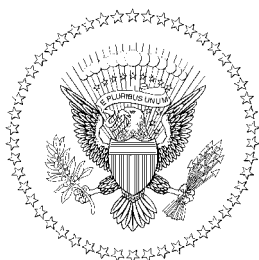


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, August 18, 2003
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Pages 1041–1067

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on August 15, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, August 15, 2003

**Executive Order 13314—Waiver
Under the Trade Act of 1974 With
Respect to Turkmenistan**

August 8, 2003

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including subsection 402(c)(2) and (d) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the “Act”) (19 U.S.C. 2432(c)(2) and (d)), and having made the report to the Congress set forth in subsection 402(c)(2), I hereby waive the application of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act with respect to Turkmenistan.

George W. Bush

The White House,
August 8, 2003.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 12, 2003]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on August 13. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Memorandum on Determination on
Turkmenistan**

August 8, 2003

Presidential Determination No. 2003–31

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination on Turkmenistan

Pursuant to Presidential Determination 98–7 of December 5, 1997, Turkmenistan was found to be not in violation of paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2432(a) and 2439(a)) (the “Act”) or paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of the Act. That determination with respect to Turkmenistan is no longer in effect.

Consistent with section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Act, I determine that a waiver by Executive Order of the application of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act with respect to Turkmenistan will substantially promote the objectives of section 402.

On my behalf, please transmit this determination to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to the President of the Senate.

You are authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., August 15, 2003]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on August 18. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Waiver on the
Extension of Normal Trade Relations
Status for Turkmenistan**

August 8, 2003

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

I hereby transmit the document referred to in subsection 402(c)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, with respect to a waiver of the application of subsections 402(a) and (b) of that Act to Turkmenistan.

I report in that document my determination that such a waiver will substantially promote the objectives of section 402. I have instructed the Secretary of State to provide a copy of that determination to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate. I have also provided a

separate report, prepared by my Administration, indicating that I have received the assurances with respect to the emigration practices of Turkmenistan required by section 402(c) (2)(B) of the Act.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on the
Extension of Normal Trade Relations
Status for Certain Former Eastern
Bloc States**

August 8, 2003

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

I hereby submit an updated report to the Congress, prepared by my Administration, consistent with sections 402(b) and 409(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2432(b) and 2439(b)), concerning the emigration laws and policies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The report indicates continued compliance of these countries with international standards concerning freedom of emigration, with the exception of Turkmenistan. In light of new developments, I am submitting a waiver for Turkmenistan.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 9, 2003

Good morning. Friday of this week was the 100th day since the end of major combat operations in Iraq. For America and our coalition partners, these have been 100 days of

steady progress and decisive action against the last holdouts of the former regime. And for the people of Iraq, this has been a period like none other in the country's history, a time of change and rising hopes after decades of tyranny.

Every day, we are working to make Iraq more secure. Coalition forces remain on the offensive against the Ba'ath Party loyalists and foreign terrorists who are trying to prevent order and stability. More and more Iraqis are coming forward with specific information as to the whereabouts of these violent thugs, enabling us to carry out raids to round them up and seize stockpiles of weapons.

We are working with Iraqis to establish a new Iraqi army and a new civil defense corps. In the city of Baghdad, 6,000 Iraqi police are patrolling the streets and protecting citizens. More than 20,000 more police are on duty in other towns and cities across Iraq.

Every day, Iraq is making progress in rebuilding its economy. In Baghdad, the banks have opened, and other banks will open across the country in the coming months. This fall, new banknotes will be issued, replacing the old ones bearing the former dictator's image. And Iraq's energy industry is once again serving the interests of the Iraqi people. More than a million barrels of crude oil and over 2 million gallons of gasoline are being produced daily.

Every day, Iraq draws closer to the free and functioning society its people were long denied. We're recovering hundreds of millions of dollars from the old regime and are using those funds to pay civil servants. Teachers, health care workers, police, and others performing essential services are also receiving salaries from our coalition. In fact, teacher pay is four times higher than under the old regime.

Life is returning to normal for the Iraqi people. Hospitals and universities have opened, and in many places, water and other utility services are reaching pre-war levels. Across Iraq, nearly all schoolchildren have completed their exams. And for the first time in many years, a free press is at work in Iraq. Across that country today, more than 150 newspapers are publishing regularly.

Most important of all, the Iraqi people are taking daily steps toward democratic government. The Iraqi Governing Council, whose 25 members represent all of that diverse country, is meeting regularly, naming ministers and drawing up a budget for the country. Soon, representatives of the people will begin drafting a new constitution, and free elections will follow.

At the local level, all major Iraqi cities and most towns have municipal councils. Freedom is taking hold in that country as people gain confidence that the former regime is never coming back.

One hundred days is not enough time to undo the terrible legacy of Saddam Hussein. There is difficult and dangerous work ahead that requires time and patience. Yet all Americans can be proud of what our military and provisional authorities have achieved in Iraq.

Our country and the nations of the Middle East are now safer. We're keeping our word to the Iraqi people by helping them to make their country an example of democracy and prosperity throughout the region. This long-term undertaking is vital to peace in that region and to the security of the United States. Our coalition and the people of Iraq have made remarkable progress in a short time, and we will complete the great work we have begun.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on August 8 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on the Healthy Forests Initiative in Summerhaven, Arizona

August 11, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks a lot. Good morning. Thanks for welcoming to this beautiful part of the world that has been scarred by nature. Senator McCain and

I drove up the hill and he was saying, "You know, this part of Arizona is a lot prettier than anywhere in Texas." [Laughter] I didn't believe it at first—[laughter]—but it is beautiful. And all of us are sorry that fire has devastated life in the countryside here.

I want to thank the people for Summerhaven for allowing us to come up to visit your beautiful part of the world. You know, any time a community has been devastated like Summerhaven has been devastated, you could determine the character of the people. And the character of the people of Summerhaven and this part of Arizona have been tested, and you've met the test, and our Nation admires your courage and strength.

Too many communities like this have known too many hardships that fire causes. We've got a problem in the country, a problem which has built up over decades, and a problem we better fix before more people go through the griefs the people of Summerhaven have gone through, or the people that were affected by the Rodeo fires in northern Arizona.

See, our job as policy people and Members of Congress, have got to fix problems when we see them. They don't ignore problems. They don't hope the problems go away. We come up with commonsense solutions to the problems that affect the daily lives of our citizens, and that's what we're here to talk about today.

One of the people I've tasked with coming up with solutions to the problems we face is Secretary Ann Veneman. She's done a fabulous job on behalf of the people of the United States. She is a commonsense purpose—person. She asks the practical questions about how do we solve problems in America. She's also done a fine job of running the Forest Service. And I appreciate Dale Bosworth being here. He's the Chief of the Forest Service. And thank you for coming, Chief. I appreciate your commonsense policy. And I want to thank all the Forest Service employees, not only here in this part of Arizona but all across the country, for your dedication and service. Thank you, sir.

I appreciate Big Dan being with us. He is a firefighter's firefighter. The Senator and

I and Madam Secretary had a chance to hear him talk about the courage and valor of the firefighters in this part of the State of Arizona as well as the others he commands. He and his partner, Larry, who I met last year, are just solid commanders. They're guys who set the course, set the strategy, and encourage the people to get after it.

And Dan, I want to thank you for your service to our country as well. I'm honored that you've given us a tour. I appreciate your service. I'm glad Ron called you into action—sad you had to come, but he called you into action because you're the best at what you do, and that's great for our country that you are. Thanks, Chief. Thank you and your wife for your service to America.

Ron, I want to thank you for your hospitality, and I want to thank all the good folks who work here in this park, in this park area for working hard to make sure the environment is safe and sound and secure and that this park remains a beautiful part of the country.

I want to thank John McCain for being with us. He's a commonsense conservative who understands that we can do a better job of managing our national resources. I also want to thank Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who is over from the great State of Colorado. Colorado has also faced a lot of fire, too many fire. And he understands we need better policy.

Jim Kolbe is with us today; he's the Congressman from this area. I asked the county commissioner here, I said, "Has the response been good?" His first—right off, he said, "McCain and Kolbe have been incredibly responsive to the people of this part of the world." And I want to—and Kyl, he didn't show up, so he doesn't get any credit. [Laughter] Kyl is a good man. He deserves credit.

