

have deployed thousands of soldiers and marines to Afghanistan and to Iraq. You've been joined by units from Hawaii's Army and Air National Guard.

Earlier this year, the Pacific fleet conducted one of the largest multinational maritime exercises in the world, involving 8 nations, 35 ships, 180 aircraft, and 19,000 personnel. You serve freedom's cause when you help others be able to defend themselves. You serve freedom's cause when you help young democracies fight off the extremists who try to impose their hateful vision of the world. What happens in Asia-Pacific matters to America's security here at home.

The Air Force has brought humanitarian aid to victims in earthquakes and typhoons. You provided airlift support to places like East Timor. The Coast Guard works closely with China as part of an effort to improve enforcement of laws against maritime drug traffickers.

Some of the troops from this command who were deployed to combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan didn't come home. We remember their courage; we pray for their families and loved ones left behind, and we resolve to honor their sacrifice by completing the missions for which they gave their lives.

The men and women who wear the uniform are the best that America has to offer. You belong to the finest Armed Forces the world has ever known. I appreciate the fact that you have volunteered to wear our uniform in these troubled times, that you have volunteered knowing the dangers into which you might be sent. It's an incredible country when people of character stand up and say, "I want to serve something greater than my self-interests."

I want to thank you for your sacrifice. I particularly thank your families for joining you in this noble cause. We'll succeed, and when we do, generations of Americans will look back on this period and say, "Thank God the United States had such men and women of character at the beginning of the 21st century."

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 a.m. in the Officers Club. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. William J. Fallon, USN, commander, U.S. Pacific

Command; and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon.

Statement on the Assassination of Minister of Industry Pierre Gemayel of Lebanon

November 21, 2006

Today's assassination of Lebanese Industry Minister Pierre Gemayel shows yet again the viciousness of those who are trying to destabilize that country.

The United States remains fully committed to supporting Lebanon's independence and democracy in the face of attempts by Syria, Iran, and their allies within Lebanon to foment instability and violence. Syria's refusal to cease and desist from its continuing efforts to destabilize Lebanon's democratically elected Government is a repeated violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. The United States will continue its efforts with allied nations and democratic forces in Lebanon to resist these efforts and protect Lebanon's sovereignty and democratic institutions.

We urge the U.N. Security Council and the Secretary-General today to take the remaining steps needed to establish the special tribunal for Lebanon that will try those accused of involvement in the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri, and to ensure that that tribunal can also bring to justice those responsible for related assassinations, assassination attempts, and other terrorist attacks. We also demand that Syria treat Lebanon as a genuinely sovereign neighbor, establishing full diplomatic relations with Lebanon, and delineating its border with that country including, in particular, in the Shab'a Farms area, through a bilateral agreement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq

November 21, 2006

We are pleased to announce that we will meet in Amman, Jordan, on November 29–30 to continue our consultations on building

security and stability in Iraq. We will focus our discussion on current developments in Iraq, progress made to date in the deliberations of the high-level Joint Committee on Transferring Security Responsibility, and the role of the region in supporting Iraq. We would like to express our gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who has graciously offered to host our consultations. We look forward to meeting with His Majesty in Amman.

We reiterate our common commitment to building the foundations of a peaceful, democratic, secure, and unified Iraq, and to strengthening the partnership between our two nations.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony

November 22, 2006

Good morning. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the Rose Garden. I appreciate being up here with Mike Briggs and Alice Johnson of the National Turkey Federation, and I thank you for bringing along our feathery guest. *[Laughter]* We're glad you're here. Mike, thanks for bringing your family as well.

The name of the National Thanksgiving Turkey has been chosen by online voting at the White House web site. By the decision of the voters, this turkey is going to be called Flyer. And there's always a backup bird, just in case the guest of honor can't perform his duties, and the backup bird's name is Fryer. *[Laughter]* Probably better to be called Flyer than Fryer.

These birds were hatched on a farm in Missouri and raised there by Matthew Nutt and his mom and dad, Carol *[Donna]** and Lynn, and we're glad you all are here. Thanks for coming. They did a fine job of raising these birds.

I also welcome the Girl Scouts who've joined us. Thanks for coming—yes, I'm glad you're here. These are troops from Virginia and Maryland and Washington, DC. And we thank you for being in scouting, and we thank

your scout masters and your parents for setting such a good example for you.

We're here in the Rose Garden. This is a place where Barney likes to hang out. Barney is my dog. And he likes to chase a soccer ball here. He came out a little early, as did Flyer, and instead of chasing the soccer ball, he chased the bird. *[Laughter]* And it kind of made the turkey nervous. See, the turkey was already nervous to begin with. Nobody has told him yet about the pardon I'm about to give him. *[Laughter]*

Tomorrow is our day of thanksgiving. It's a national observance first proclaimed by George Washington. In our journey across the centuries from a few tiny settlements to a prosperous and powerful nation, Americans have always been a grateful people, and we are this year as well. We're grateful for our beautiful land. We're grateful for a harvest big enough to feed us all, plus much of the world. We're grateful for our freedom. We're grateful for our families, and we're grateful for life itself.

So on Thanksgiving Day, we gather with loved ones and we lift our hearts toward heaven in humility and gratitude. As we count our blessings, Americans also share our blessings. We're a generous country. We're filled with caring citizens who reach out to others, people who've heard the universal call to love a neighbor as we want to be loved ourself. On Thanksgiving and every day of the year, Americans live out of a spirit of compassion and care, and I thank you for that. It's the spirit that moves men and women to be mentors to the young, to be scout leaders, to be helpers of the elderly, to be comforters of the lonely and those who are left out.

We love our country, and the greatest example of that devotion is the citizen who steps forward to defend our Nation from harm. The members of our military have set aside their own comfort and convenience and safety to protect the rest of us. Their courage keeps us free. Their sacrifice makes us grateful, and their character makes us proud. Especially during the holidays, our whole Nation keeps them and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

And now to the ceremonial task of the day. Why don't we have a look at Flyer? There

* White House correction.