

firsthand. We agree that we need to improve the technology at our disposal and develop capabilities that allow us to track our enemies anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

I appreciate the hard work of the Commission and the spirit in which their recommendations are written. We will give serious consideration to every idea because we share a common goal: to do everything in our power to prepare for and to stop any terrorist attack.

The new threats of the 21st century—they are dangerous and they are frightening, but America has the resources and the strength and the resolve to overcome them. We are waging a broad and unrelenting war on terror overseas and here at home. We're not going to give up. We're not going to weaken. Our resolve is firm. We have a duty to the American people. We are using this country's technological advantages to develop new cures and defenses to protect our citizens. We have dramatically improved our capacity to prevent and, if necessary, respond to a terrorist attack.

In nearly 3 years since September the 11th, life in America has in many ways returned to normal, and that's good for the country. It means that citizens are doing their jobs and raising their families and living as free people. Americans want to live in peace. I want peace for our country and peace for the world. Yet we have not forgotten what happened to our Nation on that day. We must do everything we can to prevent an even bolder and deadlier attack. We will never let our guard down.

Americans will always remember the courage we saw on that day as well, the unselfish heroism of police and firefighters and rescue personnel who rushed toward danger to save lives. All of you know that the next alarm could bring serious danger and even sacrifice. Americans are grateful that you are on the job. We're grateful that you're on the lookout for the enemy. We're grateful that you're prepared to respond if tragedy strikes.

You are vital to the Nation's defenses, the ones most likely to first encounter a terrorist, the ones who will be the first on the scene should there be an attack. You have dedicated your careers to serving others. That is

a noble calling. In these challenging times, with the Nation relying on your efforts, you deserve the full support of our governments, and you can count on that support.

It's an honor for me to be here with those who defend us and protect us. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:49 p.m. in the field training facility. In his remarks, he referred to Albert Rigoni, president, Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Statement on Senate Action To Block Votes on Nominations for Judges on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals

July 22, 2004

Today a minority of Senators employed filibuster tactics to bar confirmation votes on three excellent judicial nominees from Michigan to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit—Judge Richard Griffin, Judge David McKeague, and Judge Henry Saad. Each of these nominees is eminently qualified, has the support of a majority of Senators, and would be confirmed if given an up-or-down vote.

These filibuster tactics are shameful and inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional obligation. All three of these fine men are distinguished jurists. Together they have more than three decades of experience on the Michigan State and Federal courts. All three have been rated either well-qualified or qualified by the American Bar Association. The vacancies these judges have been nominated to fill have been designated judicial emergencies by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Yet all three nominees have been waiting more than 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the Senate. By blocking votes on these nominations, a minority of Senators is continuing a crisis that has delayed the administration of justice in the Sixth Circuit.

Prior to this Congress, the filibuster had never been used to block the confirmation of a judicial nominee. But in recent months, the use of this obstructionist tactic by some Democrats has become commonplace. With today's action, 10 appeals court nominees have now been filibustered.

The Senate minority's unfair treatment of these nominees demonstrates the breakdown in the judicial confirmation process. More than 18 months ago, I proposed a plan that would ensure that judicial nominees receive timely hearings and up-or-down votes no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. I again urge the Senate—Republicans and Democrats alike—to put an end to the partisan politics of the past and ensure judicial nominees are given the timely up-or-down votes they deserve. The Senate owes it to these fine men and women and to the American people.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Provide Funding for the United States Military

July 22, 2004

My most solemn duty as President is to protect the lives of the American people, and I have worked consistently for the largest defense buildup in a generation. America continues to be at war, and the legislation passed today by the Congress delivers the funding necessary to ensure that our troops are the best paid, the best equipped, and the best trained in the world.

I also commend the Congress for continuing to provide the resources necessary to support the critical missions of our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. As I have said repeatedly, our troops will have what they need to do their job, and I am pleased that a bipartisan majority in the Congress continues to stand with me to support our military.

I look forward to signing this legislation into law.

Executive Order 13347—Individuals With Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness

July 22, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to strengthen emergency preparedness with respect to individuals with disabilities, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. To ensure that the Federal Government appropriately supports safety and security for individuals with disabilities in situations involving disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and acts of terrorism, it shall be the policy of the United States that executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government (agencies):

(a) consider, in their emergency preparedness planning, the unique needs of agency employees with disabilities and individuals with disabilities whom the agency serves;

(b) encourage, including through the provision of technical assistance, as appropriate, consideration of the unique needs of employees and individuals with disabilities served by State, local, and tribal governments and private organizations and individuals in emergency preparedness planning; and

(c) facilitate cooperation among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments and private organizations and individuals in the implementation of emergency preparedness plans as they relate to individuals with disabilities.

Sec. 2. Establishment of Council. (a) There is hereby established, within the Department of Homeland Security for administrative purposes, the Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities (the "Council"). The Council shall consist exclusively of the following members or their designees:

(i) the heads of executive departments, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Administrator of General Services, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the Commissioner of Social Security; and