But I do want to thank the Senators and the Member of Congress for responding so quickly to the needs of the people here. I also want to thank other members of the congressional delegation from Arizona: Jeff Flake and Trent Franks, Big J.D. Hayworth and Rick Renzi, all fine Members of the United States Congress, all represent their State and their district with distinction and

class, and I want to thank you all for joining us on this event.

I appreciate Janice Brewer, the secretary of state of the great State of Arizona for being here, all the members of the legislature and the State Senate are here, the county commissioner, our fellow citizens. Thank you for coming by to give us a chance to say hello.

I particularly want to thank the "hot shot" fire crews, the men and women who wear yellow, the people who put their lives on the line, those who respond to emergencies. The forest fire crews have been put to incredible tests recently. A lot of it has to do with failed policy, backward policy when it comes to maintaining the health of our forests.

Last year alone, it's important for our fellow citizens all across America to know that catastrophic wildfires burned about 7 million acres of land. And in trying to protect the natural resources and the people affected by those fires, we lost 23 firefighters, men and women who served our country with distinction. Our Nation is grateful for those who are willing to take risk on somebody else's behalf, and we extend our deepest sympathies to the loved ones who still mourn the lives of those which were lost.

Last month, the people of this beautiful part of America saw the devastating effects of the Aspen fire, which consumed over 85,000 acres. It destroyed hundreds of homes and buildings. We flew over Summerhaven. We saw the devastation. We saw the effects of a fire run wild, not only on the hillsides but also in the communities, burnt buildings, lives turned upside down because of the destruction of fire.

We also were able to see—I was able to hear the fact that our Government responded quickly, and that's important. In June, shortly after the fire began, FEMA issued a fire management assistance grant, granting millions of aid to the State of Arizona to cover a significant portion of the fire-fighting costs. That is a legitimate role of the Federal Government. And I will remind the House of Representatives and Members of the Senate that we have an obligation to help people fight fires in America.

The disaster declaration I signed authorized Federal assistance to the State and Pima County for rebuilding public infrastructure

and facilities. The SBA is providing low-interest loans to help small-business people in Summerhaven get their feet back on the ground and get the businesses started again. The Forest Service is putting down seed and hay to prevent soil erosion. We got to see some of the project, the hay project, on the hill right over there, right behind us.

The Federal Government has acted, and we need to act. But there's more we can do with good, sound policy. That's what we need to do at the Federal level. The University of Arizona Steward Observatory and the surrounding trees on Mount Lemmon are still standing today because of good, sound forest management practices. They didn't have fires in the area because there wasn't enough fuel to burn through the area, like that happened here.

There are campgrounds still intact, campgrounds used by church groups and scout troops which exist today because of good forest management. Forest-thinning projects make a significant difference about whether or not wildfires will destroy a lot of property. We need to thin our forests in America.

Our citizens must understand there are millions of acres of forest around this country that are vulnerable to catastrophic fire because of brush and small trees have been collecting for decades. As Senator McCain reminded me, it has taken decades for this problem to develop. And therefore, it's going to take a while to solve the problem, and we better get after it now with good, sound forest management projects.

It's important for people who don't know anything about forests and forest fires to understand that overgrowth chokes off nutrients to older and taller trees. It provides breeding grounds for insects and disease, which weaken our forests and make them more susceptible to fire. The kindling can turn small fires into large, raging fires that burn with such intensity that the trees literally explode. The devastation of a fire destroys not only trees but wildlife and its habitat. It causes flooding and soil erosion. It can ruin water supplies. Catastrophic fires burn so hot that it is incredibly hard to put them out. The kindling on the ground, the decades of neglect, the decades of failed policy have meant that our forest fires are incredibly hot,

incredibly catastrophic. If you don't believe me, ask people like Dan who make a living fighting these fires.

And so we've listened to the people who are the frontline of making sure our forests are preserved and healthy. See, we listen to them because we have an obligation in America to preserve our forests. Our forests are treasures that must be preserved for future generations. It's important that we have good, sound forest policy. And the best way to do so is to listen to the experts who understand that by thinning out our forests, we risk—we reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, that we can and we should have good, sound forest management policy all across the United States of America.

And that's why I outlined what I called a Healthy Forests Initiative. The forest policies of the past operated to discourage efforts to thin forests. And unfortunately, well-meaning people proposed—put policy in place that made the health of the forests at risk, not better off.

And so the initiative said we're going to take a new approach. I called upon Ann and the Secretary of Interior and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality to cut through bureaucratic redtape so that we can get urgently needed thinning projects moving. See, when you hear "redtape," that means there's a lot of rules and regulations that generally are in place to prevent something from happening. And our job is to slice through the redtape to get thinning projects moving forward.

We're speeding up the process of environmental assessment and consultations required now by current law, while considering both the health of the forest and our obligation to protect endangered species. We're expediting the administrative appeals process, so that disputes over projects are resolved quickly. In other words, not everybody agrees with thinning; there will be objections. But we want those objections heard, of course—every citizen needs to hear a voice—but we want the process to work quickly so we can get on about the business of saving our forests.

We believe in bringing people together to try to reach agreement on forest projects. We believe all voices should be heard. But we

want to expedite the process to avoid the legal wrangling and the delays that take place in our courts. Delays in our courts prevent us from doing the job necessary to maintain healthy forests.

We're working with the western Governors, most of—a lot of the problems exist in—out West, and we understand that. This is a place for good, sound policy to take place—out West on the Federal lands. Above all, we will continue to rely upon the informed judgment of the forest professionals and those who fight the fires.

Any skeptic about what I'm talking about ought to come and talk to the people who know what they're talking about, who make a living fighting fires, who understand the devastation that is caused by backward forest policy. Every forest will be treated according to its unique circumstances. Federal policy must be flexible to be able to deal with the problems in each particular part of our country.

Saving millions of acres of forest through better management will require a lot of hard work in a lot of States and, interestingly enough, will not only save our forests but will create jobs. You see, not all the work of thinning will be done by Government. In order to meet some of the goals we've proposed, we have to rely upon local contractors who will clear away and be able to sell smaller trees, the trees that provide the kindling. And this way, the work of thinning overgrown forests improves public safety, will save taxpayers' money, and will help local economies.

This initiative that I outlined, the Healthy Forests Initiative, is producing results. Last year, we treated 2¼ million acres of overgrown forests. That's a million acres more than were treated in the year 2000, and that's good. By the end of the fiscal year in September, we will have treated more than 2.6 million acres of forest and range land, and that's important. In Arizona, we're treating 224,000 acres this year, about twice as many acres as were treated in 2001.

We're making progress, but current law makes it very difficult to expedite the thinning of forests. Laws on the books make it very difficult for us to set priorities, to listen to those who manage our forests and fight the fires, and to get after the thinning that

is necessary to prevent catastrophic fires from occurring in the first place.

All too often, the litigation process delays forest projects for years and years, and that's a reality. Our forests remain unprotected; our communities are vulnerable. So I asked Congress to reform the review process for forest projects. The "Healthy Forest Restoration Act" now pending in Congress will do just that. It directs courts to consider long-term threats to forest health that could result if thinning projects are delayed. In other words, it says to the courts, the health of our forests is a national goal. It makes forest health the priority when it comes to the courts resolving disputes. It places reasonable time limits on the litigation process, after the public has had an opportunity to comment and a decision has been made.

For the sake of our forests, the Congress must act. The House of Representatives has passed a bill which includes these reforms, and I want to thank the Members from the great State of Arizona for their leadership. A bill—such a bill has passed the Senate Agriculture Committee. And now it's time for us in the administration and for Members in the Senate who agree with this policy to reach across the partisan divide and get a good bill out of the United States Senate.

The issue I speak about is not a political issue. It's not a partisan issue. This is an American issue that requires consensus to do what is smart and right about preserving and protecting our national forests. I look forward to working with members of both parties to get a good bill out of the United States Senate.

Within sight of where we stand are the results of wise forest policy and the ruins of unwise forest policy. For those who live here, it's the difference between lives surrounded by natural beauty and lives disrupted by natural disaster. We can serve the interests of this country by working together, by listening to people who know what they're talking about, and putting together commonsense policy to preserve our forests, to make them healthy so that when we step back after our time and service, people will say, "Job well done."

