

that kind of instability, we're deeply concerned about it.

Secondly, there have been Al Qaida—some Al Qaida operating out of Somalia, and therefore, when you know some Al Qaida have been in and out of Somalia and there is some chaos and confusion, the conclusion is, we better be worried about it and do something about it. And we are. We've got cooperative arrangements in the region that will make it more likely for us to be able to provide protections for the people in the region and ourself.

In terms of—yes, and we're also conscious of Ethiopia and Eritrea's border dispute. And I'm constantly talking to Condi about making sure that we're on top of the situation as the best we can make a positive contribution. I feel pretty comfortable that the State Department and our Embassies are fully aware of the issues on the border and are making sure that the respective leaders understand the position of the U.S., which is to solve this thing through mediation and not stack up the troops to the point where they get—where some spark ignites some kind of border dispute.

But the Horn is an area of deep concern for the U.S. We actually happen to have a base there as well, in Djibouti. And we take the issues there seriously and are very engaged with it on a regular basis.

Okay, here's what we're going to do: We'll get a picture, unless you don't want one. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The interview began at 1:18 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin; President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; President Paul Kagame of Rwanda; U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Richard S. Williamson; President Nicolas Sarkozy of France; President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and former Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations. A reporter referred to President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki of South Africa. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 15. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Memorandum on Assignment of Function Regarding Medicare Funding

February 14, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Subject: Assignment of Function Regarding Medicare Funding

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, you are directed to perform the function of the President as described under section 802 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-173, 31 U.S.C. 1105(h) (1)).

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:44 a.m., February 15, 2008]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 15, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on February 19.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

February 15, 2008

This morning I spoke to the president of Northern Illinois University. I told the president that a lot of folks today will be praying for the families of the victims and for the Northern Illinois University community. Obviously a tragic situation on that campus, and I ask our fellow citizens to offer their blessings, blessings of comfort and blessings of strength.

We also just discussed a serious problem facing our country, and that is the fact that House leaders blocked a good piece of legislation that would give our intelligence community the tools they need to protect America from a terrorist attack.

The American citizens must understand—clearly understand that there is still a threat on the homeland, there's still an enemy