AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

development. One of the things the President recognizes is the need for there to be investment in his country, so people can find work and the stability that comes with economic development. And I appreciate your recognition of the opportunity to work together.

We talked about the eastern part of his country. And he shared with me his strategy to make sure that the Government's reach extends throughout the entire country and that there is stability throughout the country. And I want to thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with me.

I did bring up my desire to help our friend deal with malaria. Malaria is a great concern to me and my wife and the Secretary of State. This is an issue that can be solved. We hurt when young babies are dying from a mosquito bite, knowing full well that a strategy can help save lives. And so the President shares the same sense of compassion I do for people all throughout the world who are being affected by malaria.

Mr. President, you are—you've said that you wanted there to be free and fair elections, and you delivered. And I appreciate that and congratulate you on being a man of your word. And we look forward to continuing to work with you, sir, to bring peace and stability to the neighborhood. So, welcome.

President Kabila. Well, Mr. President, thanks a lot. Of course, this is the second time that we meet in the Oval Office. And way back—yes, elections was high on the agenda in 2003. We organized those elections. And basically, our priorities have now changed from elections; it's now stability, and with stability, peace and development. And I emphasized and insisted on the fact that we need continued support from the United States in order to achieve these two remaining goals, which is peace and basic stability throughout the whole country, and embark on a very, very long journey of development and really try to combat poverty, which is the biggest issue not only in the Congo but in the region and on the African Continent.

So thanks a lot for the continued support that we've always had from the United States Government and the administration. And together, let's move further and further ahead.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kabila. Thank you.

President Bush. Glad you're here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on Congressional Action on the Legislative Agenda

October 26, 2007

Good morning. I went out to California yesterday to meet with families affected by the wildfires and to thank the State and local officials for their outstanding work in this difficult time. While I was there, I saw the terrible destruction and heartbreaking loss. Yet I was also encouraged by the spirit I found—the families determined to rebuild, the volunteers who stepped forward to help neighbors in need, and the first-responders who have shown such courage in battling the flames and caring for those who were displaced.

I returned to Washington late last night. And when I got back to the White House, I was disappointed by what Congress had been doing and even more disappointed by what they had not been doing. This week, the majority in the House passed a new SCHIP bill that costs more over the next 5 years than the one I vetoed 3 weeks ago. It still moves millions of American children who now have private health insurance into Government-run health care. It raises taxes to pay for it. And it fails to do what needs to be done: to put poor children first.

After I vetoed their last SCHIP bill, I designated members of my administration to work with Congress to find common ground. Congressional leaders never met with them. Instead, the House once again passed a bill that they knew would not become law. And incredibly enough, the Senate will take up the same bill next week, which wastes valuable time.

As the House was debating SCHIP, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee unveiled a massive tax package that raises taxes on more than a million small-business owners, among others. Earlier this week, Congress sent me a fiscally irresponsible

water resources bill. The House version came in at $15 billion. The Senate version came in at $14 billion. So the House and Senate compromised and sent me a bill that costs $23 billion. In Washington, they call that "splitting the difference."

And today Congress set a record they should not be proud of. October the 26th is the latest date in 20 years that Congress has failed to get a single annual appropriations bill to the President's desk. And that's not the only thing congressional leaders have failed to get done.

They have yet to make the Internet tax moratorium permanent or even extend it, even though this moratorium is set to expire in just a few days. The House and Senate have both passed temporary extensions but have not agreed on a final bill. I urge Congress to keep the Internet tax-free and to get a bill to my desk that I can sign.

They have yet to move Judge Michael Mukasey's nomination to be Attorney General out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, even as Members complain about the lack of leadership at the Department of Justice.

They have yet to act on our emergency war funding supplemental, even though our troops on the frontlines depend on these vital funds to fight our enemies and to keep us safe at home.

This is not what congressional leaders promised when they took control of Congress earlier this year. In January, one congressional leader declared, and I quote: "No longer can we waste time here in the Capitol, while families in America struggle to get ahead." He was right. With only a few weeks left on the legislative calendar, Congress needs to keep their promise to stop wasting time and get essential work done on behalf of the American people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 3963; H.R. 976; H.R. 3970; and H.R. 1495.

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.

October 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Laurel, MD, where they toured the Patuxent Research Refuge. They then traveled to St. Michaels, MD.

Later in the morning, the President participated in an interview with Chris and Melissa Fischer of ESPN's "Offshore Adventures" program.

In the afternoon, at the Vice President's residence, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne Cheney. Later, they returned to Washington, DC.

October 21

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Governor-elect Bobby Jindal of Louisiana to congratulate him on his election victory.

October 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with President Nambaryn Enkhbayar of Mongolia. Then, in the Oval Office, the President met with veterans, leaders of military service organizations, and family members of a marine who was killed in the war on terror. Later, he had two telephone conversations with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California to discuss the wildfires in southern California.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Abdullah Gul of Turkey.

In the evening, at Decatur House, the President attended a Republican Governors Association reception.