Thanks for coming. May God bless those who suffer, may God bless those who serve

our country, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. at Inspiration Rock. In his remarks, he referred to Dan Oltrogge and Larry Humphrey, incident commanders, Type I Southwest Area Incident Management Teams; Ron Senn, Santa Catalina District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service; Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado; and Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona.

**Remarks Announcing the
Nomination of Governor Michael O.
Leavitt To Be Environmental
Protection Agency Administrator in
Aurora, Colorado**

August 11, 2003

The President. Good afternoon. First, I want to make a comment about some foreign policy. Today's departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia is an important step toward a better future for the Liberian people. The United States will work with the Liberian people and with the international community to achieve a lasting peace after more than a decade of turmoil and suffering.

The United States will help ECOWAS and the humanitarian relief organizations to get aid to those who need it. I appreciate the efforts of many African leaders, most especially Nigerian President Obasanjo, Ghanaian President Kufuor, South African President Mbeki, Mozambican President Chissano. Their continued leadership will be needed in the weeks and months ahead as a new government is formed and the Liberian people seek to chart a future of peace and stability.

Earlier today, I spoke in Arizona about the urgent need to safeguard America's forests from wildfire. It's one of the many environmental challenges that face our Nation. Those challenges go beyond our forests. We must also be vigilant in protecting the air and soil and waters around us.

This is the primary responsibility of our Environmental Protection Agency, and today I am pleased to introduce my nominee to lead that Agency, Governor Mike Leavitt of Utah. I appreciate so very much Jackie being here, as well as Michael, Taylor, Anne Marie, Westin, and Chase, who's not with us. The

Leavitt family is a great American family, primarily because Dixie and Anne, the mom and dad of the Governor, worked hard to make it such, and I'm honored they are here as well. Thank you all for coming.

I also appreciate the fact that the leader of the house and the senate from Utah have joined us today.

I selected Mike Leavitt because he is a trusted friend, a capable executive, and a man who understands the obligations of environmental stewardship. With the Senate's approval, Mike Leavitt will lead an Agency with 18,000 dedicated employees in offices all across our country. The work of the EPA is vital and reflects a national consensus on the importance of good stewardship.

During the last three decades, we've seen extraordinary progress in cleaning our air and protecting our land and making our water more pure. The quality of our air is far better than it was in the 1970s. Many more of our lakes and rivers are safe for fishing and swimming. Toxic emissions have declined, and we're bringing new resources and programs to reduce runoff and erosion. We're making real progress protecting endangered species and helping them recover.

Mike Leavitt will come to the EPA with a strong environmental record and a strong desire to improve on what has taken place during the last three decades. He served for over a decade as Governor of an important State. As cochair of the Western Regional Air Partnership, Governor Leavitt has been a leader in applying high standards in air quality, and he understands the importance of clear standards in every environmental policy. He respects the ability of State and local governments to meet those standards, rejects the old ways of command and control from above. He was twice reelected by the people of Utah, in part because he leads by consensus and focuses on results instead of process.

In Utah and beyond, he has gained wide respect for handling environmental issues in a spirit of openness and bipartisanship. These qualities and his experience will make Mike Leavitt a fine addition to my administration. I will count on him to continue the good work begun by former Administrator Whitman and Acting Administrator Horinko.

He will join my Cabinet with a full agenda and with my full confidence. Mike, I appreciate your willingness to serve. I thank the people of Utah as you leave office to take on this incredibly important assignment in our Nation's Capital.

[At this point, Gov. Leavitt made brief remarks.]

The President. Great job. Thank you. Thank you all. Good job, Michael.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. at the Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia; President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique; Jacalyn S. Leavitt, wife of Gov. Leavitt, and their children Michael, Taylor, Anne Marie, Westin, and Chase; Martin R. Stephens, speaker, Utah State House of Representatives; and L. Alma "Al" Mansell, president, Utah State Senate. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Leavitt.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Dinner in Denver, Colorado

August 11, 2003

The President. Thank you all very much. I appreciate you coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. There is nothing like heading west.

I spent a little time on our ranch in Crawford, get to see more cows than I do the press corps. [Laughter] Seems like the cows are handling the heat a little better too. [Laughter]

But I want to thank you all very much for your help. I appreciate your strong support. I want to thank all those who made this fundraiser a record-setting fundraiser. I appreciate what you're doing. You're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great victory in November of '04.

I'm here to not only thank you; I'm here to tell you I'm going to need your support in energizing the grassroots of the great State of Colorado. I need your help in putting up signs. I need you to make the phone calls. I need you to mail the letters. I need you to remind people of this State—Republican,

Democrat, independent, don't care—that our message is one that is hopeful for every single citizen who lives in this State.

I'm loosening up. I'm getting ready—[laughter]—cutting a lot of cedar—[laughter]—running a lot of miles, getting ready for the contest. But the political season will come in its own time. For me, now is not the time for politics. You see, I've got a job to do. I'm staying focused on the people's business. I'm doing what you expect me to do in Washington, DC, and I'll continue to work to earn the confidence of every American by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

I want to thank my friend the Governor of the great State of Colorado. He is—he's done a fabulous job as your Governor. He does what he says he's going to do, which is nice, to have somebody in public office—[laughter]—who says something and means it. And like me, he married above himself. I'm honored to be here with the First Lady of the State of Colorado as well.

I just called Laura and said that I'm fixing to go see a lot of our friends from the State of Colorado. I said, "How's—what's it like down there?" She said, "It's only 103." [Laughter] I said, "Well, if that's the case, it feels like winter here." [Laughter]

I can't tell you how great it is to be married to such a fine woman as Laura Bush. She is a great First Lady for our country.

I appreciate the two Senators from the State of Colorado. Senator Wayne Allard, who's—turns out to be my State cochair, along with working with the Governor here. He's a great Senator. And so is Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I'm going to tell you, it's important to put this man back into the United States Senate. And if you've got a little something left in the wallet after tonight—[laughter]—and looking for a good man to help, somebody who can use your help, it's Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. He's a fine representative of the great State of Colorado, and I'm proud to call him friend.

Two members of the U.S. congressional delegation are with us. First, Bob Beauprez; Congressman Beauprez, thank you for coming. We didn't exactly landslide them last

time—[laughter]—but neither did I. [Laughter] I know you're back home working hard in your district to tell the people of that district they made the right choice in putting Bob Beauprez in the U.S. Congress. He's a fine man. And I appreciate Tom Tancredo being here as well. Thank you, Congressman, for coming. I'm honored you're here.

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, Jane Norton, for being here tonight. I want to thank the treasurer for the great State of Colorado, Mike Coffman, for being here tonight. I appreciate the president of the State Senate and the speaker of the House, Senator John Andrews and Lola Spradley, for coming as well. Governor, I know it's a pretty good deal to be working with a Republican Speaker and a Senate leader. I kind of like it myself. [Laughter]

I want to thank very much our party chairman, Ted Halaby. I want to thank Bruce Benson for putting this event on and for being the finance chairman. I want to thank all those who helped raise the money. I thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the national finance chairman. But most of all, I want to thank you all for your friendship, for your prayers, for your support, for getting ready to get to work on behalf of this reelection campaign.

You know, 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've captured or killed many of the leaders of Al Qaida, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people—50 million people—in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom. And the world is better off for it.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world

can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. Then the attacks happened on our country and scandals in corporate America as well as the war—it all affected the people's confidence. People began to lose confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account.

To get the economy going, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. Here's what I believe, and here's what we know, that when Americans have more take-home money to spend or to save, to invest, the whole economy begins to grow, and people are more likely to find a job. And I understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It is not the Government's money we spend in Washington. It is the people's money.

Now we're returning more money to the American people to help them raise their families, reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses proper incentives to encourage them to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so every one of our citizens can realize the great promise of our country.

I want you to remember, 2½ years ago there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action in Washington, DC. So I called for and our Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation.

We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. See, we believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math. And we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. I am challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. In return for Federal money, we expect results so that not one single child in America is left behind.

We've done a lot in 2½ years. We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better strengthen our borders to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Colorado's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. We passed budget agreements that help maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, I want you to remind the skeptics and the undecideds that this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress on behalf of all the American people.

