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member, any person who is part of the member's department, agency, or office and who is either an officer of the United States appointed by the President or a full-time employee serving in a position with pay equal to or greater than the minimum rate payable for GS–15 of the General Schedule. The Task Force shall report to the President through the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

(ii) The Task Force shall establish a "Great Lakes Regional Working Group" (Working Group) composed of the appropriate regional administrator or director with programmatic responsibility for the Great Lakes system for each agency represented on the Task Force including: the Great Lakes National Program Office of the Environmental Protection Agency; the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and United States Geological Survey within the Department of the Interior; the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the Department of Commerce; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Department of Transportation; the Coast Guard within the Department of Homeland Security; and the Army Corps of Engineers within the Department of the Army. The Working Group will coordinate and make recommendations on how to implement the policies, strategies, projects, and priorities of the Task Force.

(c) Management Principles for Regional Collaboration of National Significance. To further the policy described in section 1, the Task Force shall recognize and apply key principles and foster conditions to ensure successful collaboration. To that end, the Environmental Protection Agency will coordinate the development of a set of principles of successful collaboration.

Sec. 4. *Great Lakes National Program Office.* The Great Lakes National Program Office of the Environmental Protection Agency shall assist the Task Force and the Working Group in the performance of their functions. The Great Lakes National Program Manager shall serve as chair of the Working Group.

Sec. 5. *Preservation of Authority.* Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, regulatory, and legislative proposals. Nothing in this order shall be construed to affect the statutory authority or obligations of any Federal agency or any bi-national agreement with Canada.

Sec. 6. *Judicial Review.* This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the Federal Government and is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 18, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 19, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 20.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

May 19, 2004

The President. Thank you for coming. I've just met with my Cabinet to discuss a variety of issues. We spent a lot of time talking about the situation in Iraq. I detailed our plan and our strategy to transfer full sovereignty to the Iraqi people on June the 30th. I reminded them that a lot of progress has been made already toward that transfer. Eleven ministries are now run by Iraqi citizens—I might add, capably run by Iraqi citizens.

I discussed with the Cabinet the plans of Mr. Brahimi, the U.N. representative who is consulting with Iraqi leadership and Iraqi citizenry, as well as our own Government officials there, about the interim government and who will occupy the positions of responsibility in that government. I anticipate in the next couple of weeks decisions will be made toward who will be the President and the Vice Presidents as well as the Prime Minister and other ministers.

Thirdly, we talked about the U.N. Security Council resolution, which is—the Secretary is moving forward. He's in consultations with Security Council members—a Security Council resolution which will embrace the new interim government and the need to provide security so that free elections will happen as promised to the Iraqi people.

We've got hard work to do. I told my Cabinet we've got hard work to do. After all, we saw the vivid savagery of the enemy. The decapitation of a U.S. citizen reminds us all about the barbaric nature of those who are trying to stop progress toward freedom. We understand the nature of that enemy. We also understand the nature of our brave troops. They're motivated. They're skilled. They're well trained. They will accomplish the mission.

Then I talked about the economy. We're pleased with the economic progress here in America. After all, the growth rates are high. New jobs are being created; 1.1 million new jobs since last August have been created by the entrepreneurs and small-business owners and risktakers of America. And that's positive.

I am concerned about the price of gasoline at the pump. I fully understand how that affects American consumers, how it crimps the budgets of moms and dads who are trying to provide for their families, how it affects the truck driver, how it affects the small-business owner.

I anticipated this 3 years ago. I asked my team to put together a strategy to make us less dependent upon foreign sources of energy. I submitted that plan to the United States Congress. Now we want people to have it both ways, just like they've tried to have it both ways over the last couple of years. On the one hand, they decry the price at the pump, and on the other hand, they won't do anything about it. They won't take action. Congress needs to pass the energy plan.

We had a very interesting discussion about capacity. For example, had ANWR been passed—had it not been vetoed in the past, we anticipate an additional million barrels of oil would have been coming out of that part of the world, which would obviously have a positive impact for today's consumers.

And so it's time for some action here to get us less dependent. They need to pass that which I have submitted to Congress, so this country will become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

All in all, we're upbeat about the spread of freedom and peace and the ability for our fellow citizens to find work.

