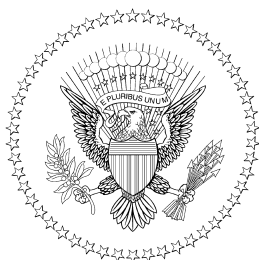


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, March 26, 2007
Volume 43—Number 12
Pages 349–371

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Editor's Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on March 23, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, March 23, 2007

The President's Radio Address

March 17, 2007

Good morning. In times of war, Congress has no greater obligation than funding our war fighters. And next week, the House will begin debate on an emergency war spending bill.

The purpose of this legislation should be to give our troops on the frontlines the resources, funds, and equipment they need to fight our enemies. Unfortunately, some in Congress are using this bill as an opportunity to micromanage our military commanders, force a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, and spend billions on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war on terror.

Our troops urgently need Congress to approve emergency war funds. Over the past several weeks, our Nation has begun pursuing a new strategy in Iraq. Under the leadership of General David Petraeus, our troops have launched a difficult and dangerous mission to help Iraqis secure their capital. This plan is still in its early stages, yet we're already seeing signs of progress. Iraqi and American troops have rounded up more than 700 people affiliated with Shi'a extremists. They've also launched aggressive operations against Sunni extremists, and they've uncovered large caches of weapons that could have been used to kill our troops.

These are hopeful signs. As these operations unfold, they will help the Iraqi Government stabilize the country, rebuild the economy, and advance the work of political reconciliation. Yet the bill Congress is considering would undermine General Petraeus and the troops under his command just as these critical security operations are getting underway.

First, the bill would impose arbitrary and restrictive conditions on the use of war funds and require the withdrawal of forces by the end of this year if these conditions are not met. These restrictions would handcuff our

generals in the field by denying them the flexibility they need to adjust their operations to the changing situation on the ground. And these restrictions would substitute the mandates of Congress for the considered judgment of our military commanders.

Even if every condition required by this bill was met, all American forces, except for very limited purposes, would still be required to withdraw next year, regardless of the situation in Iraq. The consequences of imposing such an artificial timetable would be disastrous.

Here is what Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently told Congress: Setting a fixed date to withdraw would "essentially tell the enemy how long they would have to wait until we're gone." If American forces were to step back from Baghdad before it is more secure, the scale and scope of attacks would increase and intensify. A contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country, and in time, this violence would engulf the region. The enemy would emerge from the chaos emboldened with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. Such an outcome would be a nightmare for our country.

Second, the bill would cut funding for the Iraqi security forces if Iraqi leaders did not meet rigid conditions set by Congress. This makes no sense. Members of Congress have often said that the Iraqis must step forward and take more responsibility for their own security, and I agree. Yet Members of Congress can't have it both ways. They can't say that the Iraqis must do more and then take away the funds that will help them do so. Iraq is a young democracy that is fighting for its survival in a region that is vital to American security. To cut off support for their security forces at this critical moment would put our own security at risk.

Third, the bill would add billions of dollars in domestic spending that is completely unrelated to the war. For example, the House bill would provide \$74 million for peanut storage, \$48 million for the Farm Service Agency, and \$35 million for NASA. These programs do not belong in an emergency war spending bill. Congress must not allow debate on domestic spending to delay funds for our troops on the frontlines. And Members should not use funding our troops as leverage to pass special interest spending for their districts.

We are a nation at war, and the heaviest responsibilities fall to our troops in the field. Yet we in Washington have responsibilities as well. General Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate without a single vote in opposition, and he and his troops need these resources to succeed in their mission. Many in Congress say they support the troops, and I believe them. Now they have a chance to show that support in deed as well as in word. Congress needs to approve emergency funding for our troops, without strings and without delay. If they send me a bill that does otherwise, I will veto it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on March 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 17 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on the Fourth Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq

March 19, 2007

Good morning. Four years ago today, coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to remove Saddam Hussein from power. They did so to eliminate the threat his regime posed to the Middle East and to the world. Coalition forces carried out that mission with great courage and skill. Today, the world is rid of Saddam Hussein, and a tyrant has been

held to account for his crimes by his own people.

Nearly 12 million Iraqis have voted in free elections under a democratic Constitution that they wrote for themselves. And their democratic leaders are now working to build a free society that upholds the rule of law, that respects the rights of its people, that provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

At this point in the war, our most important mission is helping the Iraqis secure their capital. Until Baghdad's citizens feel secure in their own homes and neighborhoods, it will be difficult for Iraqis to make further progress toward political reconciliation or economic rebuilding, steps necessary for Iraq to build a democratic society.

So with our help, Iraq's Government is carrying out an aggressive plan to secure Baghdad. And we're continuing to train the Iraqi security forces so that they ultimately take full responsibility for the security of their own people.

I've just received an update on the situation from Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. My conversation with the Prime Minister followed a briefing earlier this morning that included Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates, along with General Petraeus and Ambassador Khalilzad, who participated by video conference from Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki and General Petraeus emphasized that the Baghdad security plan is still in its early stages, and success will take months, not days or weeks. Yet those on the ground are seeing some hopeful signs. The Iraqi Government has completed the deployment of three Iraqi Army brigades to the capital, where they've joined the seven Iraqi Army brigades and nine National Police brigades that were already in the area.

The Iraqi Government has also lifted restrictions that once prevented Iraqi and coalition forces from going into areas like Sadr City. American and Iraqi forces have established joint security stations. Those stations are scattered throughout Baghdad, and they're helping Iraqis reclaim their neighborhoods from the terrorists and extremists.

Together we've carried out aggressive operations against both Shi'a and Sunni extremists, carried out operations against Al Qaida

terrorists. We've uncovered large caches of weapons and destroyed two major car bomb factories that were located on the outskirts of Baghdad.

I want to stress that this operation is still in the early stages; it's still in the beginning stages. Fewer than half of the troop reinforcements we are sending have arrived in Baghdad. The new strategy will need more time to take effect. And there will be good days, and there will be bad days ahead as it—as the security plan unfolds.

As we help the Iraqis secure their capital, their leaders are also beginning to meet the benchmarks they have laid out for political reconciliation. Last month, Iraq's Council of Ministers approved a law that would share oil revenues among Iraqi people. The Iraqi legislature passed a \$41 billion budget that includes \$10 billion for reconstruction and capital improvements. And last week, Prime Minister Maliki visited Ramadi, a city in the Sunni heartland, to reach out to local Sunni tribal leaders.

There's been good progress. There's a lot more work to be done. And Iraq's leaders must continue to work to meet the benchmarks they have set forward.

As Iraqis work to keep their commitments, we have important commitments of our own. Members of Congress are now considering an emergency war spending bill. They have a responsibility to ensure that this bill provides the funds and the flexibility that our troops need to accomplish their mission. They have a responsibility to pass a clean bill that does not use funding for our troops as leverage to get special interest spending for their districts. And they have a responsibility to get this bill to my desk, without strings and without delay.