Of course, we didn't do this alone. A lot of the credit goes to Members of the United States Congress. We've got a fabulous Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert, a great majority leader of the United States Senate, Bill Frist. I appreciate so very much working with them and the folks from the great State of Colorado.

And the difference now in Washington is, is that we're focusing on results, not process. We're working to change the tone in Washington so we can get the people's business done. And by the way, those are the kind of people I've asked to serve in my administration. I put together a strong team to work on behalf of the American people.

Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a second opinion. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I agree with you. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you.

In 2½ years, we have come far, but you know, we're only just beginning. We've great goals worthy of this great Nation. The job of the President is to set our sights high. A great nation requires great goals.

And here are the goals I've set: First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world; and secondly, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen—every single citizen—has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the American Dream.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home. It is freedom's de-

fender. And this Nation welcomes this charge of history, and we are keeping this charge of history. The war on terror continues. See, the enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest. We will not tire, and we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet, our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not develop weapons of mass terror. Our country believes that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And we believe that freedom is the right of every person. And we believe that freedom is the future of every single nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, this great Nation is committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children who are now suffering with AIDS. This great land, this land for which I am so proud, is leading the world in the incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face big challenges abroad, and we won't shirk from those challenges. And we face big challenges here at home. I will continue to work on our economy. I'll continue to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. I will continue to try to lay the conditions for capital formation, so that anybody who wants to work and can't find a job today will be able to do so.

I will continue to work to make sure we meet our commitments to America's seniors by modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, the United States Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. I want you to remember this: For the first time—first time—since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate have passed reforms to modernize the system, to give seniors more choices, and to provide coverage for prescription drugs for our seniors. The next step is for both bodies to iron out their differences and to get a bill to my desk so

I can sign it on behalf of the elderly of the United States of America. We have a solemn obligation, an obligation which I will continue to call upon the Congress to keep.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine all across our country. I fully understand that people who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court. Yet, the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. They affect the Medicare budget, the Medicaid budget, the veterans budgets. I view medical liability reform as a national issue which requires a national solution. The House of Representatives passed a good bill to reform medical liability. It's stuck in the Senate. The Senate must act. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women to the Federal bench, people who interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Yet, some Members of the United States Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation has got to promote energy conservation and efficiency and develop cleaner technology so we can explore in more environmentally sensitive areas. Yet, for the sake of our economic security and for the sake of our national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance the agenda of compassionate conservatism, which really means applying the best and most innovative ideas to helping our fellow citizens who hurt and who are in need.

See, there are still millions of men and women in this land who want the independence and dignity that come from work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work to the lives of more of our fellow citizens. Congress ought to complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their community and their country. Both Houses should finally reach agreement on the Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring our children and caring for the homeless, healing hearts, and helping the addicted.

A compassionate society must also be a society which promotes opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people to own their homes. I'm troubled by the fact we have a minority homeownership gap in America, and I put forth policies—constructive, smart policies to encourage more homeownership all across America.

We want people to own and manage their own health care plan. We want people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want the entrepreneurial spirit to be strong in America so that people feel confident in investing in their own small business.

Now, I understand an ownership society is one in which people have more hope for the future. In a compassionate society, people respect one another, and they take responsibility for the decisions they make in life. We're changing the culture of America, slowly but surely, from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands that we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're concerned about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you happen to be a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling

the truth to your employees and your shareholders. And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We can see that culture of respect, the culture of change and service growing around us here in America today. You know, I started what they call the USA Freedom Corps. It's an opportunity for Americans to help neighbors in need, and the response has been fantastic. Got people signing up for all kinds of ways to help in their community, and I'm grateful.

Our faith-based charities are strong, and they're vibrant, which is important to bring hope to those who hurt. Our policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than themselves in life, sacrifice for peace, sacrifice for freedom, sacrifice for safe streets. And once again, the children of America believe in heroes because they see them every day in America.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. The tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift up whole nations by spreading freedom. And at home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us, and we welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:44 p.m. at Wings Over the Rockies Museum, Aviation & Space Center of the Rockies. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Ted Halaby, chairman, and Bruce Benson, former chairman, Colorado Republican Party; and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Economic Advisers and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas

August 13, 2003

The President. Good morning. As you can see, my economic team came down. We've had some great briefings. Let me summarize by saying that this administration is optimistic about job creation. We believe strongly that the tax relief plan that was approved by Congress in '01 and most recently in '03 is going to have a very positive effect on economic growth and vitality. We believe it is more likely in the upcoming year that people are going to be able to find a job, and that's exactly what—where we focused our policy.

But I also know there's more that can be done. I think one thing is certain, and we've spent a lot of time discussing this, there needs to be a strong message to Congress not to overspend, set priorities and hold the line on the priorities. As well, we need an energy policy, and we need good tort reform. And I appreciate the fact that the House has passed a good energy bill and the Senate passed an energy bill. Now is the time to get together and reconcile their differences and get a bill to my desk. I also appreciate the fact that the House passed good class-action reform, and the Senate now needs to follow suit.

And I also look forward to working with the Congress to get associated health care plans passed, which will make it easier for small businesses to be able to write affordable health care for their employees. So there's some things we can do to make sure the economy continues to grow and so people can find work. If you'll remember the tax relief plan that was passed was called the jobs plan, the growth-and-jobs creation plan—that's what we're interested in. We're interested in people being able to work in America, and we're upbeat about the chances for our fellow citizens who are looking for work to be able to find a job.

I'll answer some questions, starting with Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Liberia/Former President Charles Taylor

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. President Taylor has met your demand to leave Liberia.

You've got a west African peacekeeping force in there. Is the time right to send in those 4,500 marines and sailors? And should Nigeria turn President Taylor over to the war crimes tribunal?

The President. They can work that out with—how they deal with Taylor. One, I'm glad he's gone. But my focus now is on making sure that humanitarian relief gets to the people who are suffering in Liberia. And one of the things I have said all along was that we are there to help ECOMIL do its job by providing the conditions necessary for the arrival of relief. And that's why we've got an assessment team on the ground that's dealing with the Nigerian who's in charge of ECOMIL, to determine what is necessary to help ECOMIL do its job. They are in the lead, and we are there to support and help.

Obviously, one place we've got to make sure is secure and open is the port. And so we're working with ECOMIL, and I will again take recommendations from the Defense Department as to what is necessary to fulfill the mission.

Q. What's your timetable, if I may?

The President. My timetable of listening—

Q. Making a decision on whether to send those 4,500 in.

The President. Well, I've already made the decision, Scott. And I said this from day one. The decision is for us to help ECOMIL do its job of getting humanitarian relief to the people in Liberia. I've made that decision, and nothing's changed.

Yes.

Hemant Lakhani/Homeland Security

Q. Yesterday there was a sting operation that netted a Brit believed to be trying to sell surface-to-air missiles to someone they believed who was Al Qaida, highlighting the danger to airlines. Also yesterday, there were three lost fisherman who came onshore to JFK Airport, breaching security.

Your Democratic opponents are trying to use homeland security as an issue in the campaign, saying that the administration is not doing enough to protect the American people. What is your assessment in light of what happened yesterday?

The President. My assessment is people are going to say the darndest thing when they run for office, in terms of just the politics. The American people know the difference between politics and reality, and the reality is we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland.

And the fact that we were able to sting this guy is a pretty good example of what we're doing in order to protect the American people. And our homeland security is focused on airport security. And today, the airports are much more secure than they were prior to September the 11th. America is a safe place for people to fly, precisely because we're working hard to make sure that our homeland security is strong.

The other way to make sure the homeland stays strong is to hunt terrorists down before they come to America. And that's why we're on the global hunt. That's why we've got troops around in places like Afghanistan and Iraq dealing with potential terrorists, bringing them to justice, finding them before they hurt us.

Yes, Elisabeth [Elisabeth Bumiller, New York Times].

Tax Policy

Q. Are you going to go for a new round of tax cuts this fall?

The President. Elisabeth, we are discussing a lot of things. And we believe that the tax relief plan we have in place is robust enough to encourage job growth.

Q. So is that a "no"?

The President. Well, as of this moment—you see, things change in the economy, as you know, but as of this moment, we feel like the plans we have in place are robust enough to create jobs.

