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God and the responsibility of government to secure the rights of all.

The courage of America's first leaders gave us the Declaration. Their patience and wisdom gave us the Constitution. They were patient through long and contentious and learned debates and discussions. They were wise in their understanding of human nature, with all its virtues and all the temptations. The supreme law of this land is the work of practical minds addressed to practical questions, like how to govern effectively and also limit the powers of government, how to represent the will of the people and to control the passions of temporary majorities. Framers devised answers that can now be found in constitutions across the world: Separate branches; enumerated powers; checks and balances; specific protections of the Bill of Rights.

Taken together, our founding documents set a standard that is the test and the burden of every generation. The text written by a slaveholder would become an unanswerable brief against slavery. The Constitution drafted and approved by men alone would, by its own logic, eventually assure the full participation of women. The ideals of our Founders were stronger than any flaws of the Founders. They rebuke our failures and guide our reforms. "These Charters of Freedom," said Martin Luther King, "are a promissory note, a pledge of justice to all who are denied it."

In the course of two centuries, the ideals of our founding documents have defined America's purposes in the world. Since July 4th, 1776, to this very day, Americans have seen freedom's power to overcome tyranny, to inspire hope even in times of great trial, to turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace. We have seen freedom's power in Europe and Asia and Africa and Latin America, and we will see freedom's power in the Middle East. Every person in every culture has the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. America owns the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, but the ideals they proclaim belong to all mankind.

This morning, exactly 216 years after the Constitutional Convention finished its business, the American people can take pride in the care we have given to preserving the work of the founding generation. Their words first guided a nation of scarcely 4 million souls. Yet even in their own day, the Founders knew they had put large events in motion, and free people everywhere remain in their debt.

In this Rotunda are the most cherished material possessions of a great and good nation. By this rededication, we show our deep respect for the first principles of our Republic and our lasting gratitude to those first citizens of the United States of America.

May God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom at the National Archives and Records Administration. In his remarks, he referred to Archivist of the United States John Carlin.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Congressional Conference Committee on Energy Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

September 17, 2003

The President. I want to thank Members from both political parties for coming down here today to discuss the energy bill that's in conference. I really do appreciate the commitment of all the parties here at the table to work together to get an energy bill on behalf of the American people, a comprehensive energy plan that will address supply and conservation, help us modernize our electricity grid.

It's a compelling issue, and there was a good spirit here. Obviously, there's not 100-percent agreement, but there is agreement that we need to get something done. And I want to thank the Members. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking members for taking time to come.

And I'm pleased with the commitment by Senator Domenici and Congressman Tauzin to see if they can't get a bill down here by mid-October—I believe is what he told me—Billy—and to my desk. And we look forward to working with them. I think the American people are—know we need to have a national

energy policy. And it's a chance to get it done, into law.

Thanks for coming. I'll answer a couple of questions. Terry [Terry Hunt, Associated Press], do you want to start?

U.N. Resolution on Iraq

Q. Mr. President, how is the administration recasting the proposed U.N. resolution on Iraq to meet the objections of some countries?

The President. We're still talking about it, Terry. I mean, we are—had some discussions this morning on it. The key is to make sure that the political situation in Iraq evolves in a way that will lead to a free and—a free society. The Iraqis need to develop a constitution and then have free elections. Then we can—and then we deal with the sovereignty issue. And so, therefore, we're talking amongst ourselves.

King [John King, Cable News Network].

Saddam Hussein and the Attacks of September 11

Q. Mr. President, Dr. Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld both said yesterday that they have seen no evidence that Iraq had anything to do with September 11th. Yet, on "Meet the Press," Sunday, the Vice President said Iraq was a geographic base for the terrorists, and he also said, "I don't know, or we don't know," when asked if there was any involvement. Your critics say that this is some effort—deliberate effort to blur the line and confuse people. How would you answer that?

The President. No, we've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with the September the 11th. What the Vice President said was, is that he has been involved with Al Qaida. And Al Zarqawi, Al Qaida operative, was in Baghdad. He's the guy that ordered the killing of a U.S. diplomat. He's a man who is still running loose, involved with the poisons network, involved with Ansar Al Islam. There's no question that Saddam Hussein had Al Qaida ties.