It can be tempting to look at the challenges in Iraq and conclude our best option is to pack up and go home. That may be satisfying in the short run, but I believe the consequences for American security would be devastating. If American forces were to step back from Baghdad before it is more secure, a contagion of violence could spill out across the entire country. In time, this violence could engulf the region. The terrorists could emerge from the chaos with a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they had in Afghani-

stan, which they used to plan the attacks of September the 11th, 2001. For the safety of the American people, we cannot allow this to happen.

Prevailing in Iraq is not going to be easy. General Petraeus says that the environment in Iraq is the most challenging that he has seen in his more than 32 years of service. He also says that he has been impressed by the professionalism and the skill and determination of our men and women in uniform. He sees in our troops, quote, "a true will to win and a sincere desire to help our Iraqi partners achieve success."

Four years after this war began, the fight is difficult, but it can be won. It will be won if we have the courage and resolve to see it through. I'm grateful to our service men and women for all they've done and for the honor they've brought to their uniform and their country. I'm grateful to our military families and for all the sacrifices they have made for our country. We also hold in our hearts the good men and women who've given their lives in this struggle. We pray for the loved ones they have left behind.

The United States military is the most capable and courageous fighting force in the world. And whatever our differences in Washington, our troops and their families deserve the appreciation and the support of our entire Nation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2006 NCAA Football Champion University of Florida Gators

March 19, 2007

Please be seated. This isn't exactly "The Swamp." [Laughter] This weekend, it would have been "The Ice Rink." Today it is the White House that welcomes the National Champion Florida Gators.

So you might remember, one of my family members held elected office in Florida. Yes, that was—[*applause*—I hope he's found work. [*Laughter*] And so I said, "You know, I had the privilege of welcoming the Texas Longhorns to the White House." He said, "One of these days, you're going to be welcoming a Florida team." And he's right. One year after the Longhorns came, here comes the mighty Gators. And we welcome you, and we're glad you're here.

So you might call it Gator country. This is the 100th anniversary of college football at the University of Florida. It's a pretty fine way to celebrate the 100th year.

I want to thank Coach Urban Meyer and Shelley for joining us. I appreciate Dr. Machen, the president of the University of Florida, and his wife, Chris. Manny Fernandez, thanks for coming—he's a chairman. Members of the Boards of Trustees, we're glad you all are here. Thank you for serving.

Carolyn Roberts, who is the chair of the board of governors, is with us. I presume the athletic director is here. If not, he's probably done—it's amazing, isn't it—so, like, the basketball team and now the football team. Like, what are you doing down there? [*Laughter*] Yes, Gatorade. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the members of my administration who are here, but I particularly want to thank the Members of Congress, starting with Senator Bill Nelson. Thank you for coming, Senator. Appreciate you being here. Adam Putnam—all he talks about is Gator football. Cliff Stearns—appreciate you being here, Cliff. Corrine Brown, thank you for coming. John Mica, Ander Crenshaw, Jeff Miller, and Gus Bilirakis, thank you all for joining us. Thanks for serving.

So the Florida Gators had the Nation's toughest schedule, and instead of wearing them down, it made them tougher; instead of, like, discouraging them that they got the bad deal when it came to the schedule, all that did was cause them to play harder. And it put them in pretty good stead going into the championship game. Like, you might remember, all the pregame polls said you couldn't win. [*Laughter*] So much for polls.

I don't know how you felt when the guy ran the kickoff back—looked like a rough

start—but didn't let you—it get you down. And you showed an unbelievable offense and a swarming defense. And we really congratulate you; you're a well-coached team of highly disciplined athletes.

I particularly like the story of the two quarterbacks, Chris Leak and Tim Tebow. First of all—[*applause*]. Where's Tebow? There he is. It's like the guy is trying to bring the single wing back, you know? [*Laughter*] And so Tebow takes a look at Florida and sees the fact that they've got a 4-year starter, but loves the school more than anything else and helps Chris Leak be a better quarterback. That's what we call teammates, people playing together for the common good. And we thank you both for the leadership you've shown. Of course, you wouldn't be half the players that you are without the huge offensive line and the receivers and backs you've got behind you; I know you would say that.

I appreciate your defense. I clearly remember linebacker Earl Everett. I've seen that face before. [*Laughter*] So has the whole country. You might remember, Everett lost his headgear. He didn't lose his head—[*laughter*]—but he lost his headgear; he went on to make a great tackle in a key moment. That's called tough defense, hard-nosed defense.

Where's Ray McDonald? Can I say what Ray McDonald said? Can I quote you, Ray? Okay, I will. [*Laughter*] Here's what he said: "We don't really believe in destiny. We believe when your number is called, you make the play." What he's saying is, is that there's no chance—"We win because we do what we're coached to do, and we're good at it." And I appreciate the spirit, and I appreciate the caliber of people on this team.

It didn't take Urban Meyer long. Like, the guy shows up; the next thing he knows, he's at the White House. [*Laughter*] Whoever hired him, good choice. He's an amazing coach, with a good coaching staff. And so I congratulate not only the players, but I congratulate the coaching staff. I congratulate all those who pick up the towels and make the program run. I thank those who help sell the tickets and the unsung heroes of any athletic program. If you're here, we welcome you to the White House, and we appreciate what you've done for the national champs.

I do want to say another thing about this program, Mr. President. I was very pleased to see that the graduation success rate of Florida's athletic programs are 15 percent higher than the national average. After all, you are representing a great university. And I appreciate the fact that people can be student athletes. I appreciate it because at some point in time, you're not going to be an athlete. At some point in time, you're going to have to use the skills you learned as a student to be a constructive citizen of the United States. And so, Coach, I appreciate the fact that you work hard with these players to make sure that they take advantage of this fantastic opportunity, and that is to be a student at the University of Florida.

I also appreciate the spirit of giving that's a part of this football program. I don't know if you know this or not, but Coach Meyer hosts the annual Urban Meyer Golf Scramble for Kids. This year, the event raised a record \$300,000, all aiming at helping youth organizations buy equipment, all aiming at touching a soul, trying to make somebody's life better.

Coach, I appreciate the example you set, and I also appreciate the fact that 32 of your football players volunteered for community organizations; 32 souls said, "I'm more than a football player; I'm a leader when it comes to helping the community in which I live."

Jemalle Cornelius just so happens to be captain. Here's what he said, he said, "If everyone took a small leadership role in whatever it is they do, we can help eliminate some of the problems that are in our society." I love the spirit. I love the fact that champions understand you've got to be a champ on the field as well as a champ off the field. And I believe one of the reasons this program is successful is because not only you're good football players, but you're good people.