Q. Is there any discussion—

The President. Please. The other thing that's necessary is to make sure we've got spending discipline in Washington, to make sure that Congress doesn't overspend. And that will—because that will affect the psychology of those who are—risk capital in order to create the job base.

You had a followup, I take it.

Q. Yes, I was just going to ask you, the discussions in the administration, maybe not at the White House level, about a—perhaps

a business tax credit, that you would get a tax credit if you hired somebody to sort of—

The President. Well, thus far, we—in the discussions today, we feel like the tax relief plans that we have passed will be robust enough to create the conditions necessary for economic growth, and therefore, people will find a job. If we change our opinion, we will let you know. You may not be the first to know, but you'll be one of the first to know. Yes, sir.

North Korea

Q. Thank you. Russia has proposed a multilateral security pact to end the standoff with North Korea. Are you willing to offer incentives before North Korea dismantles its nuclear weapons program?

The President. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to continue the dialog with North Korea, to make it clear to them that not only does the United States feel strongly that the Peninsula ought to be nuclear-free, but other countries which live in the neighborhood feel the same way. And remember, the policy has evolved from one of bilateral—you know, pressure to negotiate bilaterally with the North Koreans. That's what we did in the past, and that policy unfortunately failed because the North Koreans didn't keep their word about whether or not they would enrich uranium.

And so now we've taken another tact, which is to—first of all, to convince the Chinese to be an active participant in a dialog to make sure that the Korean Peninsula is nuclear-free. By the way, the first stage of that happened right here in Crawford when Jiang Zemin came to visit, and he stated clearly after that visit that it was in China's interest that the Korean Peninsula be nuclear-weapons-free. And we're just continuing that policy. It's very helpful that the Russians are involved with the dialog with the North Koreans. It is also very helpful that the South Koreans and the Japanese will be involved. And I think we can deal with this issue in a peaceful way, and we're making good progress.

Carl [Carl Cannon, National Journal].

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, you said that candidates say the darndest things when they're running for office. One of the things they're saying is that there are fewer jobs now than when you took office.

The President. Yes.

Q. A year from now, you are going to be standing for reelection yourself. Do you think there will be as many jobs as when you took office? And when will we start to see a significant decrease in the unemployment rate?

The President. Right. Let me remind the listeners here about what our country has gone through. We—the stock market started to change in March of 2000. And there was a precipitous decline in March of 2000. And that began to affect savings and money and attitude. And then the country went into a recession. The first three quarters of 2001 was a recession. And we dealt with that by passing tax relief, which made the recession one of the shallowest in history.

Now, people said, "Well, maybe you shouldn't have done that. Maybe you shouldn't have had tax relief. Maybe you should have let the recession run its course." But my attitude about that is, is that a deep recession would have caused more people to lose work. And I'm more worried about families finding a job and putting food on the table than I am about economic theory and economic numbers, and so the recession was shallow.

And as the economy was beginning to recover, the enemy hit us on September the 11th, and that affected our economy in a big way. And then we had corporate scandals which we've dealt with. And then, of course, you remember the "March to War." I've reminded people—I think this isn't the first time I've said this—that some would put on their TV screens that we were "marching to war." As a matter of fact, it was a year ago we began the "March to War." During the August vacation, as I recall, there was the "March to War." It's hard to have a upbeat view of the world when you're "marching to war." I mean, war is not exactly a positive thought, particularly when it comes to people willing to take risk and consumer confidence.

But nevertheless, we dealt with that issue. And so now the economy is—having overcome those obstacles, is beginning to recover. And yes, I think people are going to go back to work, and I firmly believe that what we have done was the absolute right course of action in order to help people find a job.

Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], you've got a question?

Q. I do.

The President. I'm being very generous today, as you can see.

Q. Yes, you are. Thank you, sir.

The President. My pleasure.

Federal Deficit

Q. If a Democrat were President and running for—

The President. Wait a minute. Let me stop you there.

Q. Yes.

The President. They say the silliest things during the political season. And sometimes people ask the silliest questions.

Q. [Inaudible]—try not to do that, sir.

The President. Now, be careful. Be careful. [Laughter]

Q. With that in mind, if a Democrat were President—

The President. Are you adjusting? [Laughter]

Q. —and were running a \$455-billion deficit, as are you, all other things being equal, wouldn't you be upset about it?

The President. Let me tell you something, the deficit was caused by a recession which we inherited and did something about. The deficit was caused because we spent more money on fighting a war, and the American people expect a President to do what is necessary to win a war. And so I look forward to taking this debate on. I really do. We did the right thing when it came to tax relief. We inherited a tough situation.

But most importantly, the American people know that I'm not afraid to lead and to make a tough decision. And I made a tough decision, a series of tough decisions, one, to make America more secure, a tough decision to make the world more peaceful, and I made tough decisions when it comes to making sure our economy grows.

And I believe that we've laid the foundation for good economic growth and vitality. I think people are going to be more likely to find a job in the upcoming year.

Thank you all for coming.

California Gubernatorial Candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger

Q. Are you going to do anything for Arnold? You say he'll be a good Governor. You're spending 2 days in California.

The President. I'm going to campaign for George W., as you know.

Q. Will he get a plug in the speech, a mention?

The President. I think I've answered the question, and yes, he would be a good Governor, as would others running for Governor of California. And like you, I'm most interested in seeing how the process evolves. It's a fascinating bit of political drama evolving in the State—in the country's largest State.

Q. It's also the biggest political story in the country. Is it hard to go in there and say nothing about it?

The President. It is the biggest political story in the country? That's interesting. That says a lot. That speaks volumes.

Q. You don't agree?

The President. It's up to—I don't get to decide the biggest political story. You decide the biggest political story. But I find it interesting that that is the biggest political story in the country, as you just said.

Q. You don't think it should be?

The President. Oh, I think there's maybe other political stories. Isn't there, like, a Presidential race coming up? [Laughter] Maybe that says something. It speaks volumes, if you know what I mean. But yes, it's an interesting story; it really is. And I'm looking forward, like you are, to seeing the outcome of the interesting story.

But no, I'm going to go, I'm going to talk about—now that you've asked, are you going on the trip?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. Good. Well, you'll see me speak to marines and their families, thanking them for their service to our country, reminding them that what's taking place in Iraq is essential to U.S. security. Then I'm going to go to a national park, talking about the

fact that we believe parks ought to be revitalized and talk about the initiatives that I've laid out to do that. And then, of course, I'll be doing a little spadework for the '04 campaign. One of the most important political stories—[laughter].

Have a great day. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Festus Okonkwo, Nigerian commander of ECOMIL forces in Liberia; Hemant Lakhani, arms dealer charged with selling missiles to U.S. agents posing as terrorists; and former President Jiang Zemin of China.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Further Deployment of U.S. Military Forces in Liberia

August 13, 2003

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

In my report to the Congress of June 9, 2003, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Liberia. I am providing this additional report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on U.S. military activities in Liberia.

Shortly after my initial report, additional U.S. combat-equipped, military personnel from the U.S. European Command deployed to Monrovia, Liberia, to augment the U.S. Embassy security forces and to aid in the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Liberia if required, raising the total of such personnel to 56.

On August 1, 2003, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1497 was adopted. It authorized member states to establish a Multinational Force in Liberia to support the implementation of the June 17, 2003, ceasefire, including establishing conditions for initial stages of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration activities; establishing security; and securing the environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the introduction of a longer term U.N. stabilization force. Soon thereafter, approximately 4,350 U.S. military personnel on board U.S. warships deployed into the area of operations off the coast of Liberia in preparation

to assist the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) forces in the conduct of initial humanitarian and stability operations in the vicinity of Monrovia, Liberia. On August 11, 2003, these combat-equipped forces entered the territorial waters of Liberia timed to coincide with the resignation and departure of President Taylor, which was the stated prerequisite before deploying U.S. Armed Forces in support of ECOMIL.

It is anticipated that U.S. forces will redeploy when ECOMIL forces have transitioned to the follow-on U.N. stabilization operations.

I have taken this action 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 informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions in Liberia.

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. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, California

August 14, 2003

Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming out to say hello. It's getting a little quiet on the ranch—[laughter]—so I decided to pay a visit to the “devil dogs.”

