

nations in our own hemisphere. The Colombia free trade agreement will be good for Colombia, it will be good for America. The President and I have worked diligently to make sure this is a fair agreement, and Congress needs to pass it.

The Panamanian agreement, it's good for Panama, it's good for America. And Congress ought to pass that agreement too. It's important that these agreements be passed as soon as possible.

I want to thank the leaders for joining us. I'm looking forward to our discussion.

I appreciate your hard work in working to make sure your people and your countries have great opportunities. One such opportunity is access to jobs provided by markets.

Thank you for your vision, and thank you for your leadership. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 a.m. at the Council of the Americas Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks During a Discussion With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador in New York City September 24, 2008

*President Bush.* Mr. President, thank you.

I want to let my friend know, and the people of El Salvador, that the United States will extend TPS status to El Salvadorans living in our country. This is a decision that was made to improve the lives of El Salvadorans.

I'm proud to make this announcement with you standing by my side. You've been a very strong and courageous leader, and you have been a friend. And I know this is an issue of concern to you because you care deeply about the people of your country. And so when you get back home, you can tell the people that TPS has been extended.

Thank you, sir.

*President Saca.* Thank you very much. Thank you very much, President, for extending for 18 months more the TPS for the people of El Salvador. This is going to benefit our Salvadoran people with—since we have been walking in liberty, in democracy, and in integration.

Thank you very much this morning for this extension.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:53 a.m. at the Council of the Americas Headquarters. President Saca spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on Provincial Elections Legislation in Iraq September 24, 2008

Today Iraq's parliament passed a Provincial elections law enabling Iraq to hold Provincial elections by January 31, 2009. Elec-

tions in Iraq can now be held under a new system that will give Iraqis more say in choosing their elected representatives.