

your candor, appreciate what you do for the country. Thank you. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. at Saint Luke's East—Lee's Summit hospital. In his remarks, he referred to George A. Pagels, chief medical officer, Saint Luke's Health System, and chief executive officer, Saint Luke's East—Lee's Summit hospital.

Proclamation 8102—Fifth Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps, 2007

January 25, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The great strength of our Nation is found in the heroic kindness, courage, and self-sacrifice of the American people. Every day, individuals show the good heart of our country by volunteering to help make someone's life better. Since 2002, the USA Freedom Corps has provided access to volunteer opportunities for millions of Americans. On the fifth anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps, we honor volunteers who give their time and talents to make a difference in the lives of others, and we recognize that helping those in need makes America a more hopeful country.

The USA Freedom Corps was created to encourage Americans to answer the call to serve a cause greater than themselves. By matching willing volunteers with opportunities in their communities, the USA Freedom Corps brings Americans together to mentor children, assist the elderly, clean up neighborhoods, and perform countless acts of generosity. The USA Freedom Corps has helped support national service programs such as AmeriCorps, Citizen Corps, Peace Corps, and Senior Corps. Through programs like these, volunteers all across the country bring comfort and kindness to people at home and abroad.

Through the USA Freedom Corps website at volunteer.gov, all Americans can find ways to serve in our country's armies of compassion. By answering the universal call to help a neighbor, individual Americans can transform towns and cities into more caring com-

munities and neighborhoods and make America a better place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 29, 2007, as the Fifth Anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps. I call upon the citizens of this great country to find ways to volunteer and help their fellow Americans. I commend the efforts of the USA Freedom Corps and all those who have already answered the call to serve, and I encourage all Americans to give of their time, energy, and talents to make America even stronger.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 29, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 30.

Memorandum on Assignment of Functions Under the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006

January 25, 2007

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Assignment of Functions under the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to you the functions of the President under sections 6(a), 6(b), and 6(f) of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-344). In performing such functions, you shall consult with other heads of departments and agencies, as appropriate.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

January 26, 2007

The President. I just had a full briefing with General David Petraeus about the way forward in Iraq. I want to thank the Secretary and General Pace, National Security Adviser for joining this discussion. Congratulations.

Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus. Thank you, sir.

The President. The Senate confirmed this good man without a dissenting vote. I appreciate the quick action of the United States Senate. I appreciate them giving General David Petraeus a fair hearing, and I appreciate the vote. My instructions to the general is: Get over to the zone as quickly as possible and implement a plan that we believe will yield our goals.

I thank the general and his family. I particularly want to thank your family for supporting you and supporting our Nation. One of the amazing things about our country is that we've got military folks who volunteer to go into a tough zone to protect the American people from future harm, and they've got families who stand by them. And whether you be a general or a private in the military, there is a U.S.—there's a family member saying, "I love you, and I support you."

And so, General, I congratulate you, and I congratulate the volunteers and their families for making the hard decisions necessary to protect its people from a grave danger. And you're going into an important battle in this war on terror, and I give you my full support and wish you Godspeed.

Lt. Gen. Petraeus. Thank you, Mr. President. If I could thank the Senate as well, thank my family, and above all, thank those great soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians who are out there on the frontlines of the global war on terror.

The President. All right. I'll answer a couple of questions. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

War on Terror Strategy

Q. Thank you, sir. The other night in your State of the Union Address, you asked Congress to give your plan a chance. But law-

makers, Democrats and Republicans, didn't really miss a step in starting to turn out resolutions against that plan. Why do you think it's okay to go ahead without their support?

The President. One of the things I've found in Congress is that most people recognize that failure would be a disaster for the United States. And in that I'm the decision-maker, I had to come up with a way forward that precluded disaster. In other words, I had to think about what's likely to work.

And so I worked with our military and I worked with Secretary Gates to come up with a plan that is likely to succeed. And the implementor of that plan is going to be General Petraeus. And my call to the Congress is, is that I know there is skepticism and pessimism, and that they are—some are condemning a plan before it's even had a chance to work. And they have an obligation and a serious responsibility, therefore, to put up their own plan as to what would work.

I've listened a lot to Members of Congress. I've listened carefully to their suggestions. And I have picked the plan that I think is most likely to succeed, because I understand, like many in Congress understand, success is very important for the security of the country.

Let's see—Steven [Steve Holland, Reuters], yes, sir.

Iraq/Iran

Q. Yes, sir. This policy of going after the Iranians inside Iraq, are you concerned that that could be a provocative act in the region?

The President. I made it very clear, as did the Secretary, that our policy is going to be to protect our troops in Iraq. It just makes sense that if somebody is trying to harm our troops or stop us from achieving our goal or killing innocent citizens in Iraq, that we will stop them. That's an obligation we all have, is to protect our folks and achieve our goal.

Now, some are trying to say that because we're enforcing—helping ourselves in Iraq by stopping outside influence from killing our soldiers or hurting Iraqi people, that we