AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Robert J. Portman To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget

May 26, 2006

I commend the Senate for confirming Rob Portman as Director of the Office of Management and Budget. In this key position, Rob will have a leading role on my economic team and will help ensure that the Government spends the taxpayers' money wisely, or not at all. In addition, Rob will be in charge of implementing my goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009 while funding our priorities. The American people deserve results for every hard-earned dollar they send to Washington. Rob is a man of character and will perform his duties with dedication and integrity. I congratulate Rob and his family on today's confirmation and thank him for his continued service to our Nation.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York

May 27, 2006

Thank you for the warm welcome—General Lennox, Secretary Harvey, Members of the United States Congress, Academy staff and faculty, distinguished guests, proud family, and, most importantly, the class of 2006.

On the way in, General Lennox showed me what you did to his car. [*Laughter*] I told him, "That's a fine looking vehicle"—[*laughter*]—"but you need to stay away from Marine One." [*Laughter*]

I see a lot of "Gray Hogs" out there—a few "Century Men" too. During your 4 years at this Academy, I'm told, there are about 18,000 opportunities to be late for class, drill, march, or inspection—and many of you availed yourselves of those opportunities. [*Laughter*] Others got written up just for having bad haircuts. No matter what reason you got slugged, help is on the way. In keeping with longstanding tradition, I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. I leave it to General Lennox to define exactly what "minor" means. [*Laughter*]

It's a privilege to stand before the future leaders of the United States Army. You have worked hard to get to this moment. You've survived the hardest Beast on record—the "best summer of your lives" in Buckistan—countless hours in the House of Pain. In 4 years, you've been transformed from "beanheads" to "yuks" to "cows" and "Firsties." And today you will become proud officers of the greatest Army in the history of the world. Your teachers are proud of you; your parents are proud of you; and so is your Commander in Chief. Congratulations on a fantastic achievement.

This Academy has shaped your minds and bodies for the challenges that lie ahead. You worked hard in the classroom and on the playing field to prepare for the rigors of combat. One cadet described the West Point attitude this way: "First I'll beat Navy and Air Force, and then I'll beat the enemies of freedom on the battlefield."

The field of battle is where your degree and commission will take you. This is the first class to arrive at West Point after the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. Each of you came here in a time of war, knowing all the risks and dangers that come with wearing our Nation's uniform. And I want to thank you for your patriotism, your devotion to duty, your courageous decision to serve. America is grateful and proud of the men and women of West Point.

The reality of war has surrounded you since your first moments at this Academy. More than 50 of your fellow cadets here at

West Point have already seen combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. And 34 times since your class arrived, you have observed a moment of silence in Washington Hall to honor a former cadet fallen in the war on terror. Each loss is heartbreaking, and each loss has made you even more determined to pick up their mantle, to carry on their fight, and to achieve victory. We will honor the memory of those brave souls. We will finish the task for which they gave their lives. We will complete the mission.

West Point has adapted to prepare you for the war you're about to enter. Since the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Academy has established a new combating terrorism center, a new minor in terrorism studies, with new courses in counterinsurgency operations, intelligence, and homeland security, and winning the peace. West Point has expanded Arabic language training, has hired new faculty with expertise in Islamic law and culture, brought in members of the 101st and 82d Airborne to train you and share their experiences on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan. And each of you endured grueling Saturday training events where you practiced identifying IEDs, conducting convoy operations, and running checkpoints. By changing to meet the new threats, West Point has given you the skills you will need in Afghanistan and Iraq, and for the long war with Islamic radicalism that will be the focus of much of your military careers.

This Academy went through a similar period of change six decades ago, at the end of World War II. Some of West Point's greatest graduates—men like Eisenhower and Bradley, Patton and MacArthur—had just brought our Nation victory in Europe and Japan. Yet almost immediately, a new threat appeared on the horizon—the threat of imperial communism. And West Point, like America, had to prepare for a long struggle with a new adversary, one that would require the determination of generations of Americans.

In the early years of that struggle, freedom's victory was not obvious or assured. In 1947, Communist forces were threatening Greece and Turkey; the reconstruction of Germany was faltering; mass starvation was setting in across Europe. In 1948, Czechoslovakia fell to communism; France and Italy appeared to be headed for the same fate, and Berlin was blockaded on the orders of Josef Stalin. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon, giving our new enemy the ability to bring catastrophic destruction to our homeland. And weeks later, Communist forces won their revolution in China and claimed the world's most populous nation for communism. And in the summer of 1950, seven North Korean divisions poured across the border into South Korea, marking the start of the first direct military clash of the cold war. All of this took place in just the first 5 years following World War II.

