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Message to the Congress Reporting on the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security Concerning Implementation of Section 428 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002

September 29, 2003

Message to the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 428(e)(8)(A) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–296) (the ''Act''), I am pleased to report that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security have completed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning implementation of section 428 of the Act. The Memorandum of Understanding will allow the Departments of State and Homeland Security to work cooperatively to create and maintain an effective, efficient visa process that secures America's borders from external threats and ensures that our borders remain open to legitimate travel to the United States.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 29, 2003.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Chicago, Illinois

September 30, 2003

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. I always love coming to the great city of Chicago. It's really one of the great cities in our country. I was here last summer, and I'm really happy the baseball season is still going on. It's exciting for the citizens of this city to know that the Cubs are still alive and kicking. I wish you all the best.

Thanks for your help. And what we're doing today is laying the groundwork, putting down the foundation for what is going to be a great national victory in November of 2004. I appreciate your generosity. I want to thank you for your hard work. I thank you for your contributions, but I'm going to call on you to do more. I'm going to ask you to go to your coffee shops, drug stores, community centers and remind the people that this administration has got a message that is positive and hopeful and optimistic for every single American.

I'm getting ready, and I'm loosening up. But there's a time for politics. This political season will come in its own time. Right now I'm focused on doing the people's business. I've got a job to do, and there's a lot on the agenda. I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of every American by keeping this Nation strong and secure, prosperous, and free.

I want to thank Pat Ryan and all those who worked hard to put this event on. It is a fantastic turnout, and I understand how much work goes into a successful lunch like today, and I really thank you a lot. I appreciate your leadership, Pat.

I'm also honored to be introduced by the great Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert. He's truly one of the greats. I really do enjoy working with Denny. He's a no-nonsense kind of fellow. He looks you in the eye and tells you what he believes. And that's refreshing in Washington, DC, by the way. He cares a lot about the people of his district, the people of this State, and he loves his country. And like me, he married above himself. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad Jean is here with us today as well.

Speaking about wives, I notice Laura was doing a little diplomacy today. [*Laughter*] I'm really proud of her. She is a fabulous woman, a great mom, a great wife, and a terrific First Lady for the people of this country.

I'm honored as well that members of the Illinois congressional delegation are here. I want to thank them for their hard work on behalf of this State and for helping out at this fundraiser today. Mark Kirk; Phil Crane—Congressman Crane is with us. Judy Biggert is with us. Dan Manzullo is with us. John Shimkus is with us. I appreciate you all coming, and I'm honored to call you friend.

We had a member—a meeting of the former Governors club behind the stage here. And I'm a member. It was good to see two other members. That would be Jim Edgar and Jim Thompson, and I'm honored they're here. I'm proud to call them friend.

I want to thank Bob Kjellander, who is the national committeeman from this State, and Mary Jo Arndt, who is the national committeewoman. I want to thank all the grassroots activists. I'm glad to know Mary Jo brought her family with her. [*Laughter*] I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is a Cincinnati businessman who is my national finance chairman. But most of all, I want to thank you all for coming.

The last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities and not let them slip away. This administration is 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 key leaders of the Al Qaida network that orchestrated the attacks on America on September the 11th, 2001. And the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those ultimatums chose to—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. So 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 we began a march to war. We found out some of our corporate citizens forgot to tell the truth—all of which affected the confidence of our country. But we acted. We passed tough laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going, we have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

Here's what the Speaker and I know: We know that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. We understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. We do not spend the Government's money. We spend the people's money. And so we're returning more money to American families to help them meet their needs. We're reducing the taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We give small businesses incentives to expand and hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundations for greater prosperity and economic vitality and more jobs across America, so that every single one of our citizens is able to realize the great promise of America.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I acted. 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're bringing high standards and strong accountability to every public school in America. See, we believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math. That's what we believe. And we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math.

We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. In return for Federal money, we expect results. The days of excuse-making are over. We want every child to learn to read and write and add and subtract, so that not one single child is left behind in America.

We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard our borders and ports and to make the American people more secure. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Illinois' ranchers and farmers and manufacturers and entrepreneurs. We passed budget agreements—and Mr. Speaker, thank you for working on those—to bring much needed spending discipline to Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle. We have kept our word, and we have made progress for the American people.

We have done a lot, and the Congress deserves a lot of the credit. We have set out goals. We have met those goals, thanks in large part to the leadership of Speaker Denny Hastert. He and Senator Bill Frist are

great leaders of the United States Congress. They work closely with the administration. They've got one thing in mind. They want to work with us to get rid of this needless partisan bickering that dominates the Washington, DC, landscape and the zero-sum politics of Washington. And we can do that by not only working to change the tone in Washington but by focusing on results, by saying, "Here's what we're going to do," and then go out and do it. Speaker Hastert, you are a great leader of the House of Representatives of the United States.

