

States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

**George W. Bush**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 27.

**Remarks Following a Briefing by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors**

July 25, 2007

I want to thank Secretary Shalala and Senator Dole for briefing myself and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Defense on the general recommendations they'll be making to the country about how to make sure that our wounded heroes get the best possible care from the Defense Department and the Veterans Affairs Department.

I asked these two distinguished citizens to lead an extensive search about how best for this Government to respond. We owe a wounded soldier the very best care and the very best benefits and the very easiest to understand system. And so they took a very interesting approach. And that they took the perspective from the patient, as the patient had to work his way through the hospitals and bureaucracies. And they've come up with some very interesting and important suggestions that they'll be voting on later and then will be holding a press conference about afterwards.

The reason I've asked you to come in is, I do want to thank you on behalf of the Nation for doing what's right.

I also want to recognize Bob Woodruff here. He is a—he himself was wounded, severely wounded and went through the system, to a certain extent. And we welcome you back, and we're glad you're with us. And we would hope that any wounded soldier, any person in uniform would receive the kind of care and the ability to return to work, just like you have done. And so we're glad you're with us, Bob. Congratulations on the will to recover.

That will exist with our troops as well. It's amazing how courageous our men and women in uniform are, and they deserve the best. And that's the spirit in which you analyzed the system. And we welcome your recommendations, and we thank you for your service.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala and former Senator Bob Dole, Co-chairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff, who was injured in Iraq on January 29, 2006. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks on a Report by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors and an Exchange With Reporters**

July 25, 2007

*The President.* I've been running with Max and Allen—I mean, Neil. I met these guys at Walter Reed. Neil lost both legs, and he told me he's going to run with me on the South Lawn of the White House. Max lost his leg, and he told me he was going to be jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne. Sure enough, he's jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne, and along with Neil, he's running on the South Lawn.

This is a—running with these two men is incredibly inspirational to me. And it should be inspirational to anybody who has been dealt a tough hand. Sometimes in life you get dealt a hand that you didn't expect to play. And they got dealt a tough hand, and they're playing it with all their soul. And I appreciate you guys being here. It means a lot to me.

Today Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala delivered a report to the White House. I told the press corps that they were going to go out and hold a press conference. They've held their press conference. I'd like to make some comments on that report.

First of all, the spirit of that report is, any time we have somebody hurt, they deserve the best possible care, and their family needs strong support. We've provided that in many cases, but to the extent we haven't, we're going to adjust. In that recommendation, there are things the United States Congress should do, and I call upon them to do it.

In that report, there are a lot of things that the executive branch of Government can do, the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense. And I've instructed Secretary Gates and Secretary Nicholson to look at every one of these recommendations and to take them seriously and to implement them, so that we can say with certainty that any soldier who has been hurt will get the best possible care and treatment that this Government can offer.

I'm working with two men who have been hurt, two men who refuse to allow their current circumstances to get them down or to keep them down. I am proud to be with you guys. Neil, thank you.

**Sergeant Neil Duncan.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** God bless you, Max.

**Specialist Max Ramsey.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** He wanted me to jump out of airplanes with him. I respectfully declined.

#### **President's Run**

**Q.** How does it feel to be with the Commander in Chief running around the track?

**Sgt. Duncan.** Fantastic. It's an accomplishment. It's like the pinnacle of recovery, I think. Being a wounded vet, coming out of Afghanistan a little over a year and a half ago, and then being here, running around this track is just amazing. I couldn't ask for anything better.

**The President.** Don't ask him why he outran me.

**Q.** Why did he outrun you?

**The President.** Because he's a faster runner. Anyway, thank you guys. It's a proud moment for me, a proud moment.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Spc. Max Ramsey, USA, who was injured in Iraq in March 2006; Sgt. Neil Duncan,

USA (Ret.), who was injured in Afghanistan in December 2005; former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala and former Senator Bob Dole, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

#### **Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

*July 26, 2007*

Thank you very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be back with my friends here at ALEC. Kenny, thanks. He was a silver-tongued devil when he was a State legislator; he still is as a United States Congressman. I appreciate Kenny Marchant coming from Washington with me today. It's not all that rough a trip when you're on Air Force One, Ken, so it's a—[laughter]. I'm glad to get my hot cup of coffee and visit about the old days of working together in the State legislator—with the State legislature and about the challenges we face today. And I'm going to spend a little time talking to you all about those challenges. But I appreciate you coming, Ken.

I'm also proud to be with two members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation, the United States Senator, Arlen Specter—proud you're here, Senator; thanks for coming—Congressman Jim Gerlach. When Kenny and I were reminiscing about what it was like to be in Texas worrying about schools and budgets and criminal justice, I think they were somewhat amazed by the stories we were telling.

Speaking about the Texas legislature, I am proud to be here with the speaker of the Texas House, a friend of mine from my old hometown of Midland, Texas, Tom Craddick. Proud you're here, Tom—and his wife, Nadine, and his daughter, Christi.

Laura was just out in Midland, visiting her mother. That would be First Lady Laura Bush, who sends her greetings to you all. You know, I'm a really lucky guy to have a wife who is patient enough to put up with me as President of the United States, is wise enough to seize the moment, and is compassionate enough to worry about the lives of