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April 14, 2005. The Protocol amends the Convention on the International Hydrographic Organization, which was done at Monaco on May 3, 1967, and entered into force for the United States on September 22, 1970 (TIAS 6933; 21 UST 1857; 752 UNTS 41). I am also transmitting, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Secretary of State on the Protocol.

The Protocol will facilitate the reorganization of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). The IHO, which is a technical and consultative international organization headquartered in Monaco, facilitates safe and efficient maritime navigation throughout the world. It accomplishes these objectives by facilitating the coordination of the activities of national hydrographic offices, promoting uniformity in the nautical charts and documents generated by such offices, encouraging the adoption of reliable surveying methods, and fostering the development of the science of hydrography. Reorganization of the IHO will result in a more flexible, efficient, and visible organization.

Ratification of the Protocol would serve important U.S. interests. United States commercial shipping, the United States Navy, and the scientific research community rely heavily on hydrographic information collected and shared under the auspices of the IHO. The United States plays an important leadership role in the IHO and as a result enjoys expeditious and economical access to this information. Moreover, the United States has committed more resources than any other country to research, development, and evaluation of hydrographic instruments and therefore stands to benefit significantly from the efficiencies generated by this reorganization.

Article XXI of the Convention sets forth the procedure for the approval and entry into force of amendments: amendments that are adopted or "approved" by the Conference enter into force for all Contracting Parties to the Convention 3 months after two-thirds of the Contracting Parties have notified the depositary of the their consent to be bound.

I recommend that the Senate give prompt and favorable consideration to the Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 23, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting

October 24, 2007

Southern California Wildfires

I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for being here today to discuss a lot of issues. I started off the meeting by summarizing a series of conversations that I've had regarding the fires in southern California. I had a conversation with Governor Schwarzenegger. My question to him was, are you getting what you need; are the people there in California getting the help they need from the Federal Agencies to help the good folks in California deal with these devastating fires? His answer was, yes. I assured him that if he needs anything and we're able to provide it, we'll do so.

I also had an opportunity to thank him, as well as California officials, for working hard to save houses, save lives. I appreciate very much the fact that they're willing to work in a collaborative fashion with the Federal Government. I've been meeting with my Cabinet Secretaries that are responsible for helping the State and local authorities fight these fires. I will report to you that I am—I believe the effort is well-coordinated. I know we're getting the manpower and assets on the ground that have been requested by the State and local authorities.

I wish we could control the wind, because one of the things that's hampering our joint capability of fighting these fires is the strong westerly winds. I'm told the winds may be dying down soon, in which case it will make it—make this equipment we've got in place a lot more effective at helping fight the fires.

I initially declared an emergency declaration, which will enable us to send Federal

equipment and manpower into the scene, including Department of Defense help. Today I've signed a major disaster declaration, which will then enable Federal funds to start heading toward the families who have been affected by these fires.

Looking forward to going out to California tomorrow. I will continue to make sure that our efforts are coordinated, that we are responsive to the needs of people. But most importantly, I want the people in southern California to know that Americans all across this land care deeply about them. We're concerned about their safety; we're concerned about their property; and we offer our prayers and hopes that all will turn out fine in the end. In the meantime, they can rest assured that the Federal Government will do everything we can to help put out these fires.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California.

Remarks at the Department of State

October 24, 2007

Thank you very much. *Gracias. Buenos dias*. I am pleased to be here at the State Department. I appreciate the work that's done here. Every day, the men and women of this Department serve as America's emissaries to the world. Every day, you help our country respond to aggressors and bring peace to troubled lands. Every day, you advance our country's mission in support of basic human rights to the millions who are denied them. Secretary Rice constantly tells me about the good work being done here at the State Department, and on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your hard work, and I'm pleased to be with you.

Few issues have challenged this Department—and our Nation—longer than the situation in Cuba. Nearly half a century has passed since Cuba's regime ordered American diplomats to evacuate our Embassy in Havana. This was the decisive break of our diplomatic relations with the island, a troubling signal for the future of the Cuban people and the dawn of an unhappy era between our two countries. In this building, President John F. Kennedy spoke about the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba's dictatorship. And it was here where he announced the end of the missile crisis that almost plunged the world into nuclear war.

Today another President comes with hope to discuss a new era for the United States and Cuba. The day is coming when the Cuban people will chart their own course for a better life. The day is coming when the Cuban people have the freedom they have awaited for so long.

Madam Secretary, thank you for your introduction. I'm pleased to be with you and Ambassador Negroponte and all who work here. Thanks for the hospitality. I'm pleased to be here with our Secretary of Commerce, Secretary Carlos Gutierrez—born in Cuba. I appreciate other members of my administration who are here.

I particularly want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us: Senator Mel Martinez, born in Cuba; Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, born in Cuba; Lincoln Diaz-Balart, born in Cuba; *su hermanito*—[*laughter*]—Mario Diaz-Balart. I want to thank Chris Smith for joining us, Congressman from Jersey; Thaddeus McCotter, Michigan; Debbie Wasserman Schultz from Florida, as well as Tim Mahoney from Florida. Appreciate you being here.

I thank the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. I appreciate the Ambassadors to the Organization of American States who are with us. I particularly want to thank the Cuban families who have joined me on the stage.

One of the great success stories of the past century is the advance of economic and political freedom across Latin America. In this room are officials representing nations that are embracing the blessings of democratic government and free enterprise. And the United States is proud and active to work with you in your transformations.

One country in our region still isolates its people from the hope that freedom brings and traps them in a system that has failed them. Forty-eight years ago, in the early moments of Cuba's revolution, its leaders offered a prediction. He said—and I quote—