And I want to say one other thing about—now that I've got the mike—[laughter]—I want to say something at Cam Brewer. Where's Cam? There he is, right there—United States marine. I appreciate the fact

that you wore the uniform of the United States of America. I appreciate the fact that you put self—something larger than yourself as an important part of your life. It's a good example, isn't it? And now I appreciate the fact that you've taken advantage of the educational opportunities offered to those who have worn the uniform and gotten yourself an education at a fine university.

Again, I want to welcome you all to the White House. It's an honor to welcome you here. More importantly, it's an honor to welcome the National Football Champion Florida Gators.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; J. Bernard Machen, president, Manny A. Fernandez, chairman of the board of trustees, and Jeremy N. Foley, athletic director, University of Florida; Carolyn K. Roberts, chairman of the board of governors, State University System of Florida; and Ray McDonald, defensive end, and Jemalle Cornelius and Cam Brewer, wide receivers, University of Florida football team.

Statement on the Death of Ray Nasher

March 19, 2007

Ray Nasher was a brilliant businessman, diplomat, and philanthropist. Through his service at the United Nations, he represented the best of his country and his home State of Texas. Through his patronage of the arts, he shared his magnificent collection of modern and contemporary sculpture in countless office spaces and the world-class museums he created in Dallas and at Duke University. Ray served the last three Presidents as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and served his country by giving all Americans greater access to the arts. Laura and I send our deepest condolences to Ray Nasher's family and friends.

Proclamation 8114—To Implement Modifications to the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act and the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes

March 19, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Section 5002 of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006 (Division D, Title V of Public Law 109–432)(the “HOPE Act”), which amends the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (Title II of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106–200)(CBERA), provides that preferential tariff treatment may be provided to certain articles that are imported directly from Haiti into the customs territory of the United States, provided the President determines that Haiti meets the eligibility requirements of section 213A(d) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(d)), and Haiti is meeting the conditions regarding enforcement of circumvention set forth in section 213A(e) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(e)(1)).

2. Section 6002 of the Africa Investment Incentive Act of 2006 (Division D, Title VI of Public Law 109–432) amends section 112 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Title I of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106–200)(AGOA) to modify the preferential tariff treatment accorded to designated lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries.

3. Pursuant to section 213A(d) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(d)), I have determined that Haiti meets the eligibility requirements set forth in section 213A(d)(1).

4. Pursuant to section 213A(e) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(e)), I have determined that Haiti is meeting the conditions set forth therein.

5. In order to implement the tariff treatment provided under section 213A of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a), and section 112(b)(8) and 112(c) of AGOA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 3721(b)(8) and (c)), it

is necessary to modify the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS).

6. Title I, subtitles A and B of the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–432)(the “Tax Relief Act”) suspended or reduced duties on certain articles that were identified under provisions of the HTS in effect on December 20, 2006. Presidential Proclamation 8097 of December 27, 2006, modified the HTS to conform it to the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System. Modifications to the HTS are necessary to reflect accurately the suspension or reduction of duties that were enacted in the Tax Relief Act.

7. Section 604 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the “1974 Act”) (19 U.S.C. 2483), authorizes the President to embody in the HTS the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder, including the removal, modification, continuance, or imposition of any rate of duty or other import restriction.

8. I have determined that it is appropriate to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to perform the functions specified in section 213A(f) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(f)).

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 604 of the 1974 Act, and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, do proclaim that:

(1) In order to provide the tariff treatment provided for in section 213A of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a), the HTS is modified as provided in Annex I to this proclamation.

(2) In order to implement the tariff treatment provided for in section 112(b)(8) and section 112(c) of AGOA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 3721(b)(8) and (c)), the HTS is modified as provided in Annex II to this proclamation.

(3) In order to provide the tariff treatment provided for in Title I, subtitles A and B of the Tax Relief Act, and to make technical

corrections to previously proclaimed provisions, the HTS is modified as provided in Annex III to this proclamation.

(4) The modifications to the HTS set forth in the annexes to this proclamation shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after the dates set forth in the respective annex.

(5) The Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized to perform the functions assigned to the President in section 213A(f) of CBERA, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2703a(f)).

(6) Any provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of March, 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., March 21, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation and its attached annex were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20, and they were published in the *Federal Register* on March 22.

Presidential Determination on the Eligibility of the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia To Receive Defense Articles and Defense Services

March 19, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2007–15

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on the Eligibility of the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia to Receive Defense Articles and Defense Services

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 503(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and

section 3(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and defense services to the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to arrange for the publication of this determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20.

Message to the Congress on Trade With Haiti

March 19, 2007

To the Congress of the United States:

The Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006 (Division D, Title V of Public Law 109–432), amends the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (Title II of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106–200)(CBERA), to make certain products from Haiti eligible for preferential tariff treatment. In accordance with section 213A of CBERA, as amended, I have determined that Haiti meets the eligibility requirements under section 213A(d)(1) of CBERA, as amended, and that Haiti is meeting the conditions regarding enforcement of circumvention under section 213A(e)(1) of CBERA, as amended.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 19, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20.

Remarks on Energy in Claycomo, Missouri

March 20, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Alan, thank you. It's good to be here in Kansas City. Thank you for your warm hospitality.

I've had—I guess you'd call it "Car Day." [Laughter] I started off at a GM plant across the way, and now I'm at the Ford plant. My impressions are—is that American automobile companies are essential to keeping us competitive, essential to providing good jobs, and these manufacturing facilities are full of some really—finest citizens in our country.

I thank you for your hospitality. I enjoyed walking up and down the line, shaking people's hands. I'm impressed by just how warm everybody was. And I thank you, I really do. It's been a joy to be here.

The reason I've come is, I want to highlight an important initiative for the country, and that is to promote technologies so we are less reliant upon foreign sources of oil. And the best way to become less reliant on foreign sources of oil is to manufacture automobiles that will use either less gasoline or different kinds of fuels. And that's what we're here to talk about.

The Ford plant, the GM plant are producing automobiles that are the beginning, really, of helping this country develop a wise energy policy and a wise environmental policy. And so I appreciate the fact that we've seen hybrid technologies and the world's first hybrid SUV, ethanol-driven cars. Americans are just getting used to this kind of technological—these technological breakthroughs—something you're used to. See, you make these cars all day long, but I don't think our citizens fully understand what is happening in America. And that's why I've come to highlight the technological changes that we're seeing.

I've set out a goal of reducing America's gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years. Some of our fellow citizens say, "Well, of course, that's just typical; they stand up there and put out a goal that's not achievable." I think it's achievable. And one way for me to make the case that it's achievable is to remind people about the new technologies that are being developed in a place like this Ford plant.

I believe that—I call it 20/10; in other words, reduce gasoline usage by 20 percent over 10 years. And I'm looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to get it done. See, this is the kind of thing where we should be able to come to-

gether for the good of the country and promote technologies, and to encourage consumption of hybrid automobiles.

