

And so I thank you for your sacrifice. I thank you for volunteering in the face of danger. I thank you for your courage and your bravery. Every day you are successful here in Iraq draws nearer to the day when America can begin calling you and your fellow service men and women home.

But I want to tell you this about the decision—about my decision about troop levels. Those decisions will be based on a calm assessment by our military commanders on the conditions on the ground, not a nervous reaction by Washington politicians to poll results in the media.

Audience members. Hooah!

President Bush. In other words, when we begin to draw down troops from Iraq, it will be from a position of strength and success, not from a position of fear and failure. To do otherwise would embolden our enemies and make it more likely that they would attack us at home. If we let our enemies back us out of Iraq, we will more likely face them in America. If we don't want to hear their footsteps back home, we have to keep them on their heels over here. And that's exactly what you're doing, and America is safer for it.

In Anbar, you're doing this hard work every day. We've all come to say thank you. We've come to tell you, the American people are standing with you. They're grateful for your sacrifice. As Commander in Chief, I'm proud to be in your presence on this Labor Day. I ask for God's blessings on you and your family, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:43 p.m.

Proclamation 8174—Patriot Day, 2007

September 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

September 11, 2001, was a defining moment in American history. On that terrible day, our Nation saw the face of evil as 19 men barbarously attacked us and wantonly murdered people of many races, nationali-

ties, and creeds. On Patriot Day, we remember the innocent victims, and we pay tribute to the valiant firefighters, police officers, emergency personnel, and ordinary citizens who risked their lives so others might live.

After the attacks on 9/11, America resolved that we would go on the offense against our enemies, and we would not distinguish between the terrorists and those who harbor and support them. All Americans honor the selfless men and women of our Armed Forces, the dedicated members of our public safety, law enforcement, and intelligence communities, and the thousands of others who work hard each day to protect our country, secure our liberty, and prevent future attacks.

The spirit of our people is the source of America's strength, and 6 years ago, Americans came to the aid of neighbors in need. On Patriot Day, we pray for those who died and for their families. We volunteer to help others and demonstrate the continuing compassion of our citizens. On this solemn occasion, we rededicate ourselves to laying the foundation of peace with confidence in our mission and our free way of life.

By a joint resolution approved December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107–89), the Congress has designated September 11 of each year as "Patriot Day."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2007, as Patriot Day. I call upon the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff on Patriot Day. I also call upon the people of the United States to observe Patriot Day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and remembrance services, to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day, and to observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 a.m. eastern daylight time to honor the innocent Americans and people from around the world who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:10 a.m., September 6, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 5, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on September 7.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister John Howard of
Australia in Sydney, Australia
September 5, 2007**

Prime Minister Howard. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome the media to this news conference. I'll say a couple of words, invite the President to speak briefly, and then we'll take a couple of questions from each of the press groups.

It's always a great pleasure, George, to welcome you to Australia. The United States President is always welcome in our country. We have no closer alliance with any country in the world than we have with the United States. Both historically and contemporaneously, the importance of the alliance between the United States of America and Australia is deeply embedded in the minds of millions of Australians.

And you, Mr. President, and I have shared a number of very special experiences over the past few years. I remember our first personal meeting was on the 10th of September of 2001. And of course, as a consequence of that meeting and the events that horrifically followed the other day, the paths of our two countries have been parallel in so many ways, in the fight against terrorism and the promotion of democracy and freedom around the world. And in that context, as well as the more generic national context, I welcome you very warmly on a personal basis to my hometown of Sydney, Australia's largest city and, in my view, the most beautiful big city in the world.

But we had a very broad-ranging discussion. We talked extensively about Iraq, about the climate change aspects of APEC, the American perception towards conditions in

the Middle East and in relation to Iran, and also the prospects for something we both hope for, and that is a lasting settlement between Israel and the Palestinian people which does justice to the right of the Israelis to exist unmolested as a free and proud nation and also the right of the people of Palestine to have a homeland.

On a bilateral basis, we have agreed to a number of new arrangements, including a treaty relating to exchanges concerning defense equipment which effectively will remove layers of bureaucracy for defense industries in Australia acquiring American technology. And we'll enter that market on the same basis as do companies coming from the United Kingdom.

We also agreed on joint statements regarding climate change and energy, a joint nuclear energy action plan which involves cooperation on civil nuclear energy, including R&D, skills and technical training, and regulatory issues. Australia intends to participate in the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, and there will be great benefits in terms of access to nuclear technology and non-proliferation. And the United States will support Australian membership in the Generation IV International Forum, which involves R&D to develop safer and better nuclear reactors.

I'm also pleased to announce that we've entered arrangements that will allow something in the order of 15,000—we estimate—young Australians, who are students or graduates, to visit the United States on the basis of some kind of gap year in their studies, and that will be a facility available in the United States which is currently available and very widely utilized by young Australians in the United Kingdom and other European countries.

We have also agreed to have further detailed discussions involving taking our defense cooperation even further—and this involves four components to be explored. The first of those is enhanced cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. And that could, in fact, involve a stationing—basing in Australia by the United States equipment and stores and provisions that would be available for ready use in disaster relief in our immediate region. And we think in