I'm honored to be in the presence of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I'm proud of you, and I want to thank you for your service to our great country. Each of you serves in a crucial time in our Nation's history. And this Nation is grateful for the sacrifice and service you make.

Many of you have recently returned from Iraq, and it seems like you're happy to be home. More than 70,000 men and women

from bases in southern California were deployed in Iraq. You served with honor; you served with skill; and you were successful.

Before you went in, Iraqis were an oppressed people, and the dictator threatened his neighbors, the Middle East, and the world. Today, the Iraqis are liberated people; the former regime is gone; and our Nation and the world is more secure.

This Nation is at war with people who hate what we stand for. We love freedom, and we're not going to change. Our country depends on you to protect our freedom, and every day, you depend on your families. This has been a challenging time for military families. I know that. During the last year, our families and our military have met hardships and met them together. You've supported and looked out for one another. You've been strong and faithful to the people you love. Military families make tremendous sacrifices for America, and our Nation is grateful for your service to our country.

I appreciate General Conway. This isn't the first time I met him. He looks you right in the eye. He's the kind of commander I'd like to serve under—it's just that, he just serves under me. *[Laughter]* I appreciate General Amos, General Gallinetti. I appreciate all those who are in command of forces here. I want to thank you for what you do.

We've got members of the California congressional delegation here. These are stalwarts when it comes to understanding the need to provide you the resources necessary to do your job. There's no finer Congressman when it comes to military affairs than Congressman Duncan Hunter. With him, the Congressman from southern California as well; I call him "The Ace," because he was an ace in Vietnam, a great fighter pilot, Randy "Duke" Cunningham. Two other members of the delegation are here who are friends of mine, people who serve with distinction, Congressman Ed Royce and Congressman Darrell Issa. I'm honored you all are here. Thank you for coming.

The Marine Corps Air Station and the military bases of southern California have long, long been crucial to the defense of this country. We intend to keep it that way. Generations of marines and sailors and pilots have trained and served here. And for the

veterans who are with us today, I thank you for your service to our country.

Now you have been called. This group of marines and sailors have been called to serve in the first war of the 21st century. The war began almost 2 years ago, on September the 11th, 2001, when this Nation was brutally attacked and thousands of our fellow citizens died. We were awakened to new dangers on that day.

On that morning, the threats that had gathered far across the world appeared suddenly in our own cities. The world changed on that day. The enemies of the United States showed the harm they can do and the evil they intend. Since that September morning, our enemies have also seen something: They have seen the will and the might of the United States military, and they are meeting the fate they chose for themselves.

Our Nation is waging a broad and unrelenting campaign against the global terror network, and we're winning. Wherever Al Qaida terrorists try to hide, from the caves and mountains of Central Asia to the islands of the Philippines to the cities in Pakistan, we are finding them, and we are bringing them to justice.

In the last 2 days, we captured a major terrorist named Hambali. He's a known killer who was a close associate of September the 11th mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed. Hambali was one of the world's most lethal terrorists, who is suspected of planning major terrorist operations, including that which occurred in Bali, Indonesia, and other recent attacks. He is no longer a problem to those of us who love freedom, and neither are nearly two-thirds of known senior Al Qaida leaders, operational managers, and key facilitators who have been captured or have been killed.

Now, we're making progress. Slowly but surely, we're doing our duty to our fellow citizens. Now, Al Qaida is still active, and they're still recruiting, and they're still a threat because we won't cower. Its leaders and foot soldiers continue to plot against the American people. But every terrorist can be certain of this: Wherever they are, we will hunt them down one by one until they are no longer a threat to the people who live in the United States of America.

Many of you served in Operation Enduring Freedom, and we thank you for your service. You can be proud of help—to liberate the good people of Afghanistan from the thugs who turned that country into a training camp for Al Qaida terrorists. You enforced the doctrine which said, “If you harbor a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you’re just as guilty as the terrorists,” and the Taliban found out what we meant.

Afghanistan today is a friend of the United States of America. It is not a haven for America’s terrorist enemies. As NATO assumes a leading role in keeping Afghanistan secure, we’re helping with the reconstruction and the founding of a democratic government. We’re making steady progress in Afghanistan. New roads are being built. Medical clinics are opening. There are new schools in Afghanistan where many young girls are now going to school for the first time, thanks to the United States of America.

We’ve also helped to build an Afghan national army. We want the Afghan people to defend themselves at some point in time. This army launched its first major operation, called Warrior Sweep, which are hunting down the terrorists along with the help of the United States of America. Now, thanks to the United States and our fine allies, Afghanistan is no longer a haven for terror. The Taliban is history, and the Afghan people are free.

The war on terror also continues in Iraq. Make no mistake about it, Iraq is part of the war on terror. Our coalition forces are still engaged in an essential mission. We met the major combat objectives in Operation Iraqi Freedom by removing a regime that persecuted Iraqis, that supported terrorists, and that was armed to threaten the peace of the world. All the world is now seeing just how badly the Iraqi people suffered under this brutal dictator. The Iraqi people themselves are seeing a new day, thanks to the brave men and women who came to liberate them.

Thanks to our military, Iraqi citizens do not have to fear a secret police, arbitrary arrests, or loved ones lost forever in mass graves. Thanks to our military, the torture chambers of a dictator are closed; the prison cells for children are empty. Thanks to our

military, Saddam Hussein will never threaten anybody with a weapon of mass destruction.

Many members of the former regime challenged our military and had their day of reckoning, and the other ones still in there have a lot to worry about. Parts of Iraq are still dangerous because freedom has enemies inside of Iraq. Men loyal to the fallen regime, some joined by foreign terrorists, are trying to prevent order and stability.

We’re on the offensive against these killers. We’re going after them. We’ll raid their hiding places, and we’ll find them. The brave Americans who carry out these missions can know they will have every tool and every resource they need to defend themselves and to do the job they were sent to do.

The terrorists will meet their end, and in the meantime, the Iraqi people are making steady progress in building a stable society and beginning to form a democratic government. Iraq’s new Governing Council represents the Nation’s diverse groups. In the months ahead, Iraqis will begin drafting a new constitution, and this will prepare the way for elections. America and our coalition are training Iraqi civil defense and police forces so they can patrol their own cities and their own villages. We’re training a new army, an army that defends the people instead of terrorizes them.

Life is returning to normal for a lot of citizens in Iraq. Hospitals and universities have opened. In many places, water and other utility services are reaching pre-war levels. For the first time, a free press is operating in Iraq. Across Iraq, nearly all schoolchildren have completed their exams. And now those children are receiving a real education without the hateful propaganda of Saddam Hussein.

By the hard efforts of our military, we are keeping our word to the world and to the Iraqi people. The illegal weapons hidden by the former regime will be found. The free and representative government Iraqis are building is there to stay.

A free and peaceful Iraq is an important part of winning the war on terror. A free Iraq will no longer be a training ground for terrorists, will no longer supply them with money or weapons. A free Iraq will help to rid the Middle East of resentment and violence and

radicalism. A free Iraq will show all nations of the region that human freedom brings progress and prosperity. By working for peace and stability in the Middle East, we're making America and future generations of Americans more secure.

Our actions in Iraq are part of a duty we have accepted across the world. We're keeping our resolve, and we will stay focused on the war on terror. The United States will not stand by and wait for another attack. We will not trust the restraint or good intentions of evil people. We will oppose terrorists and all who support them. We will not permit any terrorist group or outlaw regime to threaten us with weapons of mass destruction. And when necessary, we will act decisively to protect the lives of our fellow citizens.

As our Nation confronts great challenges, we rely, as always, on the goodness and courage of the men and women of our military. Like all our men and women who continue to serve in Iraq, you've done hard duty far from home and family, and I know you'll never forget the people who fought at your side. As a major from Miramar said of his fellow marines who served in Iraq, "They are my brothers and sisters." Each of you recalls especially the ones who gave their lives for freedom of others. The United States will always honor their memory. And today we ask the Almighty's blessings on those who grieve here on Earth for their loved ones.

I know you're proud to wear the same uniform they wore. Each of you has chosen—you have made the choice to fill a great calling, to live by a code of honor, in service to your Nation, for the safety and security of your fellow citizens. You and I have taken an oath to defend America. We're meeting that duty together, and I am proud to be the Commander in Chief of such a fabulous group of men and women who wear our uniform.