The American people expect us to work together. See, that's what they want. I'm confident that we can. And Congress needs to pass good bipartisan energy legislation, and they need to do it by the start of the summer driving season. That would be a good sign that we recognize that we've got a problem here in America, and we aim to solve it together.

I appreciate Sam Graves—he's the Congressman from this area—traveling down with me. Sam, thank you for being here. Sam's a farmer. I'm about to talk about ethanol a little bit. Let me put it to you this way: I like the idea that farmers are growing energy that powers our cars. I'd rather be paying American farmers than people overseas for the energy that fuels this economy. And so when you're making a vehicle that runs on ethanol or a flex-fuel vehicle, you're really helping national security.

But before I get to that, I want to thank Alan for his leadership of Ford. I appreciate Ken Ward, the plant manager. Thank you for giving me a tour. How about your president of the UAW 249—he's not only the president; he happens to be the mayor. [Laughter] I told him—I asked him—[applause]—I said, "You've got to be a busy guy," filling the potholes at the same time that he's worrying about the employees. But, Mayor, thank you—I call you, "Mayor." I could call you, "President." [Laughter] I appreciate the tour, and thanks for hanging out there with me.

I want to thank all the employees that are here. I also came over with Paul Marr. He's the plant manager of the General Motors Fairfax Assembly. I know you'll greet him kindly. But thank you for coming, Paul. I appreciate you being here.

I mentioned national security. I bet you didn't think in terms—or maybe you do think in terms of national security when you make these modern automobiles here. See, I believe that when you're dependent on oil from parts of the world where people may not necessarily like us, that creates a national security problem. I know that when you're dependent on oil and the objective of some of

the terrorists is to destroy oil networks, it creates a national security problem for us. In other words, the more we're dependent on oil from somewhere else, the more we're vulnerable to national security issues.

I deal with it every day in the Oval Office. And so when I tell people that a goal of reducing the amount of gasoline, which means we'll use less crude oil, is in the national security interest of the country, I think—I hope you're beginning to get the drift of what I mean. It's like when I say to a worker, "When you make one of these cars, you're helping the national security of the country."

I like the idea of being independent. I understand that when the demand for crude oil goes up in another part of the world and the supply of crude oil doesn't match it, the price of gasoline goes up in America. That's another issue we have to deal with when we're dependent on crude oil. About 60 percent plus of our crude oil comes from overseas.

And so what do we do about it? What should the country do to lessen our dependence on energy from somewhere else? Well, one thing we need to do is to promote the idea of technologies changing the way we live. And that's what you're doing at the plant.

And so I appreciate very much the idea of hybrid vehicles. If Americans don't know what I'm talking about, these are vehicles that either run on gasoline or electricity. You take it for granted; you live with them every day. Some people don't know what we're talking about. It's—this is a new market opportunity for Ford. More and more people are going to be saying, "How can I help us be less dependent on foreign sources of energy?" Well, one way is to buy a hybrid.

It makes sense for the Government to encourage people to buy hybrid vehicles, and so we've got a tax credit for somebody who purchased such a vehicle, up to \$3,500 a person. I think it makes sense to encourage consumer behavior to buy a car that you manufacture here or at the GM plant—not to be favoring one plant over the other. There have been—about 700,000 hybrids have been sold in America. That's the beginning of something different, isn't it? It's the beginning of a new market.

The next wave of technologies, I'm told, is for there to be plug-in hybrids. In other words, battery technologies—I'm hoping at some point in time relatively quickly, you all will be installing new battery technologies in these automobiles that will enable people to drive on electricity more than on gasoline.

So part of the strategy has got to be for the Federal Government to promote research and development on technologies that will enable us to become the leader in battery technologies—lithium ionic batteries. I mean, it's very conceivable, one day, that somebody living in a big city will be able to drive the first 40 miles on electricity. Now imagine if all the big-city drivers were able to drive on electricity, not on gasoline, how much more—how much less dependent on foreign sources of oil we'd be. Remember, oil is the feedstock for gasoline.

And it's coming. And I predict, relatively quickly, that you'll be making automobiles that will have this battery technology in. And I think it makes sense to use some of your money to encourage new technologies and to encourage research and development. And that's what we're doing. So part of the strategy is to really develop new battery technologies.

And by the way, what you're proving here is, a car that—or a truck—doesn't have to look like a golf cart if you're running on electricity. It can be a normal size vehicle that people like to drive. Texans like to use pickup trucks, as you well know. And it makes sense to have these technologies fit in the kind of trucks that people like to drive or the kind of cars that people demand. And that's what's happening.

I appreciate the idea of flex-fuel vehicles for the American citizen. That means that you can either use ethanol, or you can use gasoline, and you can choose. I like the idea of the consumer having more options. You're producing flex-fuel vehicles here, where somebody can decide to fill up with ethanol, or they can decide to fill up with gasoline, their choice. It turns out that Henry Ford—Model T was one of the first flex-fuel vehicles. I didn't realize that until I came here—but that he had the vision of having the Model T run either on gasoline or ethanol. Isn't that interesting?

And finally, it's now becoming in the marketplace. Why? Because it's going to be necessary for this country for national security and economic security reasons to start using different kinds of fuels.

And here in the Midwest, you have seen a boom in ethanol production and ethanol usage. And the reason why is, is that corn-based ethanol is leading an amazing change in the country. We consume about 5 billion gallons of ethanol right now in America. That's up nearly fivefold in a relatively quick period of time. The problem we face is that right now, the most efficient way to make ethanol is through the use of corn. And that's fine if you're a corn grower, but it's not fine if you're a hog raiser—[laughter]—because that price of corn is beginning to affect the people who are raising hogs. And I understand that. That's why we're spending a fair amount of money on developing new types of technology that will enable us to use something besides corn to make ethanol—whether it be switch grasses or agricultural refuse or wood chips.

And that technology is coming. It may sound farfetched to some that, one of these days, we'll be making a product that can go into a Ford pickup truck out of wood chips, and you'll be able to drive just like it was full of gasoline, but those days are around the corner. And it makes sense for us to promote that kind of technologies.

Right now the ethanol industry is sectionally based because this is where the corn is grown. The idea is to develop new ways to be able to process different materials so that ethanol can be more widespread around the country. If you're a Ford guy working here on the line, it's in your interest that we promote new ways to make ethanol. After all, the flex-fuel vehicle would then become more in demand.

All this is aimed, by the way, at doing what I told you, and that is to make us less dependent on crude oil. It's really interesting, isn't it, for the President to be talking about, one of these days, people driving pickup trucks driven by ethanol—fueled by ethanol from wood chips. Is it real? I think it is. Otherwise I wouldn't be standing here talking to you about it. Is it necessary? I know it's necessary for the sake of the future of this country.