Caren [Caren Bohan], Reuters.

Energy Legislation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Step forth and speak.

Q. I know that the ANWR drilling provision is very important to you, but are you willing to sacrifice it to get a broader bill?

The President. One thing I've learned, Caren, is not to negotiate with myself, particularly in front of cameras. The conferees will work as hard as they can to come up with a good bill that can pass both bodies. And we look forward to working with them. I think it's very important for our country to recognize that we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of crude and, therefore, find ways to do that. We had a good discussion. That's certainly a contentious issue, and you'll find strong opinions around the table about this. And the job of the conferees is to work through these issues, and we look forward to helping them.

Yes, final question.

Funding for Domestic Priorities and Iraqi Reconstruction

Q. Mr. President, how do you respond——

The President. Identify yourself, please.

Q. Pam Fessler from NPR.

The President. Oh, Pam, of course—[*inaudible*]. How do I respond?

Q. How do you respond to criticism that you are asking for $20 billion in aid to reconstruct Iraq at a time when a lot of domestic work, such as the No Child Left Behind and the Help America Vote Act are not being fully funded?

The President. Well, I will start with—by responding this way: The No Child Left Behind funding is the largest increase in elementary and secondary school funding in a long time. And the Title I part of the Elementary and Secondary School Act funding is a large increase as well—historic increases.

Secondly, that it is vital that we succeed in Iraq, that a free Iraq will make America more secure. A free Iraq will change the dynamics of the Middle East, which will be important for peace. And I appreciate the support of Congress and the understanding of Congress that we will succeed in Iraq. And so the $20 billion is to help rehabilitate that country, so that the people of that country can live a free and hopeful life.

Listen, thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:48 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and USAID officer Laurence Foley, who was killed in Amman, Jordan, on October 28, 2002. He also referred to Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103–382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89–10).

Executive Order 13316—Continuance of Certain Federal Advisory Committees

September 17, 2003

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Each advisory committee listed below is continued until September 30, 2005.

(a) Committee for the Preservation of the White House; Executive Order 11145, as amended (Department of the Interior).

(b) National Infrastructure Advisory Council; Section 3 of Executive Order 13231, as amended (Department of Homeland Security).

(c) Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health; Executive Order 12196, as amended (Department of Labor).

(d) President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Executive Order 13256 (Department of Education).

(e) President's Board of Advisors on Tribal Colleges and Universities; Executive Order 13270 (Department of Education).

(f) President's Commission on White House Fellowships; Executive Order 11183, as amended (Office of Personnel Management).

(g) President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities; Executive Order 12367, as amended (National Endowment for the Arts).

(h) President's Committee on the International Labor Organization; Executive Order 12216, as amended (Department of Labor).

(i) President's Committee on the National Medal of Science; Executive Order 11287, as amended (National Science Foundation).

(j) President's Council on Bioethics; Executive Order 13237 (Department of Health and Human Services).

(k) President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; Executive Order 13265 (Department of Health and Human Services).

(l) President's Export Council; Executive Order 12131, as amended (Department of Commerce).

(m) President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee; Executive Order 12382, as amended (Department of Homeland Security).

(n) Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee; Executive Order 12905 (Office of the United States Trade Representative).

Sec. 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other Executive Order, the functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act that are applicable to the committees listed in section 1 of this order shall be performed by the head of the department or agency designated after each committee, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 3. The following Executive Orders, or sections thereof, which established committees that have terminated or whose work is completed, are revoked:

(a) Sections 5 through 7 of Executive Order 13111, as amended by Executive Order 13188 and Section 3(a) of Executive Order 13218, pertaining to the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Expanding Training Opportunities;

(b) Executive Order 12975, as amended by Executive Orders 13018, 13046, and 13137, establishing the National Bioethics Advisory Commission;

(c) Executive Order 13227, as amended by Executive Order 13255, establishing the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education;

(d) Executive Order 13278, establishing the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service;