Fortunately, we had a President named Harry Truman, who recognized the threat, took bold action to confront it, and laid the foundation for freedom's victory in the cold war. President Truman set a clear doctrine. In a speech to Congress, he called for military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, and announced a new doctrine that would guide American policy throughout the cold war. He told the Congress, "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." With this new doctrine, and with the aid to back it up, Greece and Turkey were saved from communism, and the Soviet expansion into Southern Europe and the Middle East was stopped.

President Truman acted boldly to confront new adversaries. When Stalin tested America's resolve with a blockade of Berlin, President Truman launched the Berlin Airlift, delivering supplies to the besieged city, forcing the Red Army to back down, and securing the freedom of West Berlin. Later, Truman again responded to Communist aggression with resolve, fighting a difficult war in Korea. Korean war saw many setbacks and missteps and terrible losses. More than 54,000 Americans gave their lives in Korea. Yet in the end, Communist forces were pushed back to the 38th Parallel, and the freedom of South Korea was secure.

President Truman acted boldly to help transform old adversaries into democratic allies. In Asia, his administration led the effort to help Japan change from a nation that had launched a surprise attack on America into

a thriving democracy and steadfast ally. In Europe, he launched the Marshall Plan, an unprecedented effort to help Germany and other nations in Europe recover from war and establish strong democracies. The Marshall Plan cost about 100 billion in today's dollars, and it helped to save Western Europe from Soviet tyranny and led to the emergence of democratic allies that remain indispensable to the cause of peace today.

President Truman transformed our alliances to deal with new dangers. After World War II, he led the effort to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the first peacetime alliance in American history. NATO served as a military bulwark against Communist aggression and helped give us a Europe that is now whole, free, and at peace.

President Truman positioned U.S. forces to deal with new threats. Despite enormous pressure to bring our troops home after World War II, he kept American forces in Germany to deter Soviet aggression, and kept U.S. forces in Japan as a counterweight to Communist China. Together with the deployment of U.S. forces to Korea, the military footprint Truman established on two continents has remained virtually unchanged to this day and has served as the foundation for security in Europe and in the Pacific.

President Truman launched a sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government to prepare it for a new struggle. Working with Congress, he created the Department of Defense, established the Air Force as a separate military service, formed the National Security Council at the White House, and founded the Central Intelligence Agency to ensure America had the best intelligence on Soviet threats.

President Truman made clear that the cold war was an ideological struggle between tyranny and freedom. At the time when some still wanted to wish away the Soviet threat, he brought Winston Churchill to Missouri to deliver his famous "Iron Curtain" speech. And he issued a Presidential directive called NSC–68, which declared that America faced an enemy "animated by a new fanatic faith" and determined to impose its ideology on the entire world. This directive called on the United States to accept the responsibility of world leadership and defend the cause of freedom and democracy—and that's exactly what the United States did.

By the actions he took, the institutions he built, the alliances he forged, and the doctrines he set down, President Truman laid the foundation for America's victory in the cold war. As President Truman put it towards the end of his Presidency, "When history says that my term of office saw the beginning of the cold war, it will also say that in those 8 years, we set the course that can win it." His leadership paved the way for subsequent Presidents from both political parties—men like Eisenhower and Kennedy and Reagan—to confront and eventually defeat the Soviet threat.

Today, at the start of a new century, we are again engaged in a war unlike any our nation has fought before. And like Americans in Truman's day, we are laying the foundations for victory. The enemies we face today are different in many ways from the enemy we faced in the cold war. In the cold war, we deterred Soviet aggression through a policy of mutually assured destruction. Unlike the Soviet Union, the terrorist enemies we face today hide in caves and shadows and emerge to attack free nations from within. The terrorists have no borders to protect or capital to defend. They cannot be deterred—but they will be defeated. America will fight the terrorists on every battlefront, and we will not rest until this threat to our country has been removed.