Ultimately, there's going to be hydrogen driving these vehicles. Some of us aren't probably going to be able to drive by the time those show up, and so the meantime—[laughter]. Of course, I'm not driving much anyway these days. [Laughter]

I do believe we ought to reform the CAFE standards in a way that's based upon size—not fleet-wise, but on different sizes—in order to be able to encourage better mileage. But the big gains in this 20/10 program are going to come through by alternative fuels. And that's what I want to share with you, that this is a national objective.

We spent about \$12 billion over the last 6 years to promote different kinds of researches, different kinds of ideas, trying to make sure America stays on the leading edge of technological change. I strongly believe it's in our interest to be the leader of technologies. Technology changes the way we have lived our lives; technology is going to change the way we drive our cars. And so part of the strategy to be better stewards of the environment and, at the same time, less dependent on foreign sources of energy is to change the automobile. And I've come to this plant because that's what you're doing. You're making a new kind of automobile that is literally a part of a changing America for the better.

An energy strategy has got to be more than just an automobile strategy. I mean, we can reduce dependency on oil, and we will; we're still going to need oil. And therefore, I think it makes a lot of sense for us to continue to explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways here in America. If you're worried about a terrorist attack, like I am—terrorist attack on our infrastructure somewhere else that will affect the price of oil, I do believe it makes sense to double the size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, to have oil in place in the ground that we could then use in order to protect the American consumer against sudden disruptions of supply.

We got a lot of coal in America. We've got about 250 years worth of coal. If you want to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, it seems to make sense to develop the energy reserves you have at home. And—but coal burns—doesn't burn cleanly. And so therefore, we're spending a sizable

amount of money on clean coal technologies. I believe that within a relatively quick period of time, we will have the ability to use coal to fire our electricity without emitting greenhouse gases or pollutants, zero-emission coal-fired plants. We've still got work to do. But there's a lot of research going on, and it makes sense to spend that kind of money on developing ways that we can be good stewards of the environment and use a plentiful supply of coal.

I strongly believe in nuclear power. If you're somebody who is concerned about greenhouse gases, it seems like to me that it's logical then that you support the use of nuclear power. A nuclear powerplant is the ultimate source of renewable fuels, and it has zero emissions. It makes a lot of sense, to me, to promote a nuclear power. The engineering technologies have developed to the point where they're safe.

It's an interesting part of the debate. I know there's a lot of folks who worry about nuclear power. I would just hope people would keep an open mind about it. If you really do want to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy and want to worry about the environment, there's no better way to protect the environment than the renewable source of energy called nuclear power.

I do believe wind power makes sense. All we've got to do is put a couple of turbines in Washington, DC, and we'll be energy free. There's a lot of—[laughter]—a lot of hot air there, you know. [Laughter]

What I'm telling you is, is that we've got a comprehensive plan, comprehensive ideas on how to meet the challenges, really, of the 21st century. I'm a believer in technologies, and I'm a believer in the ingenuity of the American people. And for the skeptics, all you got to do is come into a place like this and see what they're building.

And I believe it's just the beginning. I really do. That's what I've come to share with you, my sense of optimism about the country. As a matter of fact, I don't think there's anything we can't achieve when we put our mind to it. This country has overcome challenges in the past, and we'll darn sure overcome them in the future.

One of the challenges we have is to protect the country from a group of terrorists who'd

like to do us harm. And here in this Ford plant, I want to declare to you: No matter how tough it gets, this country is going to stay steadfast and do the job that you expect us to do, which is to protect you from harm.

And another challenge facing us is this challenge of energy independence. We're making great strides, continue to make great strides. And they'll look back and say of this generation that I'm a part of—I hope they'll look back and say, "They did their job. Job well done."

Thanks for letting me come by, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at the Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant. In his remarks, he referred to Allan Mulally, president and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Company; Ken Ward, plant manager, Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant; and Jim Stoufer, president, United Autoworkers of America Local 249, and chairman of the board of trustees, Village of Claycomo, MO.

Remarks on the Department of Justice and an Exchange With Reporters

March 20, 2007

Earlier today, my staff met with congressional leaders about the resignations of U.S. attorneys. As you know, I have broad discretion to replace political appointees throughout the Government, including U.S. attorneys. And in this case, I appointed these U.S. attorneys, and they served 4-year terms.

The Justice Department, with the approval of the White House, believed new leadership in these positions would better serve our country. The announcement of this decision and the subsequent explanation of these changes has been confusing and, in some cases, incomplete. Neither the Attorney General nor I approve of how these explanations were handled. We're determined to correct the problem.

Today I'm also announcing the following steps my administration is taking to correct the record and demonstrate our willingness to work with the Congress. First, the Attorney General and his key staff will testify before the relevant congressional committees

to explain how the decision was made and for what reasons.

Second, we're giving Congress access to an unprecedented variety of information about the process used to make the decision about replacing 8 of the 93 U.S. attorneys. In the last 24 hours, the Justice Department has provided the Congress more than 3,000 pages of internal Justice Department documents, including those reflecting direct communications with White House staff. This in itself is an extraordinary level of disclosure of an internal agency in White House communications.

Third, I recognize there is significant interest in the role the White House played in the resignations of these U.S. attorneys. Access to White House staff is always a sensitive issue. The President relies upon his staff to provide him candid advice. The Framers of the Constitution understood this vital role when developing the separate branches of government. And if the staff of a President operated in constant fear of being hauled before various committees to discuss internal deliberations, the President would not receive candid advice and the American people would be ill-served.

Yet in this case, I recognize the importance of Members of Congress having—the importance of Congress have placed on understanding how and why this decision was made. So I'll allow relevant committee members, on a bipartisan basis, to interview key members of my staff to ascertain relevant facts. In addition to this offer, we will also release all White House documents and e-mails involving direct communications with the Justice Department or any other outside person, including Members of Congress and their staff, related to this issue. These extraordinary steps offered today to the majority in Congress demonstrate a reasonable solution to the issue. However, we will not go along with a partisan fishing expedition aimed at honorable public servants.

The initial response by Democrats, unfortunately, shows some appear more interested in scoring political points than in learning the facts. It will be regrettable if they choose to head down the partisan road of issuing subpoenas and demanding show trials when I have agreed to make key White House offi-

cials and documents available. I have proposed a reasonable way to avoid an impasse. I hope they don't choose confrontation. I will oppose any attempts to subpoena White House officials.

As we cut through all the partisan rhetoric, it's important to maintain perspective on a couple of important points. First, it was natural and appropriate for members of the White House staff to consider and to discuss with the Justice Department whether to replace all 93 U.S. attorneys at the beginning of my second term. The start of a second term is a natural time to discuss the status of political appointees within the White House and with relevant agencies, including the Justice Department. In this case, the idea was rejected, and it was not pursued.