May God bless you. May God bless you and your families. May God continue to bless the United States of America. *Semper fi.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, USMC, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force; Maj. Gen. James F. Amos, USMC, commanding general, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing; Maj. Gen. (Select) Jon A. Gallinetti,

USMC, commander, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, and commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks on the Power Blackout in Portions of North America and an Exchange With Reporters in San Diego, California

August 14, 2003

The President. Today our country—a major portion of our country was affected by rolling blackout. Canada was affected; over 10 million people in Canada were affected as well. And I have been working with Federal officials to make sure the response to this situation was quick and thorough, and I believe it has been.

We're focused on two major things right now. One is to work with State and local authorities to manage the consequences of this rolling blackout. In my judgment, the Governors and mayors of the affected States and cities have responded very well. We've offered all the help they need to help people cope with this blackout. And they've—to this moment have said they've got the resources necessary to handle it. The emergency preparedness teams at the local level and the State level are responding very well.

I also want to thank the people in the affected cities and States for their calm response to this emergency situation. It has been remarkable to watch on television how resolved the people are about dealing with this situation, and it's—I'm grateful for that. And I know their neighbors are grateful as well for the proper and calm response.

The other thing, of course, we're working on is to get electricity up and running as quickly as possible. And Federal officials are working with State and local officials to get the electricity grid up and running. Our goal, of course, is to do this as quickly as possible. Obviously, the sooner we can get electricity up, the more normal people's lives will become.

One thing I think I can say for certain is that this was not a terrorist act. I've heard reports about a lightning strike in Niagara Falls, New York, and we're—Federal officials, of course, are investigating the veracity of that. We'll find out here what caused the blackout. But most importantly, what we now need to do is fix the problem and to get electricity up and running as quickly as possible.

I was pleased to hear that many of the airports up East are beginning to have flights leave, and that's good. So in other words, slowly but surely, we're coping with this massive national problem. Millions of people's lives are affected. I fully understand that their lives will not be normal for the short run and hope that they continue to cope with this in a manner that they have done so far. I'm confident we can get things up and running as quickly as possible and people's lives will go back to normal.

Yes.

Security of the Power Grid

Q. Mr. President, does this suggest that even with all the attention paid to homeland security, that the electrical grid is still vulnerable, should it have been a terrorist attack?

The President. Well, I think, you know, one of the things we'll have to do, of course, is take an assessment of why the cascade was so significant, why it was able to ripple so significantly throughout our system up East. And that'll be a very important part of the investigation once we deal with the immediate—and the immediate, of course, is to take care of people.

You know, for example, in New York City, Mayor Bloomberg has ordered out thousands of police officers on the street to help bring calm. Firefighters are working overtime. Emergency crews are out working well. My focus is to work with State and local authorities to help deal with the immediate problem. Of course, we'll have time to look at it and determine whether or not our grid needs to be modernized. I happen to think it does and have said so all along. But this will be—this is going to be an interesting lesson for our country, and we'll have to respond to it.

Cause of the Blackout

Q. Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

Q. Do we know why this happened?

The President. Well, as I say, I saw a preliminary report. But we'll find out why, and we'll deal with the problem.

Federal/State/Local Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, you said that the State and locals had said they have all the resources they need. Can you talk about what the Federal Government might do or might already be doing to help them out?

The President. Well, one thing, of course, we're doing is we're getting the airlines running. The FAA is—as I understand, has cleared flights out of LaGuardia and Newark, for example.

The organization of Homeland Security is aimed at quick communications with State and local authorities, and I think that that communication was quick and thorough. I talked to Secretary Ridge several times. Governors have been notified, and mayors have been notified, and we're prepared to do anything that we can upon request.

Q. But it doesn't sound like they've asked you yet to do very—

The President. Not much, because they're well prepared. I mean, the first thing that I think Americans ought to be pleased about is the fact that we're better organized today than we were 2½ years ago to deal with an emergency, and the system responded well. Secretary Ridge was telling me 30 minutes ago how quickly the local authorities responded and how good the communications were between the Federal Government, the State Government, the local government.

It's a serious situation, but the people whose lives have been affected need to know there's a lot of people working to enable them to get on about their lives in a normal way. And hopefully, electricity will be restored soon. I can't tell you exactly when, but I know a lot of people are working overtime to get it done.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. at the Manchester Grand Hyatt. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Dinner in San Diego

August 14, 2003

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's really great to be back in San Diego, California. What a fabulous city. I want to thank you for your help. You all have done a tremendous job of helping us get started in the campaign. The way I look at it is, you're laying the groundwork for what will be a great nationwide victory in November of '04.

I appreciate your generosity. But I'm going to warn you, I need your help in energizing the grassroots, for putting up the signs and making the phone calls and telling your fellow citizens—Republican, Democrat, independent, could care less—that ours is a message that is hopeful for every single person who lives in this country.

I'm loosening up—[laughter]—and I'm getting ready. But the political season will come in its own time, because I have a job to do for the American people. I'm focused on the people's business. We have a lot on our agenda, and over the next months I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of our fellow Americans by making sure America is secure and strong and prosperous and free.

My only regret is that First Lady Laura Bush isn't here tonight too. She is visiting her mother in Midland, Texas.

Audience member. [Inaudible].

The President. You're right. [Laughter] I am really proud of her. She is a fabulous First Lady, but most important, she's a great mother and a great wife, and I love her dearly.

I want to thank my friend Brad Freeman. I thought for a minute he was going to announce for Governor, he spoke so long. [Laughter] He's been a longtime friend, just as has Gerry Parsky. Both of these friends are working hard in '04, just like they did—for the '04 election, just like they did in 2000. I'm proud to stand with them.

I also want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds. Mercer is from Cincinnati, Ohio. He's dedicating a lot of time to make sure our national finance effort is as strong as I know it's going to be. I appreciate you, Mercer.

We've got members of the congressional delegation here today from the mighty State of California, Duncan Hunter and "Duke" Cunningham and Darrell Issa. I'm honored they're here.

I appreciate the Mayor, Dick Murphy, for greeting me. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your strong support. I want to thank the event co-chairmen here from San Diego. You all have done a fantastic job. I'm proud to call you friends, and I thank you for your support.

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 to future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away, and 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 key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession, and then our country was attacked. And scandals in corporate America became evident, and war began to affect the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. Here is what I believe and here is what we know: When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are then more likely to find a job.

I also understand whose money we spend in Washington. It's not the Government's money. It's the people's money. We're returning more money to people to help them

raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to expand and hire new people. With all these actions, we've laid the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America, so that every single person in this country can realize the great American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We bring high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. See, we believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in every classroom all across America so that not one single child is left behind.

We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for California's manufacturers and entrepreneurs and ranchers and farmers. We passed a budget agreement that is helping to maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The United States Congress has shared these great achievements, and I appreciate the hard work of the Members of Congress. I enjoy a great relationship with Speaker Denny Hastert and Majority Leader Bill Frist. We're going to continue to work together to change the tone of Washington and focus on the people's business by focusing on results. And those are the kind of people I've asked to serve in my administration. I have put together a fantastic team of Americans to serve the American people.

We've got no finer Vice President in our history than Dick Cheney. Mother might have a different view. *[Laughter]*

In 2½ years, we have come far, but our work is only beginning. I have set great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion, so that every citizen has a chance to work and succeed and to realize the great promise of our country.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depends on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we're keeping it.

Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest. We will not tire, and we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet, our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror, free nations do not attack their neighbors, and free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. We believe that freedom is the right of every person. And we believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. In the continent of Africa, this great, compassionate, strong Nation is committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is taking the lead. We are leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges at home, and our actions will prove that we're equal to those challenges. I will continue to work to create a favorable condition for economic growth and vitality, until everybody who wants to

work and can't find a job today will be able to find a job.

