

made recommendations, which the White House accepted, that 8 of the 93 would no longer serve. And they will go up and make the explanations as to why—I'm sorry this, frankly, has bubbled to the surface the way it has, for the U.S. attorneys involved. I really am. These are—I put them in there in the first place; they're decent people. They serve at our pleasure. And yet now they're being held up in this—into the scrutiny of all this, and it's just—what I said in my comments, I meant about them. I appreciated their service, and I'm sorry that the situation has gotten to where it's got. But that's Washington, DC, for you. You know, there's a lot of politics in this town.

And I repeat, we would like people to hear the truth. And, Kelly, your question is one I'm confident will be asked of people up there. And the Justice Department will answer that question in an open forum for everybody to see.

If the Democrats truly do want to move forward and find the right information, they ought to accept what I proposed. And the idea of dragging White House members up there to score political points or to put the klieg lights out there—which will harm the President's ability to get good information, Michael—is—I really do believe will show the true nature of this debate.

And if information is the desire, here's a great way forward. If scoring political points is the desire, then the rejection of this reasonable proposal will really be evident for the American people to see.

Listen, thank you all for your interest.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. A reporter referred to Counsel to the President Fred F. Fielding.

Message on the Observance of Nowruz

March 20, 2007

I send greetings to those celebrating Nowruz.

Nowruz is a special time of thanksgiving and celebration when millions of people around the world who trace their heritage to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan,

India, and Central Asia welcome the New Year. For thousands of years, it has been an occasion when family, friends, and loved ones come together to reflect on the blessings of the past year and look forward with a spirit of renewal and hope.

America is strengthened by the rich cultural diversity of our people, and we are blessed to be a Nation that welcomes individuals of all races, religions, and cultural backgrounds. Celebrating Nowruz honors the values of family and tradition and helps preserve the unique fabric that makes up our country.

Laura and I send our best wishes for health and happiness in the coming year.

George W. Bush

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

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Sweden-United States Social Security Agreement

March 20, 2007

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (42 U.S.C. 433(d)(1)), I transmit herewith the Supplementary Agreement on Social Security between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Sweden. The Supplementary Agreement was signed in Stockholm on June 22, 2004, and is intended to modify certain provisions of the original United States-Sweden Agreement, which was signed May 27, 1985, and that entered into force January 1, 1987.

The United States-Sweden Agreement, as revised by the Supplementary Agreement, remains similar in objective to the social security agreements that are also in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social

security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefits that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Sweden Agreement, as revised by the Supplementary Agreement, contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Supplementary Agreement with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the Supplementary Agreement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act on the effect of the Supplementary Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Supplementary Agreement and a composite text of the United States-Sweden Agreement showing the changes that will be made as a result of the Supplementary Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Supplementary Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend to the Congress the Supplementary Agreement to the United States-Sweden Social Security Agreement and related documents.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 20, 2007.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand

March 21, 2007

President Bush. Madam Prime Minister, welcome. We've had a really fruitful discussion. The Prime Minister and I have visited several times over the course of the years. Every time I've talked to Helen Clark, I've found a very straightforward, honest woman who cares deeply about the country she rep-

resents. And I really thank you very much for coming back.

We talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about the importance for the United States and New Zealand to work cooperatively in helping democracy in places like Afghanistan. We talked about North Korea and Iran, our mutual desire for these problems of nations wanting to have nuclear weapons to be solved in a peaceful way by using the diplomatic process.

We talked about commerce. We talked about the environment and the need for our respective countries to work toward energy security. I assured the Prime Minister that my initiative to reduce gasoline in the United States by 20 percent over the next 10 years was a realistic initiative that's going to require new technologies, which we hope that other parts of the world, including New Zealand, will find useful to help achieve the common objective.

We talked about the South Pacific, and I praised the Prime Minister on her leadership in dealing with some difficult issues. I assured her that our Government want to help in any way we can. We understand this is a—some of the countries there have got difficult issues, and it requires New Zealand's leadership, with U.S. help, to help solve the problems—and Australian help as well.

We talked about the need for us to continue to work together in the Asia Pacific region, about how APEC is a useful forum for New Zealand and the United States to work with China and other nations.

All in all, I found it to be a constructive conversation, such a good conversation I've decided to invite her for lunch.

Madam Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Clark Well, thank you, Mr. President. It has been a good conversation. It's a very good relationship. And we've talked about the areas in the new international security environment where we're working particularly closely—counterterrorism, counterproliferation. The President is very familiar with the work New Zealand has been doing in Afghanistan and very appreciative of it, as I know the Afghanistan Government and people are.

We've talked about New Zealand's support in the counterproliferation area. I've told the