Second, it is common for me, members of my staff, and the Justice Department to receive complaints from Members of Congress in both parties and from other citizens. And we did hear complaints and concerns about U.S. attorneys. Some complained about the lack of vigorous prosecution of election fraud cases, while others had concerns about immigration cases not being prosecuted. These concerns are often shared between the White House and the Justice Department, and that is completely appropriate.

I also want to say something to the U.S. attorneys who've resigned. I appreciate your service to the country. And while I strongly support the Attorney General's decision and am confident he acted appropriately, I regret these resignations turned into such a public spectacle.

It's now my hope that the United States Congress will act appropriately. My administration has made a very reasonable proposal. It's not too late for Democrats to drop the partisanship and work together. Democrats now have to choose whether they will waste time and provoke an unnecessary confrontation, or whether they will join us in working to do the people's business. There are too many important issues, from funding our troops to comprehensive immigration reform to balancing the budget, for us to accomplish on behalf of the American people.

Thank you for your time. Now I'll answer a couple of questions.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

**Resignation of Eight U.S. Attorneys/
Disclosure of Information to Congress**

Q. Mr. President, are you still completely convinced that the administration did not exert any political pressure in the firings of these attorneys?

The President. Deb, there is no indication that anybody did anything improper. And I'm sure Congress has that question. That's why I've put forth a reasonable proposal, for people to be comfortable with the decisions and how they were made. Al Gonzales and his team will be testifying. We have made available people on my staff to be interviewed. And we've made an unprecedented number of documents available.

Q. Sir, are you convinced, personally?

The President. There's no indication whatsoever, after reviews by the White House staff, that anybody did anything improper.

Michael [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post].

Q. If today's offer from Mr. Fielding your best and final offer on this, are you going to go to the mat in protecting the principle that you talked about? And why not—since you say nothing wrong was done by your staff, why not just clear the air and let Karl Rove and other senior aides testify in public, under oath? There's been a precedent for previous administrations doing that.

The President. Well, some have; some haven't. My choice is to make sure that I safeguard the ability for Presidents to get good decisions.

Michael, I'm worried about precedents that would make it difficult for somebody to walk into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, here's what's on my mind." And if you haul somebody up in front of Congress and put them in oath and all the klieg lights and all the questioning, it, to me, it makes it very difficult for a President to get good advice. On the other hand, I understand there is a need for information sharing on this. And I put forth what I thought was a rational proposal, and the proposal I put forward is the proposal.

Q. And then you'll go to the mat; you'll take this to court—

The President. Absolutely. I hope the Democrats choose not to do that. If they truly are interested in information—in other words, if they want to find out what went on between the White House and the Justice Department, they need to read all the e-mails we released. If they're truly interested in finding out what took place, I have proposed a way for them to find out what took place. My concern is, they would rather be involved with partisanship; they view this as an opportunity to score political points.

And anyway, the proposal we put forward is a good one. I mean, there really is a way for people to get information. We'll just find out what's on their mind.

Kelly O [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News].

**Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/
Department of Justice**

Q. Sir, in at least a few instances, the attorneys that were dismissed were actively investigating Republicans—in San Diego, in Arizona, in Nevada. By removing them, wouldn't that have possibly impeded or stopped those investigations? And, sir, if I may also ask about the Attorney General. He does not have support among many Republicans and Democrats. Can he still be effective?

The President. Yes, he's got support with me. I support the Attorney General. I told you in Mexico, I've got confidence in him, and I still do. He's going to go up to Capitol Hill, and he's going to explain the very things—questions you asked. I've heard all these allegations and rumors. And people just need to hear the truth, and they're going to go up and explain the truth.

Q. In San Diego, Nevada, Arizona, Republicans were the targets of investigations, and those U.S. attorneys were removed. Does that not give the appearance—

The President. Well, I don't—it may give the appearance of something, but I think what you need to do is listen to the facts, and let them explain to you—it's precisely why they're going up to testify, so that the American people can hear the truth about why the decision was made.

Listen, first of all, these U.S. attorneys serve at the pleasure of the President. I named them all. And the Justice Department

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

President today that following on the good work his country and others have done in the six-party talks on North Korea, New Zealand is prepared to offer support for the energy package as part of the initial actions agreement that came out of the last session of the six-party talks. We've been involved with the Korean issue before, support of the KEDO fund. So we're prepared to be in and support denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We're also participating with the U.S. on another project under the G-8 global partnership for eliminating the weapons of mass destruction still floating around the ex-Soviet countries. And we'll be involved in another partnership with the U.S. on the Ukrainian border, which involves training officials and detecting material which might be crossing borders.

I've talked about the importance to us of the U.S. presence in the Asia Pacific. We cooperate a lot on the Asia Pacific, a lot of common objectives, work well in APEC together. I particularly welcomed the President's support for developing up the concept of a free trade area of the Asia Pacific, which we have to look at again at the Sydney APEC summit.

Also appreciative of the fact that the U.S. is focusing on the problems of the South Pacific. We've had close coordination on the aftermath of the coup in Fiji, on the issues in the Solomon Islands, on Tonga, where the State Department is shortly to send another envoy to look at the situation there. Quite a considerable Tonga population in the U.S., as well as in New Zealand.

And of course, Timor, which has many of the characteristics of a South Pacific country, we're very active in as well; just sent a new helicopter contingent up there to support the peace effort.

So all in all, we've run through those issues. I've indicated that New Zealand is very supportive of fast-track authority being extended because the Doha round needs that extension. And if at some point in the future the U.S. is in a position to consider negotiating with more countries on FTA, New Zealand is there. And we think we present very, very few problems for the U.S.

So had the opportunity to run over a lot of issues, and a very, very good relationship,

and thank the President for the invitation to be here today.

President Bush. Thank you, Madam Prime Minister. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Proclamation 8115—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2007

March 21, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The United States and Greece share a long friendship built on common values and an abiding love for freedom. On Greek Independence Day, we underscore the warm ties between our countries, recognize the Greek Americans who enrich our society, and commemorate the anniversary of modern Greece.

The ancient Greeks entrusted their citizens with the right to govern, and they believed in the power of freedom to protect human dignity and basic human rights. Many of America's Founding Fathers studied Greek history and took inspiration from these democratic ideals as they framed our Constitution. The founders of modern Greece had the strong support of our own young democracy when they declared their independence in 1821, and our nations have stood as allies in the major conflicts of the 20th century. Today, we continue to defend freedom together in the global war on terror, as Greek and American Armed Forces work to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

On Greek Independence Day, and throughout the year, we celebrate the universality of freedom and the enduring bonds between Greece and the United States.

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 March 25, 2007, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day

of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of March, 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, 11:25 a.m., March 22, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 23.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Leaders of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq *March 22, 2007*

I just had a remarkable visit with some remarkable citizens. I want to thank them—Secretary Rice and Secretary England and other members of my administration—for being here to listen to State Department folks, USAID folks, and military folks talk about why they volunteered to go help Iraq succeed.

