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Statement on the Inauguration of the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

July 18, 2003

I congratulate President Joseph Kabila and the Congolese people on the installation of the new transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also extend congratulations to Vice Presidents Jean-Pierre Bemba, Abdoulaye Yerodia, Azarias Ruberwa, and Z'Ahidi Ngoma. The arrival of former rebel leaders in Kinshasa and their participation with former opposition parties in the new Government is a major achievement that sets the country on a course toward peace and democratic elections. I am confident that the Congolese people will be well served by the experience and vision these five leaders bring to these important posts.

The United States will work closely with President Kabila and the transitional Government to promote peace, prosperity, and democracy for all Congolese. I call upon neighboring countries to join us in supporting Congo's new Government during this crucial time.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7691—Captive Nations Week, 2003

July 18, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Captive Nations Week, first declared in 1959 as a statement against the continuing Communist domination of Eastern Europe, America expresses its dedication to freedom and democracy. While many countries around the world uphold these principles, millions of people still live under regimes that violate their citizens' rights daily. In countries such as Burma and Iran, citizens lack the right to choose their government, speak out against oppression, and practice their religion freely. The despot who rules Cuba imprisons political opponents and crushes peaceful opposition, while in North Korea hundreds of thousands languish in prison camps and citizens suffer from malnutrition as the regime pursues weapons of mass destruction. Violence, corruption, and mismanagement reign in Zimbabwe and an authoritarian government in Belarus smothers political dissent.

Yet the cause of freedom is advancing. With the demise of the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi people are no longer captives in their own country. Their freedom is evidence of the fall of one of the most oppressive dictators in history. Today, American and coalition forces are helping to restore civil order and provide critical humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. Iraqis are now meeting openly and freely to discuss the future of their country. The United States vows to continue to work with those trying to bring about peaceful democratic change and greater respect for human rights.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959, (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as ''Captive Nations Week.''

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 20 through July 26, 2003, as Captive Nations Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to reaffirm their commitment to all those seeking liberty, justice, and self-determination.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Dallas, Texas

July 18, 2003

Thank you all very much. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. It is great to be home. It's really fun for us to see a lot of our old buddies—some of our young buddies too. [*Laughter*] This is our first trip back to Texas since I got back from Africa. You may remember we were over there, and we went to a park in Botswana. That's where we learned a lot about our party's mascot. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you all for your help. Thanks a lot. It means a lot to Laura and me. We love Texas, and we love our friends, and we want to thank our friends for helping us. You're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great victory in November of 2004.

I'm getting ready, loosening up. [*Laughter*] But I'm going to have to count on you to energize the grassroots and to make the phone calls and to put up the signs and to address the envelopes and remind everybody that our message is so positive and hopeful for every citizen of this State and this country.

The political season will come in its own time. But right now, I'm focused on the people's business in our Nation's Capital. I have a job to do, and we have a lot on our agenda. And I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of all America by keeping this Nation strong and secure, free, and prosperous.

I am thrilled that Laura's here. She is a fabulous First Lady, and I love her dearly. She is just a steady rock and has been a great comforter for a lot of Americans during some of our difficult times.

I appreciate our Governor. I want to thank him for his introduction. I thank him for his introduction; more importantly, I thank him for his great leadership for the State of Texas. He is Governor during some tough times for this State, and he has led with courage and vision. And the State of Texas is better off with Rick Perry as the Governor.

I know we've got quite a few of the mighty Texas congressional delegation with us today. And I'm going to tell you something: It's really good to have steady support in the House of Representatives from our fellow Texans, Texans like Joe Barton and Michael Burgess and Kay Granger and Jeb Hensarling and Sam Johnson. I want to thank all of them for their service to our State and to our Nation.

I know our able Lieutenant Governor is here, and I want to thank David Dewhurst for his service to the State of Texas, and the speaker of the house, my fellow Midland, Texan, citizen Tommy Craddick; I want to thank Tom for his service. Thank you, Tom and Nadine. I saw Marchant and Branch out there, two fine members of the Texas House. It's good to see you all.

I appreciate so very much my close personal friend Mercer Reynolds. He's the national finance chairman for the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign. I want to thank Mercer for his hard work. I want to thank my close friend Fred Meyer for being the Texas State finance chairman. I thank Jeanne Johnson Phillips and Roger Williams for being the finance vice chairmen for our campaign here. I want to thank all of you who worked hard to raise this money. I appreciate your help.

Finally, I want to thank the Gatlin boys for bringing their mother. [*Laughter*]

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities, instead of letting them slip away. We are meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many leaders of Al Qaida, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we