While there are real differences between today's war and the cold war, there are also many important similarities. Like the cold war, we are fighting the followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom, crushes all dissent, has territorial ambitions, and pursues totalitarian aims. Like the cold war, our enemies are dismissive of free peoples, claiming that men and women who live in liberty are weak and lack the resolve to defend our way of life. Like the cold war, our enemies believe that the innocent can be murdered to serve a political vision. And like the cold war, they're seeking weapons of mass murder that would allow them to deliver catastrophic destruction to our country. If our enemies succeed in acquiring such weapons, they will not hesitate to use them,

which means they would pose a threat to America as great as the Soviet Union.

Against such an enemy, there is only one effective response: We will never back down; we will never give in; and we will never accept anything less than complete victory. Like previous generations, history has once again called America to great responsibilities, and we're answering history's call with confidence. We're confronting new dangers with new determination and laying the foundations for victory in the war on terror.

In this new war, we have set a clear doctrine. After the attacks of September the 11th, I told a joint session of Congress, "America makes no distinction between the terrorists and the countries that harbor them. If you harbor a terrorist, you are just as guilty as the terrorists, and you're an enemy of the United States of America." In the months that followed, I also made clear the principles that will guide us in this new war: America will not wait to be attacked again; we will confront threats before they fully materialize; we will stay on the offense against the terrorists, fighting them abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

In this new war, we have acted boldly to confront new adversaries. When the Taliban regime in Afghanistan tested America's resolve, refusing our just demands to turn over the terrorists who attacked America, we responded with determination. Coalition forces drove the Taliban from power, liberated Afghanistan, and brought freedom to 25 million people.

In Iraq, another tyrant chose to test America's resolve. Saddam Hussein was a dictator who had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He sponsored terrorists, invaded his neighbors, abused his people, deceived international inspectors, and refused to comply with more than a dozen United Nations resolutions. When the United Nations Security Council gave him one final chance to disclose and disarm, or face serious consequences, he refused to take that final opportunity. So coalition forces went into Iraq and removed his cruel regime. And today, Iraq's former dictator is on trial for his crimes, and America and the world are better off because Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

In this new war, we have helped transform old adversaries into democratic allies. Just as an earlier generation of Americans helped change Germany and Japan from conquered adversaries into democratic allies, today, a new generation of Americans is helping Iraq and Afghanistan recover from the ruins of tyranny. In Afghanistan, the terror camps have been shut down; women are working; boys and girls are going to school; and Afghans have chosen a President and a new Parliament in free elections.

In Iraq, the people defied the terrorists and cast their ballots in three free elections last year. And last week, Iraqis made history when they inaugurated the leaders of a new Government of their choosing, under a Constitution that they drafted and they approved. When the formation of this unity Government—with the formation of this unity Government, the world has seen the beginning of something new: a constitutional democracy in the heart of the Middle East. Difficult challenges remain in both Afghanistan and Iraq. But America is safer and the world is more secure because these two countries are now democracies—and they are allies in the cause of freedom and peace.

In this new war, we have forged new alliances and transformed old ones for the challenges of a new century. After our Nation was attacked, we formed the largest coalition in history to fight the war on terror. More than 90 nations are cooperating in a global campaign to dry up terrorist financing, to hunt down terrorist operatives, and bring terrorist leaders to justice. Nations like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia that once turned a blind eye to terror are now helping lead the fight against it. And since September the 11th, 2001, our coalition has captured or killed Al Qaida managers and operatives in over two dozen countries and disrupted a number of serious Al Qaida terrorist plots, including plots to attack targets inside the United States. Our Nation is more secure because we have rallied the world to confront this threat to civilization.

The greatest threat we face is the danger of terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction. To confront this danger, we launched the Proliferation Security Initiative, a coalition of more than 70 nations that are

working together to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea, and in the air, and to stop them from falling into terrorist hands. And building on the legacy of Harry Truman, we launched the most dramatic transformation of the NATO Alliance since its founding in 1949. Working with allies, we created a new NATO Response Force that will allow NATO to deploy rapid reaction forces on short notice anywhere in the world. And together we transformed NATO from a defensive alliance focused on protecting Europe from Soviet tank invasion into a dynamic alliance that is now operating across the world in the support of democracy and peace.