We have a remarkable country, and we have people from different walks of life, different levels of experience make the decision to serve America by helping a young democracy survive. They understand what I understand, and that is, success in Iraq is important for the security of the United States. And my first mission was to thank them and their families. The country owes you a debt of gratitude.

And the Congress owes you the money you need to do the job, without any strings attached. In the recent—in the bill that's now being debated, there is money to help you do your jobs, in that bill. And Congress needs to get that bill out as quickly as possible, without a lot of extra spending and without a lot of strings to it.

There is money in that bill to make sure our military is funded. And I believe it's important for our commanders on the ground to have the flexibility necessary to make deci-

sions to succeed. We don't want you to go into Iraq and then have unnecessary strings placed upon the money so you can't do your job. Congress needs to get their business done quickly, get the monies we requested funded, and let our folks on the ground do the job.

Secondly, Secretary Rice is headed to the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East is a priority for this administration. She's going to continue our efforts to involve all parties—the Palestinians, the Israelis, Arabs—to work for a solution that will lead to peace, and that is a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

I have been on the phone to some of my counterparts in the Middle East, reminding them that I have a strong commitment to this vision, as does the Secretary. This will be hard work. It's not easy to get all parties headed in the right direction, but it's necessary work for this country. And it's necessary for our Secretary of State, with my strong approval, to be moving the process forward. And that's what she'll be doing.

Madam Secretary, I wish you all the best on your trip, and I thank you very much for your service.

In the meantime, thank you all. Please give your families all the thanks in the world. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on House of Representatives Passage of Emergency Supplemental Appropriations *March 23, 2007*

Today I'm joined here at the White House by veterans, family members of people serving in combat, family members of those who have sacrificed. I am honored that they have joined me here today.

Here in Washington, members of both parties recognize that our most solemn responsibility is to support our troops in the war on terror. Yet today a narrow majority in the House of Representatives abdicated its responsibility by passing a war spending

bill that has no chance of becoming law and brings us no closer to getting our troops the resources they need to do their job.

The purpose of the emergency war spending bill I requested was to provide our troops with vital funding. Instead, Democrats in the House, in an act of political theater, voted to substitute their judgment for that of our military commanders on the ground in Iraq. They set rigid restrictions that will require an army of lawyers to interpret. They set an arbitrary date for withdrawal without regard for conditions on the ground. And they tacked on billions for pet projects that have nothing to do with winning the war on terror. This bill has too much pork, too many conditions, and an artificial timetable for withdrawal.

As I have made clear for weeks, I will veto it if it comes to my desk. And because the vote in the House was so close, it is clear that my veto would be sustained. Today's action in the House does only one thing: It delays the delivery of vital resources for our troops. A narrow majority has decided to take this course, just as General Petraeus and his troops are carrying out a new strategy to help the Iraqis secure their capital city.

Amid the real challenges in Iraq, we're beginning to see some signs of progress. Yet, to score political points, the Democratic majority in the House has shown it is willing to undermine the gains our troops are making on the ground.

Democrats want to make clear that they oppose the war in Iraq. They have made their point. For some, that is not enough. These Democrats believe that the longer they can delay funding for our troops, the more likely they are to force me to accept restrictions on our commanders, an artificial timetable for withdrawal, and their pet spending projects. This is not going to happen. Our men and women in uniform need these emergency war funds. The Secretary of Defense has warned that if Congress does not approve the emergency funding for our troops by April the 15th, our men and women in uniform will face significant disruptions, and so would their families.

The Democrats have sent their message; now it's time to send their money. This is an important moment—a decision for the

new leaders in Congress. Our men in women in uniform should not have to worry that politicians in Washington will deny them the funds and the flexibility they need to win. Congress needs to send me a clean bill that I can sign without delay. I expect Congress to do its duty and to fund our troops, and so do the American people, and so do the good men and women standing with me here today.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. He also referred to H.R. 1591.

Remarks at a Celebration of Greek Independence Day

March 23, 2007

The President. Your Eminence, thanks. It's great to have you back at the White House. One of the joys about being the President is, you get to meet some pretty interesting people. And I will tell Your Eminence, I value our friendship. You're such a gentle soul, and it gives me great—it soothes my spirit to be with you. I appreciate your prayers, and I appreciate your leadership, and I am proud to join you in celebrating the 186th anniversary of Greek independence. And we're glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

As you can tell, there is going to be a series of orations, and then you get to go have some refreshments. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the leaders of the Greek American community who are here with us today. Our country is home to 1.2 million Greek Americans—actually, more than that. And, Your Eminence, Greek Americans have really enriched our culture and enriched our Nation's heritage. They're a lively bunch, as you know—[*laughter*]—

Archbishop Demetrios. Absolutely.

The President. —but an important group of people in our country, and that's really what we celebrate here. We celebrate our friendship with the nation of Greece.

And Madam Foreign Minister, thanks for coming. I talked to Condi about her discussions with you. We have a lot to do together, and I appreciate your leadership.

I thank the Ambassador for joining us today. Mr. Ambassador, thanks. Thanks for bringing Francoise, wife. I appreciate the Ambassador from—the Cypriot Ambassador to the United States. Andreas, thank you for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thank you for bringing your wife, Kareen.

I want to thank Nick Burns for being here, former Ambassador to Greece from the United States, now top official at the State Department. One of my top advisers happens to be a Greek American—Fran Townsend, Fran Fragos Townsend—[*laughter*—whose advice I listen to on a regular basis, Your Eminence. Thank you for serving.

I appreciate Members of Congress who have come. Thank you all for taking time: Congressmen Carolyn Maloney from New York; Gus Bilirakis from Florida; John Sarbanes from Maryland; Zack Space from Ohio. I appreciate you all coming. You're welcome to be here.

I want to thank Father Alex—wherever you are—there he is. Father Alex, yes, trying to be as low profile as possible. [*Laughter*] Appreciate you coming, and thanks for your continued friendship.

I want to thank members of the United States military, Greek Americans who wear the uniform of the United States. I thank you for your service; I thank you for your dedication; I thank you for your stalwart defense of freedom and peace.

As you mentioned, Your Eminence, in 1821, the people of Greece proclaimed their independence, and they risked their lives to secure liberty. They knew that their land had been the home of the first democratic society, the first place in the world where people could choose their leaders, speak their minds, and freely explore the arts and the sciences.

These Greek patriots also knew that freedom and democracy were more than just a legacy—that they were their destiny. And they believed, like I believe, that freedom is the hope of all mankind—not just a few people, but of all mankind.