Let me answer two questions, starting with Lindlaw [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Israeli Military Shelling Demonstrators

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. You've called for maximum restraint from both sides in the Middle East. Today Israel's military acknowledged they fired four tank shells, machine guns, a missile into a crowd of demonstrators. One, was it justified? Two, what are you telling them, and what are you hearing?

The President. I continue to urge restraint. It is essential that people respect innocent life, in order for us to achieve peace. And we'll get clarification from the Government. I haven't had a chance to speak to the Government or be briefed. But I am—I will continue to speak out about the need for all parties to respect innocent life in the Middle East.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Gasoline Prices/Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Q. Sir, Senator Kerry has suggested halting shipments to the emergency oil reserves. Your energy bill is a long-term strategy. What are some short-term steps that can be taken?

The President. If people had acted on my energy bill when I submitted it 3 years ago, we would be in a much better situation today.

Secondly, we will not play politics with the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That Petroleum Reserve is in place in case of major

disruptions of energy supplies to the United States. The idea of emptying the Strategic Petroleum Reserve plays—would put America in a dangerous position in the war on terror. We're at war. We face a tough and determined enemy on all fronts, and we must not put ourselves in a worse position in this war. And playing politics with the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would do just that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:04 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; and American hostage Nicholas Berg, who was killed in Iraq in early May by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring NCAA Winter Champion Teams

May 19, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming.

Audience member. We'll be back. [*Laughter*]

The President. Whoever said, "We'll be back," it sounds like the Connecticut women's basketball team.

I'm glad you all are here. This is what we call Champions Day. It is my high honor to welcome champions to the White House. I appreciate—I notice we've got a lot of folks from Connecticut here. [*Laughter*] Yes. We've got two fine United States Senators in Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman. We're proud you're here. Nancy Johnson is here with us today. Chris Shays—you made it. Very good. And Rob Simmons is with us as well. Yes, there you go. [*Laughter*]

They're here because Connecticut—University of Connecticut has done something really unusual. They have a women's champion and a men's champion in the same year, and we're proud to welcome them here. Maybe now is the moment that I should admit that I was born in Connecticut. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Phil Austin for being here. Geno, welcome back. Geno is—he's obviously a great coach. And he is a fellow who—I've watched the games, and I've watched his attitude, and no wonder Connecticut women's basketball does so well, because he knows how to win. And I'm proud to have him back. This is the third year that the Connecticut ladies have been here since I've been the President.

And Jim Calhoun is also a great coach and a fine man as well. Coach Calhoun looked at me and said, "I wonder if you're a point guard." I said, "I couldn't even touch the net." [*Laughter*] But he's got some people that can touch the net on his team. And both these champs really worked hard to get here—both these teams worked hard to get here, with great coaches. And I'm proud to welcome them here to the White House.

University of Denver—one of your—well, you've got a couple of alumni who work for me. One is Gale Norton, who is the Secretary of the Interior. Welcome, Gale. I'm glad you're here. The other one is Condi Rice, and I told her to keep working. [*Laughter*] No rest for the weary. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Marc Holtzman and George Gwozdecky, who is the head coach, for joining us as well. We've got Wayne Allard, who is the United States Senator from Colorado, with us. Scott McInnis and Diana DeGette is with us as well. Diana, thanks for coming. We're glad you all are here, proud the good folks from Colorado are here.

Laura Halldorson is the coach of the University of Minnesota women's hockey team. I welcome the team here. I also welcome Senators Norm Coleman and Mark Dayton. Where is Senator Dayton—he was a fine goalie, by the way.

Audience member. Long ago.

The President. Yes, long ago. [*Laughter*]

Martin Sabo, the Congressman, is with us. Martin, thank you for coming. We're proud we've got so many here. I was pleased to know that the University of Minnesota women's hockey team's slogan this year was, "Get it done, and meet George." [*Laughter*] It's my pleasure to meet you. [*Laughter*] You beat Harvard, and you became the first women's team in school history to win a national championship, and that's got to make you feel great. Congratulations.

I had met one of your players before. I warned her I was going to say this, but Krissy