For five decades, NATO forces never deployed outside of Europe. Today, NATO is leading security operations in Afghanistan, training Iraqi security forces in Baghdad, delivering humanitarian relief to earthquake victims in Pakistan, and training peacekeepers in Sudan. An alliance some said had lost its purpose after the cold war is now meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

In this new war, we're positioning our forces to meet new threats. For more than a half a century, American forces essentially had remained in the same places that President Truman deployed them. So 2 years ago, I announced the largest transformation of our global force posture since the start of the cold war. Over the coming decade, we will move U.S. forces from cold war garrisons in Europe and Asia and reposition them so they can surge quickly to trouble spots anywhere. We will deploy advanced military capabilities that will increase U.S. combat power across the world, while bringing home between 60,000 and 70,000 troops now stationed overseas. By taking these steps, we will reduce stress on our military families, raise the pressure on our enemies, and ensure that when you put on the uniform of the United States Army, you are ready to meet any threat.

In this new war, we've undertaken the most sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government since the start of the cold war. We created a new Department of Homeland Security, merging 22 different Government organizations into a single department with a clear mission: to protect America from future attacks. We created the new Director of National Intelligence, which has led a broad restructuring of our Nation's intelligence agencies for the threats of the 21st century. We have transformed the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism, and reorganized the Department of Justice to help us meet this new threat. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which broke down barriers that prevented law enforcement and intelligence agencies from sharing vital information on terrorist threats.

At the Department of Defense, we created a new Northern Command responsible for homeland defense, a new Strategic Command responsible for defending America against long-range attacks. We transformed the Special Operations Command, more than doubling its budget, adding thousands of new troops, and making it the lead command in the global war on terror. And we're undertaking the largest transformation of the Army in more than 100 years. Since the turn of the last century, the Army has been organized around the division structure designed by Napoleon. Today, we're replacing that division structure with a 21st century Army built around modular brigade combat teams that will be interchangeable and available to work for any division commander. These brigades will make our Army faster and lighter and more agile and more lethal, and it will make you more effective in the defense of freedom.

We have made clear that the war on terror is an ideological struggle between tyranny and freedom. When President Truman spoke here for the 150th anniversary of West Point, he told the class of 1952, "We can't have lasting peace unless we work actively and vigorously to bring about conditions of freedom and justice in the world." That same principle continues to guide us in today's war on terror. Our strategy to protect America is based on a clear premise: The security of our Nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw that problems originating in a failed and oppressive State 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. And we learned an important lesson: Decades of excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing

to make us safe. So long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place where terrorists foment resentment and threaten American security.

So we are pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. I believe the desire for liberty is universal, and by standing with democratic reformers across a troubled region, we will extend freedom to millions who have not known it and lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

We're still in the early stages of this struggle for freedom and, like those first years of the cold war, we've seen setbacks and challenges and days that have tested America's resolve. Yet we've also seen days of victory and hope. We've seen people in Afghanistan voting for the first democratic parliament in a generation. We have seen jubilant Iraqis dancing in the streets, holding up ink-stained fingers, celebrating their freedom. We've seen people in Lebanon waving cedar flags and securing the liberty and independence of their land. We've seen people in Kyrgyzstan drive a corrupt regime from power and vote for democratic change. In the past 4 years alone, more than 110 million human beings across the world have joined the ranks of the free—and this is only the beginning. The message has spread from Damascus to Tehran that the future belongs to freedom, and we will not rest until the promise of liberty reaches every people and every nation.

Now the class of 2006 will enter the great struggle, and the final outcome depends on your leadership. The war began on my watch, but it's going to end on your watch. Your generation will bring us victory in the war on terror. My call to you is this: Trust in the power of freedom, and be bold in freedom's defense; show leadership and courage, and not just on the battlefield. Take risk; try new things; and challenge the established way of doing things. Trust in your convictions; stay true to yourselves—and one day, the world will celebrate your achievements.

I have confidence in the final outcome of this struggle, because I know the character and determination of the men and women gathered before me. We see that character and determination in a cadet named Patrick Dowdell. It was Patrick's dream to attend West Point, and he applied straight out of high school, but he did not get in on his first try. After being turned down, he wondered if he was cut out for the Academy. His father, New York Fireman Kevin Dowdell, encouraged Patrick to apply again. Kevin wrote letters to his Congressman on behalf of his son. And he spent long hours working with Patrick on his application—right up to September the 9th, 2001. Two days later, Kevin Dowdell raced across the Brooklyn Bridge with his fire rescue unit to the burning World Trade Towers—and he never returned.

