvements in security have helped clear the way for political and economic developments described by Ambassador Crocker. These gains receive less media coverage, but they are vital to Iraq's future. At the local level, businesses are reopening, and Provincial councils are meeting. At the national level, there's much work ahead, but the Iraqi Government has passed a budget and three major benchmark laws.