

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