

This Convention, which is similar to tax treaties between the United States and other developed nations, provides rules specifying the circumstances under which income that arises in one of the countries and is derived by residents of the other country may be taxed by the country in which income arises, providing for maximum source-country withholding tax rates that may be applied to various types of income and providing for protection from double taxation of income. The proposed Convention also provides rules designed to ensure that the benefits of the Convention are not available to persons that are engaged in treaty shopping. Also included in the proposed Convention are rules necessary for administering the Convention.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention, and that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 9, 2003.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Members of the Iraqi National
Symphony**

December 10, 2003

Last night Laura and I had the honor of going to hear the Iraqi National Symphony play with the Washington Symphony at the Kennedy Center. It was an extraordinary event. And today I've had the honor of welcoming members of the symphony here at the White House. Maestro, you did a superb job. Thank you very much.

I'm also honored to be here with Rend al-Rahim, who is the Iraqi representative to the United States. Rend is an articulate defender of freedom and peace. I'm so honored you're here, Rend, and we look forward to working with you.

We've had a very positive discussion here about freedom and hopes and aspirations of young and old alike. And I am so impressed by the spirit of these musicians. I'm so honored you would come to our country.

It's very interesting that the Iraqi Symphony is made up of people who are Shi'a

and Sunni and Armenian and Kurdish. They work for one thing, and that is a unified sound, a beautiful sound. And that's the country that is now emerging in Iraq, a country that will work together and recognize everybody's rights. We're making good progress in Iraq. There's more to do, obviously, but the fact that the Iraqi Symphony is here and entertaining Americans is a sign of that progress.

And we thank you all for coming. We wish you Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mohammed Amin Ezzat, conductor, Iraqi National Symphony; and Rend Rahim Francke, head of Iraq's Interest Section in the U.S. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on the Death of
Paul Simon**

December 10, 2003

Laura and I were saddened to learn of the death of former Senator Paul Simon. Paul Simon contributed significantly to America as an Army special agent, newspaper publisher, Member of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and author and teacher. He will be missed by the many people in Illinois and throughout the country whose lives he touched and improved. Laura and I send our condolences to his family and many friends.

**Statement on the Death of
Bob Bartley**

December 10, 2003

Bob Bartley was a giant of journalism. His extraordinary contributions to America as an author, editor, and columnist helped shape our times. I was pleased to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our highest civil honor, in recognition of his enormous impact on the intellectual and political life of our Nation. Laura joins me in sending condolences to Edith and his daughters, family, colleagues, and friends.

Proclamation 7744—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 2003

December 10, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's founders dedicated this country to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. During Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, we recognize the advances we have made expanding freedom, democracy, and individual rights in this country and around the world.

America has helped bring liberty to Afghanistan and Iraq. In countries like Belarus, Cuba, and Zimbabwe, we continue to stand with those who struggle for democracy. We will continue to call on Burma's ruling junta to release political prisoners and engage in an inclusive dialogue with the democratic opposition to bring democracy to Burma. We also look forward to the day when the men and women of North Korea can live in a free society.

Freedom is the right of mankind and the future of every nation. It is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to every man and woman who lives in this world.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 10, 2003, as Human Rights Day; December 15, 2003, as Bill of Rights Day; and the week beginning December 10, 2003, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to mark these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:44 a.m., December 12, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

December 11, 2003

The President. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for coming for what will be the last Cabinet meeting of the year 2003. I've just heard from each Cabinet member about the accomplishments in the year 2003. This has been an historic year. America is safer. America is more prosperous. America is a better place because of the actions this administration has taken.

In order to secure America, we liberated the people of Iraq from a brutal tyrant, and now we're in the process of rebuilding that country, along with others, and we're making good progress.

In order to make sure people could find work in America, we proposed and Congress passed an economic stimulus package, and that package is making a significant difference on our economy. Our economy is strong; it is vibrant. People are finding work, but we won't rest until everybody who wants to find a job can find one.

The country is better off for a lot of reasons. A significant piece of legislation was passed by the Congress, which I recently signed, and that is the Medicare reform bill. We took on a tough issue; we worked with Congress to make sure that we fulfilled a promise to America's seniors by modernizing and strengthening Medicare.

This has been a year of accomplishment. We also recognize we've got a job to do, to continue to do for the American people, to keep this country safe and prosperous and strong and a better place for all our citizens. And we look forward to working with the Congress in the year '04 to accomplish those objectives.

Today is Mel Martinez's, the fine Secretary of HUD, last meeting. Mel has served our country with class and distinction. I'm proud, Mel, to have had you on this team. Good job.

Secretary Martinez. Thank you, sir.

The President. I'll answer a couple of questions—that would be two questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].