

pay a reduced premium or no premium at all for the new drug coverage. And low-income seniors would also have lower copayments for their medicines.

Fourth, our seniors would enjoy more choices in their health coverage, including the same kind of choices that Members of Congress and other Federal employees enjoy. If seniors have more choices, health plans will compete for their business by offering better coverage at affordable prices.

The choices we support include the choice of remaining in the traditional Medicare program. Some seniors don't want change, and if you're a senior who wants to stay in the current Medicare system, you will have that option. And with that option, you will also be able to get Medicare-approved prescription drug coverage.

Some seniors may choose a new Medicare-approved private plan that includes a drug benefit, along with other options. Such options could include coverage for extended hospital stays or protection against high out-of-pocket medical expenses. Others may prefer managed care plans. Under the approach I support, seniors would have these options as well.

American seniors are calling for these improvements. Among the seniors I met in Florida was Marge MacDonald. Marge and her husband Mac do not have prescription drug coverage, and they are frustrated. Here is what Marge says: "I'm tired of the talk. Sooner or later, somebody needs to do something." Marge is right. The time for delay and deadlock has passed. Now is the time for action.

I ask seniors and all Americans to speak up, to call and write your Representatives and Senators and urge them to work out a final bill. Congress has an historic opportunity to give all our seniors prescription drug coverage, health care choices, and a healthier, more secure retirement. We must make these improvements this year, during this session of Congress. And with your help, we will get the job done.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:35 a.m. on November 14 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 15. The transcript was made available by

the Office of the Press Secretary on November 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Announcement of a Transition Plan by the Iraqi Governing Council

November 15, 2003

I welcome the announcement by the Iraqi Governing Council of a political timetable as called for by the United Nations in U.N. Resolution 1511. This statement is an important step toward realizing the vision of Iraq as a democratic, pluralistic country at peace with its neighbors.

The plan outlined by the Governing Council meets a key mutual objective of the coalition and the Iraqi people: the restoration of sovereignty to a body chosen by the citizens of Iraq and based in a legal framework. It also commits Iraq to a process for drafting a permanent, democratic constitution that protects the rights of all citizens.

The U.S. stands ready to help the Governing Council and all Iraqis translate this new timeline into political reality. The American people are committed to the future of an Iraq that is democratic and prosperous.

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Istanbul, Turkey

November 15, 2003

I condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks today in Istanbul, where Turkey's diverse religious communities of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian believers have flourished together for centuries. The focus of these attacks on Turkey's Jewish community, in Istanbul's synagogues where men, women, and children gathered to worship God, remind us that our enemy in the war against terror is without conscience or faith. Turkey has suffered terrible losses from terrorism for decades, and the United States stands resolutely with Turkey in the global war on terrorism. On behalf of the American