

would have already been done. But it is necessary to confront it. And I would hope to be able to work with Democrats to get this done. I'm not sure we can get it done without Democrat participation, because it is a big issue, and I will explain to them and I will show them Senator Moynihan's thinking as a way to begin the process. And I will remind everybody here that we have a duty to leave behind a better America and when we see a problem, to deal with it. And I think the—I think Democrats agree with that.

And so I'm optimistic. You covered me when I was the Governor of Texas. I told you that I was going to do that as a Governor. There was probably skepticism in your beady eyes there. [Laughter] But you might remember, we did—we were able to accomplish a lot by—and Washington is different from Austin, no question about it. Washington—one of the disappointments of being here in Washington is how bitter this town can become and how divisive. I'm not blaming one party or the other. It's just the reality of Washington, DC, sometimes exacerbated by you because it's great sport. It's really—it's entertaining for some. It also makes it difficult to govern at times.

But nevertheless, my commitment is there. I fully—am now more seasoned to Washington. I've cut my political eyeteeth, at least the ones I've recently grown here in Washington. And so I'm aware of what can happen in this town. But nevertheless, having said that, I am fully prepared to work with both Republican and Democrat leadership to advance an agenda that I think makes a big difference for the country.

Listen, thank you all. I look forward to working with you. I've got a question for you. How many of you are going to be here for a second term? Please raise your hand. [Laughter] Good. Gosh, we're going to have a lot of fun, then. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:17 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. As regards journalist Bill Sammon's question asking for the President's reaction to the death of Chairman Yasser

Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, the reports of Chairman Arafat's death were inaccurate.

Statement on the Death of Shaykh Zayid bin Sultan Al Nahayyan of the United Arab Emirates

November 4, 2004

The United States mourns the passing of a great friend of our country, Shaykh Zayid bin Sultan Al Nahayyan of the United Arab Emirates. Shaykh Zayid was the founder and President of the UAE for more than 30 years, a pioneer, an elder statesman, and a close ally. He and his fellow rulers of the seven Emirates built their federation into a prosperous, tolerant, and well-governed state. I offer my condolences and those of the American people to the family of Shaykh Zayid and to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates on their great loss.

Statement Congratulating President Hamid Karzai on His Election as President of Afghanistan

November 4, 2004

I congratulate President Karzai on his election victory. I commend the millions of Afghan men and women who voted in the first democratic election in their Nation's history. Through this simple act of voting, the Afghan people declared to the world their determination to move beyond a brutal legacy of oppression, terror, and fear to a future of hope, democracy, and freedom. The large turnout by Afghan women, who made up 40 percent of all voters, confirms that there is a vital role for women in the politics of a nation proud of its Islamic heritage. The election also makes clear that a free Afghanistan is a partner in the war on terror, a beacon of hope in a troubled region of the world, and an example to other countries working to realize the promise of freedom.