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country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Westin Galleria. In his remarks, he referred to Texas House of Representatives Speaker Tom Craddick; and Fred Meyer, Texas State finance chairman, Jeanne Johnson Phillips, Texas State vice chairman, and Nancy Kinder, fundraiser, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy in Crawford, Texas

July 21, 2003

President Bush. Thank you for coming. I'm honored to host my friend the Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi. It's such an honor for us to welcome—I say "us"; Laura welcomes him as well as I to our ranch. We welcome the Prime Minister as a good friend, and he represents a country which is a strong ally to America. Welcome.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you.

President Bush. I want to thank him for being such a gracious host during our trips overseas, and we're really pleased to return the hospitality.

Last year, on America's Memorial Day, Prime Minister Berlusconi visited a American military cemetery in Italy to honor our service members who gave their lives defending freedom in Europe. His actions touched me personally. He understands the history and the values that our two countries share. The people of the United States and Italy love freedom, and we know that freedom must be defended.

We also understand that defending freedom requires costs and sacrifice. And the United States is grateful for Italy's willingness to bear the burdens with us. Italy and America stood together through nearly a half a century of cold war. Over the past decade, we have stood together against oppression and hatred in the Balkans. And in the months since September the 11th, 2001, Italy and America have stood side by side against tyranny and global terror.

The war on terror continues. We will see it through to victory. Global terrorist networks are a threat to America, to Italy, and to all peaceful nations. And we are disrupting and destroying those networks. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to America, to Italy, and to all peaceful nations. We will persevere until that threat is removed. Radicalism and ideologies of hatred are a threat to America, to Italy, and to all peaceful nations. And we are determined to spread liberty and progress and hope.

My country is especially grateful to the Italian troops and police who are serving with skill and courage in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our efforts to work for freedom and stability in these countries and throughout the entire region are an integral part of the war on terror. And we will make both our nations safer and advance the peace of the world.

The Prime Minister and I are both encouraged by signs of progress toward a great goal in the Middle East: two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security. Both Prime Minister Abbas and Prime Minister Sharon are showing leadership and courage. Now it is time for governments across the Middle East to support the efforts of these two men by fighting terror in all its forms. This includes the Governments of Syria and Iran. This behavior is—today, Syria and Iran continue to harbor and assist terrorists. This behavior is completely unacceptable, and states that support terror will be held accountable.

Supporting and harboring terrorists undermines the prospects for peace in the Middle East and betrays the true interests of the Palestinian people. Terrorism is the greatest obstacle to the emergence of a Palestinian state, and all leaders who seek this goal have an obligation to back up their words in real actions against terror. And leaders who are interested in a peaceful solution in the Middle East must support the efforts of Prime Minister Abbas to build a democratic Palestine and ease the hardships faced by the Palestinian people.

The Prime Minister and I are in complete agreement that Europe and America are both more secure and more effective when

we act together. I'm pleased that Prime Minister Berlusconi is now serving as the President of the European Union. And I'm confident that under his leadership of the EU, Europe and America will continue to meet the great challenges before us.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your leadership, your wise counsel, and your friendship, and welcome to Crawford, Texas.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for hosting me, and thank you for inviting me here to visit a country which I love very much, to talk about our common concerns: that is, freedom, democracy, and justice and development.

Thank you very much for welcoming me in your home, making me feel as a member of your family. Please let me say so, this is again a chance for me to talk to you and tell you about the gratitude I have, the gratitude I personally have, my country has for you, for a country which allowed us to enjoy our freedom and our welfare and well-being and to enjoy all of this.

This morning I attended one of your meetings, work meetings, and I was strongly impressed by the burden of responsibilities that you take on yourself and on your country. And I really thought that it was extremely important for the citizens in the West to know with what attention and care and with what spirit of sacrifice and generosity the United States and its President follow the developments all over the world which might bring about danger and threat and hurt any country in the world.

He already mentioned the subjects we discussed in our meeting and already said that we have a common vision on all of these issues, with no exception. I'll go back to Italy and Europe with a belief which I already had but which was strengthened by my visit here. My belief is that we really need to support and develop the culture of union and cohesion and certainly not nurture the culture of division. Selfishness, narcissism, and division shall never win. We need to revive the huge strength of cohesion. And this has to be a vital force, able to plan and build something. And this is the message which I'm going to bring back to my European allies as President of the European Union.

Once again, thank you, Mr. President, for the friendship of your people to my country and for your personal friendship and esteem.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Before the Prime Minister and I take a tour of the ranch, we'll answer a couple of questions.

Deb, AP [Deb Reichman Kepler, Associated Press].

Liberia

Q. Mr. President, a mortar shell has hit the U.S. Embassy in Liberia. The U.S. has sent a contingent of Marines there to protect its interests. What about the civilians being killed? There were some civilians dragged in front of the Embassy this morning. Sir, my question is, can the U.S. stand by and watch the violence spiral out of control, and what about sending U.S. peacekeepers?