After the attack, Patrick spent months digging at Ground Zero looking for his dad—and thinking about the dream that they had shared about his future. He was determined to fulfill that dream. And in the summer of 2002, Patrick arrived here at West Point as a new cadet, and today he will receive his degree and his commission.

A few weeks ago, Patrick's mom, RosEllen, attended another graduation ceremony—at the New York City Fire Academy, where her other son, James, followed his father's footsteps as one of New York's bravest. And today RosEllen is with us to see Patrick join the ranks of America's bravest, as an officer in the United States Army.

We live in freedom because young Americans like Patrick and all the cadets here today have stepped forward to serve. You have chosen a difficult and dangerous vocation, and America is grateful for that choice. Today you will accept a sacred trust: You will lead America's sons and daughters on the battlefield in a time of war. Our Nation is counting on you as we count on no other group of young leaders in our country. The last 4 years have tested you in ways you never imagined, and you leave here well prepared for the challenges you will face.

There's a saying at West Point, that much of the history you teach here was made by the people you taught here. Now the class of 2006 will leave for the battlefield, and you will make history. Never falter; never quit. Bring honor to the uniform and pride to your country. May God bless you, and the class of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. in Michie Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. William J. Lennox, Jr., USA, Superintendent, West Point Military Academy; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

The President's Radio Address

May 27, 2006

Good morning. This Memorial Day weekend, Americans pay tribute to those who have given their lives in service to our Nation. America is free because generations of young Americans have been willing to sacrifice to defend the country they love, so their fellow citizens could live in liberty.

This weekend, I am visiting some of the brave men and women who will soon take their own place in the defense of our freedom—the 2006 graduating class at West Point. This was the first class to arrive at West Point after the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. Each of them came to West Point in a time of war, knowing all the risks and dangers that come with wearing our Nation's uniform. And the reality of that war has surrounded them since their first moments at the Academy. Thirty-four times since they arrived at West Point, they have observed a moment of silence to honor a former cadet fallen in the war on terror.

One of those former cadets was First Lieutenant Rob Seidel, a 2004 West Point graduate who gave his life in Iraq earlier this month. Rob grew up in Maryland, and as a child, he and his family made frequent visits to the Civil War battlefield at Gettysburg, and from his earliest days, he dreamed of serving in the U.S. Army. He deployed to Iraq with the 10th Mountain Division and was killed by a bomb in Baghdad. His father says this about Rob, "He loved his family and believed in God, and he loved his country, and he was willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of his country."

We live in freedom because of young Americans like Lieutenant Rob Seidel. And in recent days in Iraq, we've seen what their sacrifices have made possible. A week ago, the new Prime Minister of Iraq announced the formation of a national unity government. British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently visited Baghdad to meet with Prime Minister Maliki and Iraq's new leaders, and this week, he came to the United States to give me his impressions. Prime Minister Blair told me that Iraq's new leaders are determined to rid their country of terrorism, unite Iraqis as one people, and deliver peace and prosperity for all their citizens.

The formation of a democratic government in Iraq marks a victory for the cause of freedom in the Middle East. It is a victory for millions of Iraqis, who defied the terrorists and cast their ballots in three elections last year. It is a victory for the Iraqi security forces, who fought and bled for this moment, and now have a democracy worthy of their sacrifice. And it is a victory for the American, British, and other coalition forces who removed a murderous dictator who threatened the world. Because of their courage and sacrifices, Iraq has a free government that will be a strong and capable ally in the global war on terror.

The new Government in Iraq is also a defeat for the terrorists, who fought the arrival of a free and democratic Iraq with all the hateful power they could muster. Now, a day that they feared has arrived. The terrorists can kill the innocent, but they cannot stop the advance of freedom. We can expect the terrorists to continue bombing and killing, but something fundamental has changed: The terrorists are now fighting a free and constitutional government. They are at war with the people of Iraq. The Iraqi people and their new leaders are determined to defeat this enemy, and so is the United States of America.

This Memorial Day weekend, we remember First Lieutenant Seidel and the brave Americans of every generation who have given their lives for freedom, liberated the oppressed, and left the world a safer and better place. And the best way to honor America's fallen heroes is to carry on their fight, defend our freedom, and complete the mission for which they gave their lives.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 26 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 27. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister