

as the CEQ Chairman to work to find additional areas in the Pacific that could be eligible for Federal protection. We will improve our wetlands work by protecting, restoring, and improving an additional 4 million acres.

It's important to set clear goals. We have set clear goals in this administration, we have met those goals, and in this case, we're setting a new goal. We will expand the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the Davidson Seamount. This 585-square-nautical-mile addition will safeguard one of the largest known seamounts in U.S. waters, and it will protect an extraordinary array of ocean creatures.

All Americans have a responsibility and obligation to be good stewards of our environment. And one person who understands that is Pietro Parravano. I met Pietro today. He is a commercial fisherman in Half Moon Bay, California. He was as excited to see this exhibit as I was. When a project to expand the nearby Port of Oakland threatened the bay's fishing grounds, Pietro helped broker an agreement that allowed the expansion of the port while protecting Half Moon Bay. Pietro has continued his cooperative conservation work at the local, State, and Federal and international levels. This fisherman has been honored by NOAA and the EPA. He says, "Conservation needs

to be everyone's priority, because the oceans belong to all Americans."

I don't know where you are, Pietro, but—somewhere around here—wherever you are—there he is. Thanks, Pietro. Only in America. We're sure glad you're here, and thanks for your work. Like, people—Pietro shows that, you know, you can make a difference in your communities; it's just not all that hard. And part of the purpose of this fantastic facility is to encourage people to do that when it comes to the oceans.

I believe that the research that's going on and the actions that will be taken by this administration and, hopefully, future administrations will say to our children and grandchildren, we saw our responsibility, and we met it; that those of us who work here in Washington came here to be a constructive force, to see problems before they became acute, and we did something about it. And for those of you in this room who are doing something about it, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and so will future generations of Americans. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Sant Ocean Hall at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. In his remarks, he referred to Pietro Parravano, secretary, San Mateo County Harbor District Board of Commissioners.

Remarks Following a Video Teleconference With Military and Civilian Leaders in Afghanistan September 26, 2008

President Bush. President, welcome. I'm pleased to be joined by President Karzai and members of his Government, as we've just had a discussion with our fellow citizens represented here on the screen. We had a real-time SVTS with PRT members in Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces in Af-

ghanistan, plus the Governors—the Afghan Governors.

My reaction to our conversation is, one, there was promise and progress. No question, it's difficult. But if you listen to the people who are actually on the ground working with the citizens of Afghanistan on matters such as agriculture or education or

infrastructure, you'll understand why I said that there is progress and promise and hope.

And so I want to thank my fellow citizens, Mr. President, in your presence, for their sacrifice and service. Three of the PRT members are here, Provincial Reconstruction Teams. This is a central part of a counterinsurgency strategy, which combines economic development, education, infrastructure with security, all aiming to help this young democracy not only survive, but to thrive, so that it never becomes a safe haven for those would do us harm again.

I've had a grand experience in dealing with President Karzai. He and I have known each other for a long time.

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Exactly.

President Bush. We—I can remember when I was informed that our special forces rescued President Karzai during the liberation of Afghanistan. He was stuck out there wondering whether he was going to make it—

President Karzai. Top of the mountain.

President Bush. We sent some good troops in and pulled him out. And he has served his country then, and he's served his country now as the President. And I admire your leadership and your determination to succeed. And I want to welcome you here. I want to let you know that the United States is committed to the people of Afghanistan. We will stand by your side and do the hard work necessary to achieve our objective. And our objective is for you to become a thriving democracy and to deny Al Qaida and other extremists a safe haven or a base from which to launch their murderous attacks.

Welcome.

President Karzai. Thank you, President. Mr. President, thank you very much for seeing me and my delegation once again, so graciously, and with tremendous hospitality, as always, in the White House.

Mr. President, my trip this time to Washington, as I insisted to be here with you,

is for one reason alone, and that is to thank you and, through you, the American people for all that you have done for Afghanistan. You can't imagine here in Washington, especially at the White House, how much difference you have made to the lives of the Afghan people by your personal commitment to Afghanistan, by your commitment for the betterment of Afghan life, for the security of the Afghan people, the democracy of the Afghan people, for education and health and all that we discussed earlier with the PRTs and the Afghan Governors.

At times in this, the span of 7 years, we have come across issues that gives us a feeling as if things were slowing down. That is not the impression that we have in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has made progress that we would have not been able to make in 50 years or 60 years—what you have done in the past 6 or 7 years. We have rebuilt in 4 years more than 3,500 of our roads. We have millions of children. We have more than 85,000 of our babies, infants, and children now saved each year. Infant mortality is down; health care from 9 percent to 85 percent. National reserves, I will share that for you now, from \$180 million of 2002 to \$3.5 billion today—over \$3 billion today.

Life is better. Of course we have challenges, and the challenges will continue to face us as we move ahead. The success is already there; the success will be completed. You will be leaving office, Mr. President, together with the Vice President, in a few months from today, but I would like you to remember as you leave office that Afghanistan will remember you tremendously, nicely, with affection. And you are there in our memory in a golden plate. Come and visit us so we can show it to you in a manner that we do traditionally in Afghanistan.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Karzai. It's an honor to have associated with you, to have had your friendship, and to have had your support

and to have had your patience with me and some of our habits up there. [*Laughter*]. Very, very nice of you. I have yelled at times, I've been angry at times, but you've always been smiling and generous, and that's so nice of you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Karzai. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom September 26, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. The United States has got a great friendship with Great Britain, and you and I have worked hard to make sure that friendship stays strong. And I appreciate you coming down from New York, and I thank you for the consultations on this current economic issue.

What the Prime Minister wants to know is, is the plan we've devised big enough to make a difference, and is it going to be passed? And I told him the plan is big enough to make a difference, and I believe it is going to be passed. And I really want to thank you very much for staying in touch during this difficult period of time, not only for us, but for people all around the world.

Secondly, we talked about trade. There's no stronger advocate for free and fair trade than Prime Minister Brown has been. And I appreciate your strong support for trade; because he knows what I know: That if—the best way to help deal with poverty and hopelessness is to give people opportunity through free and fair trade.

And so I thank your steadfast support on Doha. I told him that we are still optimistic that the Doha round can be reinvigorated, and we strategized as to how to do that. And I thank you for your advice on that.

Finally, we talked about Iraq and Afghanistan. Both our nations still have troops in those two countries. We're helping young democracies not only survive, but

grow and thrive. And I fully believe that when people look back at this period of history, they will say, thank goodness the United States and Great Britain stood strong, because we're helping to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

So I welcome you back to the Oval Office. Thank you for coming.

Prime Minister Brown. It's a great privilege to be here this afternoon. And I thank you for your hospitality, President Bush.

We talked about a number of issues: Iraq, Afghanistan, the trade talks, what's happening in Russia and in the—in Georgia, and about the general situation in the world economy. And we concentrated on the financial issues that are being raised in every country of the world by what's happening because of financial turbulence on the markets.

America and Britain have always stood together and as one in times of difficulty and challenge. And I said to President Bush this afternoon that facing this global turbulence, Britain supports the financial plan. And whatever the details of it, it's the right thing to do to take us through these difficult circumstances.

I was also able to tell President Bush that other countries whom I've talked to during the course of the last week in New York—every continent, all the members of the G-7, believe that America deserves the support of the rest of the world in the