

People were saying, “Let’s get out of there; it doesn’t matter to our national security.” Iraq has changed a lot thanks to the bravery of people in this hangar and the bravery of troops all across our country. The terrorists on the run—the terrorists will be denied a safe haven, and freedom is on the march. And as a result, our children are more likely to grow up in a peaceful world. And I thank you for your service, and I thank you for your sacrifice.

It is important for the United States of America never to forget the transformative power of liberty. I believe there’s an Almighty, and I believe a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. And I know free societies yield the peace we all want. It’s in our national interest to keep the pressure on the terrorists, to give them no safe haven, no place to hide, to keep them on the run.

It’s also in our national interest to help others realize the blessings of a free society, so that when we look back at the initial chapters of the 21st century, we will say, we’ve done our duty. We defended the United States of America, and we laid the foundation for peace to come.

I want to thank you for your contributions to that hopeful chapter. I thank you for your courage. And there is no doubt in my mind that we will prevail. I’ve seen firsthand the character of the men and women who wear our uniform. I know such a man named Sergeant Gregory Williams. He’s right here with us today.

He was on night patrol in Baghdad when his vehicle was hit by an explosive device. The blast caused Sergeant Williams to lose consciousness. He recovered, and he put out the flames that were beginning to engulf him and the soldiers around him. He gave emergency aid to members of his platoon until he realized he was under enemy fire, and then he provided covering fire. He pulled his platoon leader out of the smoldering vehicle. Williams performed these actions despite the fact that he was burned himself, that he was wounded. His heroism that night saved the lives of his fellow soldiers, and for that he received the Distinguished Service Cross. And I’m proud to be in the presence of such a courageous American citizen.

All here have my pride and have my gratitude, and you have the thanks of our entire Nation. We honor your service. We appreciate the sacrifice of your families. A lot of Americans will keep you in their prayers. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. at the Thunderdome. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Mark W. Graper, USAF, commander, 354th Fighter Wing, who introduced the President; Col. D. Scott Wenke, USAF, commander, 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard; Col. Wendy Wenke, USAF, director of staff (air), Joint Force Headquarters—Alaska; and Susan Covich, daughter of Sen. Ted Stevens.

Statement on the International Convention Against Doping in Sport *August 4, 2008*

Today I signed the instrument of ratification for the International Convention Against Doping in Sport adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization on October 19, 2005.

This convention is a valuable tool in protecting the integrity of international sport and the health of athletes. The convention advances international cooperation on doping control matters and promotes a

drug-free competitive environment for athletes. Ratification of the convention represents the culmination of the longstanding efforts of the international community and the United States to jointly develop an equitable and harmonized approach to antidoping control and enforcement measures in international competition. Importantly, the convention highlights the vital role of youth education, comprehensive drug testing, and research in combating doping.

The timing of the United States ratification, on the eve of the Beijing Olympic Games, is appropriate. Over the next several weeks, the world will be focused on the talent and dedication of the world's most accomplished athletes. The convention makes clear that the use of performance-enhancing drugs to gain a competitive ad-

vantage undercuts the positive attributes of sport.

I remain particularly concerned that doping sends to young people the message that performance is more important than character and health. As a result, my administration has aggressively pursued education campaigns, research, and drug testing, as well as cooperation among public and private partners to encourage clean, fair, and healthy sport competition. These efforts have coincided with a significant decline in the number of young people using performance-enhancing drugs.

The challenges posed by doping must also be addressed by international cooperation and collaboration. By ratifying the convention, the United States is demonstrating its continued commitment and leadership in working with the international community to combat this public health issue.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea in Seoul, South Korea August 6, 2008

President Lee. Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, as well as your lovely daughter, Barbara Bush, I would like to welcome you from the bottom of our hearts. Yes, well, Mr. President, the majority of the Korean people have been eagerly waiting for your visit to Korea this time, and as you saw yesterday, there were many people who gathered together to welcome your visit to Korea.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Lee. And also, Mr. President, yesterday in the lawn in front of the Seoul City Hall, there were many people gathered there, thousands of people gathered, who came together to pray, not only for your visit, but also for the future of the Korea-U.S. relationship as well.

And of course, behind those people, there were those who were sort of opposed.

[*Laughter*] But, however, the number was minimal, sir.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Lee. Yes, well, Mr. President, I don't need to reiterate the fact that Korea and the United States, we are traditional allies and friends for many, many years. And also, it's been only a little over 5 months since I assumed the Presidency, but today is already our third meeting, Mr. President. So officially, but as well as personally, I have deep friendship for you and for the people of America, and I believe in the future of the Korea-U.S. relationship.

And as you saw, Mr. President, the weather today is beautiful. We had rain coming—torrential rain coming up until about 2 days ago. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Laura and I are