And we have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. A few weeks ago, Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and the Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices for our seniors and to provide coverage for prescription drugs. The next step is for both Houses to come together to iron out some details and to get a bill to my desk. We have an obligation to the seniors of America to modernize the Medicare system.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on frivolous lawsuits, which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a doctor deserve their day in court. Yet, the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. The House of Representatives has passed a good bill to reform the system. The bill is stuck in the Senate. The Senate must act on behalf of the American people. They must realize that nobody in America has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well. And I've met that duty. I have nominated superb women and men for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

In California, I've nominated Carolyn Kuhl to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She has tremendous bipartisan support. She's respected as a State judge. Yet, some Senators are distorting Judge Kuhl's record, and they're threatening to block an up-or-down vote. And this is happening to too many of the judges I've nominated, and it is wrong. All the judicial nominees deserve a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The United States Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan.

Our Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation. We must work to develop cleaner technology to help us explore for energy in an environmentally sensitive way. Yet, for the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism by applying the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping fellow citizens in need.

There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our citizens. Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children, that are caring for the homeless, and that are offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration is firmly committed and will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their home. We have a minority home ownership gap in America, and I have put forth a plan to solve it.

We want more people to manage and own their own health care accounts. We want people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want more people to own and operate their own small business, because, you see, we understand that when a person owns something in America, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad,

you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're concerned about the quality of education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this new responsibility, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

Things are changing in America to the better. We can see a culture of service and responsibility growing around us. I started what we call the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need. And the response has been fantastic. People are signing up. People want to serve something greater than themselves.

Our charities and our faith-based institutions are strong and they're vibrant, bringing important help to people who hurt. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. And at home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us, and we welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. at the San Diego Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Brad Freeman, California State finance chairman, and Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Gerald Parsky, chairman, Team California, California Re-

publican Party; and Mayor Dick Murphy of San Diego.

Exchange With Reporters in Thousand Oaks, California

August 15, 2003

Q. Do you have time for a couple of questions?

The President. Yes, I'll answer a couple of questions.

North American Power Blackout/Energy Legislation

Q. Can you update us on the situation back East, what you've heard, whether there's been any progress toward finding out what possibly caused the blackout?

The President. Yes, it's going to take a while, I think. But we will find out what caused the blackout, and we'll deal with it. I view it as a wake-up call. You know, I've been concerned that our infrastructure—the delivery system is old and antiquated. And I think this is an indication of the fact that we need to modernize the electricity grid.

So it's a good opportunity for us to analyze what went wrong and to deal with it. We don't know yet what went wrong, but we will.

Q. There's a bill pending in Congress, the energy bill, that's pretty broad in scope. There's also a piece of that bill that's smaller that would fix this particular problem. Would you urge Congress to act on that?

The President. Yes, I think what we need to do is take a look at what went wrong, analyze the problem, and come up with a solution. And I think it's very important—I'm going to say this down here in the remarks—the people in New York and in the Northeast and in parts of the Midwest were—showed the great character of America in very difficult circumstances. The people responded in calm fashion. They worked hard to help their neighbors in need, and they showed the rest of the country and the world the true mettle of the American people.

As I said yesterday, I'm most pleased by the fact that we've got a—our emergency response was good. They acted well. And I doubt that would have happened—the response would have been this good—prior to

September the 11th. But the creation of the Homeland Security Department, coupled with the modernization of communications between State and local and Federal officials, really enabled the system to work well. And now we've got to figure out how to make the electricity system have the redundancy necessary so that if there is an outage like there has been throughout our history, that it doesn't affect as many people as it did in the past.

Q. Sir, are you worried, though, that power still isn't restored to so many millions of people and may not be through the weekend?

The President. Well, I think, you know—listen, everybody is working hard to get it restored as quickly as possible. I think it's going to take a while to get 100 of the power up and running. And that's why it's important for our citizens who have got electricity in the Northeast and the Midwest would be wise about how they use the electricity. They must conserve, because the more conservation there is now, the more likely it is their neighbor is going to end up having electricity in a quicker fashion.

Q. In recent weeks, you have mentioned several times the need to pass your comprehensive energy plan. Is there anything in there that would have helped or mitigated this?

The President. Well, I think part of the plan recognizes that the grid needs to be modernized, the delivery systems need to be modernized. And obviously something like this isn't going to happen overnight. But it is—it begins to address the problem, that this particular incident has made abundantly clear to the American people that we've got an antiquated system, and now we've got to figure out what went wrong and how to address it. And I'm confident we will.

Q. You said yesterday that while you've made some offers of Federal assistance, the States and locals didn't really seem to need much help; they had it under control. Is that still the situation?

The President. Actually, as I understand it, as of this morning, at about 5:30 a.m. Pacific Coast time, there was a request for a generator by New York City from the Department of Defense, which we're now working on delivering.

Look, for example, Tommy Thompson started calling around to hospitals and asking, did everybody get what they need? And Tom Ridge was calling, which made it clear—abundantly clear—that where we had assets that could help, we're more than willing to help. This is a national problem, and the Federal Government has got a responsibility to help local and State officials. As far as I know, the one specific request to date was this generator.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The exchange began at 8:35 a.m. at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 9

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President hosted a barbecue for Bush-Cheney '04, Inc., fund-raisers at a neighboring ranch in Crawford.

August 11

In the morning, the President had intelligence and national security briefings aboard Air Force One en route to Tucson, AZ. Upon his arrival in Tucson, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Deborah Toland. Later, he traveled to Coronado National Forest. En route, he took an aerial tour of areas damaged by wildfire near Summerhaven, AZ.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Denver, CO, where he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Phoung Nguyen.

In the evening, the President returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

August 12

In the morning, the President had intelligence and national security briefings.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals to represent the United States at the inauguration of President Nicanor Duarte Frutos of Paraguay on August 15: Anthony J. Principi (delegation leader), John F. Keane, and Robert L. Peeler.

August 13

In the morning, the President had intelligence and national security briefings, during which he had a video conference call to discuss the capture of Al Qaida terrorist Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali).

Later in the morning, the President met with members of his economic team.

The President announced his intention to appoint Duane H. Laible as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sandra O. Sieber as a member of the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Peter Field as Federal Commissioner and Alternate Federal Commissioner of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River (ACF) Basin Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles J. Chaput, Khaled Abou El Fadl, and Richard D. Land as members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

August 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, CA.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with U.S. military personnel. During lunch, he was informed by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph W. Hagin of the power

blackout in portions of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States and Canada. Later, he received updates on the blackout from Deputy Hagin and Deputy National Security Adviser Steve Hadley.

Later in the afternoon, the President participated in an interview with Armed Forces Radio and Television journalists. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge to discuss the blackout. He also received updates on the blackout from Deputies Hagin and Hadley and White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to San Diego, CA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Newport Beach, CA.

August 15

In the morning, the President had intelligence and national security briefings. He then had a telephone conversation with Secretary of the Treasury John Snow to discuss the status of the stock markets during the blackout. Later, he traveled to Thousand Oaks, CA, where he toured the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and made remarks on the National Park System.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Irvine, CA, where he had telephone conversations from the Hyatt Regency Irvine with Governors George E. Pataki of New York, John G. Rowland of Connecticut, Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, and Bob Taft of Ohio and Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City to discuss the blackouts.

In the afternoon, the President made remarks at a Bush-Cheney 2004 luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Irvine. Later, he returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada to discuss the blackout.

During the day, the President received updates on the blackout from Deputies Hagin and Hadley and other officials.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 11

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Fact sheet: President Bush Promotes Healthy Forests

Announcement of nomination for Environmental Protection Agency Administrator

Released August 12

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Released August 13

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Washington

Released August 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released August 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the joint Canada-U.S. task force on the recent power outage in North America

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Deputy Assistant to the President and Coordinator for Strategic Planning at the National Security Council

Statement by the Press Secretary on Libya's letter to the U.N. Security Council stating it accepts responsibility for the actions of its officials in the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1018 and H.R. 1761 on August 14

Fact sheet: Strengthening and Caring for America's National Parks

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey

Acts Approved by the President

Approved August 8 *

H.R. 2859 / Public Law 108-69
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2003

Approved August 14

H.R. 1018 / Public Law 108-70
To designate the building located at 1 Federal Plaza in New York, New York, as the "James L. Watson United States Court of International Trade Building"

H.R. 1761 / Public Law 108-71
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9350 East Corporate Hill Drive in Wichita, Kansas, as the "Garner E. Shriver Post Office Building"

* This Public Law was not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.