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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

Nuri al-Maliki and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Earthquake in Indonesia

May 27, 2006

On behalf of the American people, Laura and I send our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the devastating earthquake in Indonesia. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Indonesian people as they comfort all those affected by this terrible disaster.

Through financial and material support, the United States is assisting with recovery efforts in coordination with Indonesian authorities, and we stand prepared to provide additional assistance as needed.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia

May 29, 2006

Thank you all. Laura and I are honored to join you today. Thank you for coming. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your kind words. Members of my Cabinet, General Pace, Members of Congress, members of the United States military, veterans, honored guests, and the loved ones of the fallen: A few moments ago, I placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. I was honored to do so on behalf of the American people, as a sign of our solemn gratitude and our deep respect. The names of those buried there are known only to God, yet their souls have entered into the spirit of America, and they will never be forgotten by our Nation.

In this place where valor sleeps, we acknowledge our responsibility as Americans to preserve the memory of the fallen. On this Memorial Day, we look out on quiet hills and rows of white headstones, and we know that we are in the presence of greatness. The markers here record the names of more than 296,000 men and women. Each of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines buried here answered the call to serve and stepped forward to protect the nation they loved.

All who are buried here understood their duty. They saw a dark shadow on the horizon and went to meet it. They understood that tyranny must be met with resolve and that liberty is always the achievement of courage. Here, in the presence of veterans they fought with and loved ones whose pictures they carried, the fallen give silent witness to the price of our liberty, and our Nation honors them this day and every day.

In this place where valor sleeps, we are reminded why America has always gone to war reluctantly—because we know the costs of war. We have seen those costs in the war on terror we fight today. These grounds are the final resting place for more than 270 men and women who have given their lives in freedom's cause since the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. With us here are veterans who fought alongside them and who have come today to pay their respects. They are joined by veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other conflicts across the globe, whose friends and comrades also lie in this sacred ground. As we pray for their fallen friends, we also remember those who went to war and are still missing, and we are determined to account for them all.

In this place where valor sleeps, we find strength in knowing that those serving freedom's cause have acted with principle and steadfast faith. Second Lieutenant Jack Lundberg was killed 2 weeks after D-day. At the end of World War II, he wrote his Mom and Dad a letter to be opened in the event he did not come home. He wrote, "I am sorry to add to your grief, but we of the United States have something to fight for—never more fully have I realized that. The United States of America is worth the sacrifice."

That same feeling moves those who are now fighting the war on terror. First Lieutenant Mark Dooley was killed by a terrorist bomb last September in the Iraqi city of Ramadi. Before he left for his tour, he gave his parents a last letter, just in case. He wrote, "Remember that my leaving was in the service of something that we loved, and be proud. The best way to pay respect is to value why a sacrifice was made."