And when they made their stand for freedom and independence, they found a lot of friends in this country, Americans who express their support by contributing funds, and some who volunteer to serve in the new Greek Army. Americans stood with Greece again after World War II, when violent Communist insurgents threatened Greece's free Government. As you mentioned, President Truman saw the danger, and he articulated a new and bold doctrine for our country. In an address to the United States Congress, he put it this way: "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Like democracy itself, the Truman Doctrine grew out of the experience of the Greek people and affirmed the desire for freedom for all people—not just a handful, not just some, but for all.

Today, Greece and the United States are allies in the cause of freedom, Madam Minister, and I want you to send thanks to your Government. In Afghanistan, a Greek engineering team provides support to the International Security Assistance Force; a Greek medical team provides emergency care to those who are wounded. And we thank you very much.

In Lebanon, Greek naval units are part of a UNIFIL force supporting the democratic Siniora Government. These Greek forces are serving with courage; they're helping young democracies who struggle against the forces of evil. And I appreciate your vision. I appreciate the good work that we're doing to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. It is hard work, Madam Minister, but it is necessary work.

I appreciate the important help Greece has provided to Americans who find themselves in danger overseas. Last summer, Greece was one of the first nations to offer ships to help evacuate Americans who found themselves stranded in Lebanon following Hizballah's unprovoked terrorist attacks on Israel. We called for your help, and you delivered, and we appreciate that a lot. That's what friends do.

In January, the Greek Government responded quickly following a grenade attack

on our Embassy in Athens. And we appreciate the determination of Greek authorities to bring those responsible for this attack to justice. We're grateful for the many messages of sympathy and support we've received after those attacks.

We also share with Greece important ties of faith, Your Eminence. The Greek Orthodox Church counts more than 1 million members in the United States, and it plays a vital role in the spiritual life of our Nation. Your Eminence, I thank you and congratulate you on 40 years of ministry as a bishop. You're providing necessary and important leadership here in the United States. You are a man of wisdom. You're a man of prayer. I appreciated your thoughtful response to me and Laura after the September the 11th attacks. These were tough times for our Nation, and your comforting call meant a lot to me.

I thank you for your determination to rebuild what was lost on that terrible day. On 9/11, the terrorists who struck Manhattan brought down not only magnificent skyscrapers but a humble house of worship. Before those attacks, St. Nicholas Church stood just south of the second tower of the World Trade Center. Your vision is for a new St. Nicholas to rise just a few steps from its original site. And with your help, St. Nicholas will once again be a sanctuary of faith in New York's financial district and a new center of reconciliation for visitors from all over the world.

I thank you very much, Your Eminence, for gracing this house. This is the people's house. This belongs to everybody who's an American. I thank you for your vision of peace. I thank you for your spirituality. And I thank you for joining me as we celebrate Greek Independence Day.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America; Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakoyannis of Greece; Greece's Ambassador to the U.S. Alexandros P. Mallias; Cyprus's Ambassador to the U.S. Andreas S. Kakouris; Reverend Father Alex Karloutsos, assistant to the Archbishop for public affairs; and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 17

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 18

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

March 19

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia. He then had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, in the Situation Room, he and Vice President Dick Cheney participated in a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with members of the Boone and Crockett Club.

March 20

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Kansas City, MO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Rob Mullin, Jr.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fairfax, KS, where he toured the General Motors Fairfax Assembly Plant. Later, he traveled to Claycomo, MO, where he toured the Ford Motor Company—Kansas City Assembly Plant.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has named Julie Cram as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Public Liaison.

The President announced that he has named Brent McIntosh as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Staff Secretary.

The President announced that he has named Dan Meyer as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced that he has named David Boyer as Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Daniel J. Kaniewski as Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Response Policy.

The President announced that he has named Matt Latimer as Special Assistant to the President for Speechwriting.

The President announced that he has named Stacie Maass as Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.

March 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had a working lunch with Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 White House News Photographers Association "Eyes of History" winners.

Later in the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with chief executive officers from the Business Roundtable.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Sullivan to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to accord the personal rank of Ambassador to Thomas A. Schweich during his tenure as Coordinator for Counternarcotics and Justice Reform in Afghanistan.

March 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, in the State Dining Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a reception in honor of the Education Department's

National Higher Education Transformation Summit, "A Test of Leadership: Committing to Advanced Postsecondary Education for All Americans."

March 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay house, the President attended a Republican National Committee luncheon. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a signing ceremony for H.R. 584, designating the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janet E. Garvey to be Ambassador to Cameroon.

The President announced his intention to nominate George A. Krol to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Lyle Lavery to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishing Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Neils Marquardt to be Ambassador to Madagascar and Comoros.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 19

Sharion Aycock,
of Mississippi, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi, vice Glen H. Davidson, retiring.

David R. Dugas,
of Louisiana, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, vice Frank J. Polozola, retired.

James Randal Hall,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the
Southern District of Georgia, vice B. Avant
Edenfield, retired.

Richard H. Honaker,
of Wyoming, to be U.S. District Judge for
the District of Wyoming, vice Clarence A.
Brimmer, Jr., retired.

Richard A. Jones,
of Washington, to be U.S. District Judge for
the Western District of Washington, vice
John C. Coughenour, retired.

Robert James Jonker,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for
the Western District of Michigan, vice Gor-
don J. Quist, retired.

Raymond M. Kethledge,
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the
Sixth Circuit, vice James L. Ryan, retired.

Paul Lewis Maloney,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for
the Western District of Michigan, vice Rich-
ard Alan Enslen, retired.

Stephen Joseph Murphy III,
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the
Sixth Circuit, vice Susan Bieke Neilson, de-
ceased.

Janet T. Neff,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for
the Western District of Michigan, vice David
W. McKeague, elevated.

Janis Lynn Sammartino,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for
the Southern District of California, vice Ju-
dith Nelsen Keep, deceased.

Submitted March 22

John C. Rood,
of Arizona, to be Under Secretary of State
for Arms Control and International Security,
vice Robert Joseph, resigned.

Michael J. Sullivan,
of Massachusetts, to be Director, Bureau of
Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
(new position).

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released March 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing
that the President consulted with Prime Min-
ister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq on the implemen-
tation of the Baghdad security plan

Released March 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-
retary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Twenty in Ten: Reducing Amer-
ica's Dependence on Oil

Released March 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing
that the President signed H.R. 342 and H.R.
544

Released March 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Expanding Provincial Recon-
struction Teams To Achieve Iraqi Self Reli-
ance

Released March 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing
that the President signed H.R. 584

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved March 21

H.R. 342 / Public Law 110–13
To designate the United States courthouse located at 555 Independence Street in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, as the “Rush Hudson Limbaugh, Sr. United States Courthouse”

H.R. 544 / Public Law 110–14
To designate the United States courthouse at South Federal Place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as the “Santiago E. Campos United States Courthouse”

Approved March 23

H.R. 584 / Public Law 110–15
To designate the Federal building located at 400 Maryland Avenue Southwest in the District of Columbia as the “Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building”