I've asked good people to join my administration, people who are as well working to change the tone in Washington, good, solid citizens who are there to serve something greater than themselves, good people like Don Rumsfeld, who was educated right here in this part of the—of our country. Now, I've got a strong team, solid Americans from all walks of life. Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a different opinion. [*Laughter*]

Now, we've done a lot in 2½ years. We've 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 to succeed and to 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, and we are freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom, those who hate America, 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.

We're confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw Iraq into chaos by attacking coalition forces and aid workers and innocent Iraqis. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat in the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying to shake the will of America and the civilized world. But America will not be intimidated.

Aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq, we're defeating them there so we don't have to face them in our own country. We call on other nations to help build a free Iraq. We stand with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move towards self-government. These aren't easy tasks, but they are essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Yet 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 threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person and that freedom is the future of every nation.

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

We face challenges at home as well. The Speaker knows that, and I know it. And our actions will prove equal to those tasks. So long as anybody in America who wants to work is looking for a job, I will work hard to make the conditions for economic growth positive and strong. I want our people working in America.

We have other duties as well. We have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. 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

reconcile their differences, to iron out the details, and get a bill to my desk. The sooner they finish the job, the sooner we can say we have done our duty to America's seniors.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, and therefore, they affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. And so I proposed a good bill, and I worked with the Speaker on it. We passed a good bill out of the House of Representatives, but the bill is stuck in the Senate. And the Senate must act on behalf of the American people. Those Senators must understand that no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

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

Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. The Speaker knows this, and Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your leadership on this issue. As we learned a while ago, we need to modernize our electricity grid. [*Laughter*] We need to bring it up to the standards of the 21st century. We need to make sure that the delivery of electricity is not a voluntary act. It's a—requires mandatory reliability standards. We need to make sure we do a better job of using our technologies to conserve more energy. We need to develop alternative sources to foreign oil. We need clean coal technology. One of the things we need to do is, for economic security and national security, to become 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, applying the most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on government, 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 fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the ''Citizen Service Act,'' so more Americans can serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should finally reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion which exist all around our country, that are mentoring our children, that are caring for the homeless, that offer hope to addicted. This great Nation should not fear faith, should not fear those who rely upon faith as their motivation to provide help to those who hurt. We need to welcome faith in our society.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. See, this administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. We want people owning and managing their health care accounts. We want people owning and managing their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning a small business, because we understand that when a person owns something, 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, 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 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. 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're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders

and your employees. 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 the culture of service and responsibility growing around us here in America. You know, I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been really strong. People want to serve. People want to be involved in their community. Our faith-based and charities are strong, providing the much needed healing to those who need help.

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. 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.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Patrick G. Ryan, event chair; Jean Hastert, wife of Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert; Representative Don Manzullo; former Gov. Jim Edgar and former Gov. James R. Thompson of Illinois; Robert Kjellander, Illinois national committeeman, and Mary Jo Arndt, Illinois national committeewoman, Republican National Committee; Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters in Chicago

September 30, 2003

The President. Mr. Mayor, thank you. I want to thank the business leaders here from the Chicago area for sharing with me their concerns about our economy. I think it's safe to say most people share the sense of optimism I do but recognize there's still work to be done, particularly when it comes to job creation.

We talked about good legal policy. We talked about the need for an energy plan. We talked about fair trade for American manufacturers. We talked about the need for China to make sure that China's got a monetary policy which is fair. And I assured the leaders here that I would work to—I'd represent the manufacturing sector and the—all sectors of our economy when it comes to world trade.

The thing I'm concerned about is people being able to find a job. We put the conditions in place for good job creation, but I recognize there's still people who want to work that can't find a job. And we're dedicated to hearing the voices of those folks and working hard to expand our economy.

And so I want to thank you all for taking time. Mr. Mayor, I wish the Cubs all the best. [*Laughter*] I made a significant contribution to the Cubs, as you might recall——

Participant. Sammy.

The President. ——when I was a—yes, Sammy Sosa. I'll take great delight when they win.

Participant. Thank you for Sammy.

The President. Thanks for coming.

Let me answer a couple of questions. Then we've got to go to Cincinnati. Deb [Deb Reichmann, Associated Press].

Justice Department Investigation of Classified Information Leak

Q. Do you think that the Justice Department can conduct an impartial investigation, considering the political ramifications of the CIA leak, and why wouldn't a special counsel be better?

The President. Yes. Let me just say something about leaks in Washington. There are