

Remarks on Congressional Action on the Legislative Agenda June 20, 2008

Good morning. This week, Congress moved forward on two important issues affecting the national security of our country.

Yesterday the House passed a responsible war funding bill that will provide vital resources to our men and women on the frontlines in the war on terror. This legislation gives our troops the funds they need to prevail without tying the hands of our commanders in the field or imposing artificial timetables for withdrawal.

The bill also supports our military families by passing an expansion of the GI bill that makes it easier for our troops to transfer unused education benefits to their spouses and their children. I want to thank the Members of Congress for their action on this legislation, and I urge the Senate to pass it as soon as possible.

Members of the House and Senate also reached a bipartisan agreement yesterday on legislation to allow our intelligence professionals to quickly and effectively monitor the plans of terrorists abroad, while protecting the liberties of Americans here at home.

My Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General tells me that this is

a good bill. It will help our intelligence professionals learn our enemies' plans for new attacks. It ensures that those companies whose assistance is necessary to protect the country will themselves be protected from liability for past or future cooperation with the Government.

The enemy who attacked us on September the 11th is determined to strike this country again. It's vital that our intelligence community has the ability to learn who the terrorists are talking to, what they're saying, and what they are planning.

I encourage the House of Representatives to pass this bill today, and I ask the Senate to take it up quickly so our intelligence professionals can better protect Americans from harm.

I'm pleased with the bipartisan cooperation on both these bills, and I thank the Members for their efforts.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. from the Oval Office Patio at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on North Atlantic Treaty Organization Enlargement June 20, 2008

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 3(2)(E)(ii) of the Resolution of Ratification to the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic adopted on April 30, 1998, I am pleased to submit the enclosed report.

In doing so, I reiterate with appreciation the bipartisan support that the Congress

has shown for NATO's next round of enlargement.

As provided in the Resolution, for each of the two current NATO invitees (Albania and Croatia) as well as for Macedonia (in the event an invitation is issued by the Alliance before the signing of accession protocols), the enclosed report includes:

- (I) updated information contained in the report required under clause (i) with respect to that country; and
- (II) an analysis of that country's ability to meet the full range of the financial burdens of NATO membership, and the likely impact upon the military effectiveness of NATO of the country invited for accession talks, if the country were to be admitted to NATO.

This report is in both classified and unclassified forms, as provided in the Resolution.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Robert C. Byrd, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; David R. Obey, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Isaac N. Skelton IV, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The President's Radio Address *June 21, 2008*

Good morning. Americans are concerned about the high price of gasoline. Everyone who commutes to work, purchases food, ships a product, or takes a family vacation feels the burden of higher prices at the pump. And families across our country are looking to Washington for a response.

The fundamental problem behind high gas prices is that the supply of oil has not kept up with the rising demand across the world. One obvious solution is for America to increase our domestic oil production. So my administration has repeatedly called on Congress to open access to new oil exploration here in the United States. Unfortunately, Democrats on Capitol Hill have rejected virtually every proposal. Now Americans are paying the price at the pump for this obstruction. So this week, I asked Democratic congressional leaders to take the side of working families and small businesses and farmers and ranchers and move forward with four steps to expand American oil and gasoline production.

First, we should expand American oil production by increasing access to the Outer Continental Shelf, or OCS. Experts believe that the OCS could produce

enough oil to match America's current production for almost 10 years. The problem is that Congress has restricted access to key parts of the OCS since the early 1980s. So I've called on the House and Senate to lift this legislative ban and give States the option of opening up OCS resources off their shores, while protecting the environment. There's also an executive prohibition on exploration in the OCS, which I will lift when Congress lifts the legislative ban.

Second, we should expand American oil production by tapping into the extraordinary potential of oil shale. Oil shale is a type of rock that can produce oil when exposed to heat and other processes. One major deposit in the Rocky Mountain West alone would equal current annual oil imports for more than 100 years. Unfortunately, Democrats in Congress are standing in the way of further development. In last year's omnibus spending bill, Democratic leaders inserted a provision blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands. That provision can be taken out as easily as it was slipped in, and Congress should do so immediately.