President Bush. Well, you're right, we just sent a group of troops in to protect our interests, and we're concerned about our people in Liberia. We'll continue to monitor the situation very closely. We're working with the United Nations to effect policy necessary to get the cease-fire back in place. We are working with ECOWAS to determine when they will be prepared to move in the peacekeeper troops that I have said we'd be willing to help move into Liberia. We're monitoring the situation very carefully.

You call on somebody.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. [*Inaudible*]

President Bush. No, you get to call on somebody.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. *Si, si. Prego.*

Iraq

Q. The question, if possible, could be answered by both of you—that is, the situation in Iraq. Did you discuss the possibility of having Italian troops taking over and replacing the—taking over the peacekeeping operations and taking over from the U.S. military? And did you talk about reconstruction of Iraq? And did you also mention the possibility that countries which did not participate in the coalition can have the same role and the same share in the reconstruction of Iraq?

President Bush. No, we didn't talk about Italy replacing the United States as peacekeepers. Yes, we did discuss how to broaden the coalition to bring more security to Iraq.

It's very important for our citizens of both countries to understand that this extension of hostility is really a part of the war to liberate Iraq. There are people in Iraq who hate the thought of freedom. There are Saddam apologists who want to try to stay in power through terrorist activity. And I explained to the Prime Minister: We're patient; we're strong; we're resolute; and we will see this matter through. And obviously, the more help we can get, the more we appreciate it. And we are continuing to work with other nations to ask their help and advice. And we appreciate the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Secondly, the answer to your question about reconstruction efforts, the answer is, who can do the best job for the Iraqi people? The reconstruction effort shouldn't be viewed as a political exercise. It shouldn't be viewed as an international grab bag. It shouldn't be viewed as a special opportunity.

The answer to your question is, how best to improve the lives of the Iraqi people, how best to quickly establish electricity and clean water and hospitals and schools, all the things necessary for a free society to develop. And so if that can be—if that question can be answered positively by somebody who didn't necessarily agree with the decision, that's fine. We're interested—mostly interested in the Iraqi people.

Okay, Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. I share——

President Bush. You want to answer that? Sure.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. No, no, I completely share what the President just said.

President Bush. Then why don't you ask the Prime Minister a question so he can answer a question.

Q. Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, Adam.

North Korea

Q. New evidence suggests North Korea may have built a second, secret site to process plutonium. How concerned are you? Are you going to let this stand? Also, are you still hopeful of making progress in talks through the Chinese?

President Bush. Well, I appreciate you bringing up the latter, because I do believe we can solve this issue diplomatically by encouraging the neighborhood—the Chinese, the South Koreans, and the Japanese to join us with a single voice that says to Mr. Kim Chong-il, ''A decision to develop a nuclear arsenal is one that will alienate you from the rest of the world.''

The desire by the North Koreans to convince the world that they're in the process of developing a nuclear arsenal is nothing new. We've known that for a while. And therefore, we must continue to work with the neighborhood to convince Kim Chong-il that his decision is an unwise decision. And we will do just that.

Iraq

Q. Under what condition would you accept a new United Nation resolution about Iraq? You know that some countries are asking.

President Bush. Well, we're in close consultation with the U.N. We believe that 1483 empowers countries to make a proper decision to get involved in Iraq. Let me talk about the U.N. in relations to Iraq in general. Mr. de Mello is doing a very fine job. He is working very closely with Bremer. They've got a fine relationship, and that bodes well for future discussions. Fourteen eighty-three is a very strong resolution and a very adequate resolution.

But we're constantly in touch with U.N. officials. And Kofi Annan was in my office the other day, discussing a lot of different issues, and one of the issues was Iraq. The more people involved in Iraq, the better off we will be. And that's exactly what our intention is, to encourage people to participate in the—making Iraq more secure and more free. A free Iraq is a crucial part of winning the war on terror.

And now I'm going to go see to it that the Prime Minister is well fed. We're going to feed him some chicken.

Thank you, sir. I appreciate it very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:13 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime

Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Special Representative for Iraq Sergio Vieira de Mello of the United Nations; and L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq. Prime Minister Berlusconi spoke in Italian, and some reporters asked their questions in Italian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continued Operations of United States Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina

July 22, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of January 21, 2003, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR). The SFOR began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1491 of July 11, 2003. The mission of SFOR is to provide a focused military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key tasks and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately 1,800 personnel. United States personnel comprise approximately 15 percent of the total SFOR force of approximately 12,000 personnel. During the first half of 2003, 17 NATO nations and 11 others provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina are assigned to Multinational Brigade, North, headquartered near the city of Tuzla. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes and to conduct counter-terrorism operations. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have not sustained any combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Progress Report on Spending in Support of Plan Colombia

July 22, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 3204(e), Public Law 106–246, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration detailing the progress of spending by the executive branch during the first two quarters of Fiscal Year 2003 in support of Plan Colombia.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 22, 2003.