AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

A lot of fans said, "Thank you, Glenn." [*Laughter*] A lot of opponents said, "No thank you, Glenn." [*Laughter*] After all, he was the defensive player of the year for SEC, Outland Trophy winner, Lombardi Trophy, and Nagurski Award. He'll have his time in the NFL, and a lot of teams are sure anxious to have him play for them. Congratulations, and welcome. Glad you're here.

This is a team of great athletes. Two players were drafted by Major League Baseball. One of the stars, Trindon Holliday, holds the school record in the 100 meters. One of your linemen, Herman Johnson—he holds a different kind of record. [*Laughter*] He was the largest baby ever born in the State of Louisiana, at 15 pounds, 14 ounces. [*Laughter*] That's why he's known as "the House," which puts him in good stead with his fellow teammates known as "Putt" or "Surfer Boy," "L-Crazy," and "Cheese." [*Laughter*] Whatever nickname you prefer to be called, all of us here are calling you champs. And you deserve it. I want to thank you for being champions on the field.

I appreciate you understanding that once you're a champ on the field, means you have a responsibility to be a champ off the field as well. And there's no better inspiration than Les Miles and his wife, Kathy. They host events that raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. They're active in cancer fundraising and the Special Olympics, the Baton Rouge Children's Advocacy Center. I told the coach that I was going to mention this, and that is, I'm aware, as the Commander in Chief of the finest military ever assembled on the face of the Earth, that he went to boost our troops in Iraq and Kuwait as part of a USO tour. I want to thank you, coach, for doing your job.

I appreciate the example that Glenn Dorsey has set on the field and off the field to—he works to educate children about the dangers of drugs and encourages them to work hard. His advice is, "Dream big and make things happen." There's nothing better than a champ to help somebody dream big and to encourage them to make something happen.

And so when you leave here, I hope you leave here knowing that you've got a special responsibility, not only to represent your school on the football field but to help make America a better place, just like Ciron Black did when he heard the story of an 8-year-old LSU fan who was suffering from leukemia. And he took time to send an encouraging message. Then he wrote the boy's name, Mikey, on his wristband during the national championship game. Sometimes people say, "I can't help because I can't solve all the problems." But in this case, he showed that you can help one person. And in helping one person, he helped the Nation as a whole. And I want to thank you, Ciron, for your leadership.

There's a lot of great stories about the character of the people behind me, but it's getting chilly, and I'm looking forward to getting my LSU jersey. [*Laughter*] And so I want to welcome you all to the White House—to the South Lawn of the White House. I'm so honored and proud to welcome the LSU Tigers here as the national champs. God bless you; God bless LSU; and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Scott and Clark McCrery, sons of Representative James O. McCrery III of Louisiana; Preston Kennedy, son of Louisiana State Treasurer John Neely Kennedy; former Senator John B. Breaux of Louisiana; and Jared Mitchell and Trindon Holliday, wide receivers, Chad Jones and Craig Steltz, safeties, Herman Johnson, offensive lineman, Luke Sanders, linebacker, Charles Alexander, defensive tackle, and Ciron Black, offensive tackle, Louisiana State University football team.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Implement the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement

April 7, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (the "Agreement"). The Agreement represents an historic development in our relations with Colombia, which has

shown its commitment to advancing democracy, protecting human rights, and promoting economic opportunity. Colombia's importance as a steadfast strategic partner of the United States was recognized by President Clinton's support for an appropriation in 2000 to provide funding for Plan Colombia, and my Administration has continued to stand with Colombia as it confronts violence, terror, and drug traffickers.

This Agreement will increase opportunity for the people of Colombia through sustained economic growth and is therefore vital to ensuring that Colombia continues on its trajectory of positive change. Under the leadership of President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia has made a remarkable turnaround since 1999 when it was on the verge of being a failed state. This progress is in part explained by Colombia's success in demobilizing tens of thousands of paramilitary fighters. The Colombian government reports that since 2002, kidnappings, terrorist attacks, and murders are all down substantially, as is violence against union members.

The Government of Colombia, with the assistance of the United States, is continuing its efforts to further reduce the level of violence in Colombia and to ensure that those responsible for violence are quickly brought to justice. To speed prosecutions of those responsible for violent crimes, the Prosecutor General's Office plans to hire this year 72 new prosecutors and more than 110 investigators into the Human Rights Unit. These additions are part of the increase of more than 2,100 staff that will be added to the Prosecutor General's Office in 2008 and 2009. To support these additional personnel and their activities, Colombia has steadily increased the budget for the Prosecutor General's Office, including by more than $40 million this year, bringing the total outlay for that office to nearly $600 million.

In negotiating this Agreement, my Administration was guided by the objectives set out by the Congress in the Trade Act of 2002. My Administration has complied fully with the letter and spirit of Trade Promotion Authority—from preparation for the negotiations, to consultations with the Congress throughout the talks, to the content of the Agreement itself. In addition, my Administration has conducted several hundred further consultations, led congressional trips to Colombia, and last year renegotiated key labor, environmental, investment, and intellectual property rights provisions in the Agreement at the behest of the Congress. By providing for the effective enforcement of labor and environmental laws, combined with strong remedies for noncompliance, the Agreement will contribute to improved worker rights and higher levels of environmental protection in Colombia. The result is an Agreement that all of us can be proud of and that will create significant new opportunities for American workers, farmers, ranchers, businesses, and consumers by opening the Colombian market and eliminating barriers to U.S. goods, services, and investment.

Under the Agreement, tariffs on over 80 percent of U.S. industrial and consumer goods exported to Colombia will be eliminated immediately, with tariffs on the remaining goods eliminated within 10 years. The Agreement will allow 52 percent of U.S. agricultural exports, by value, to enter Colombia duty-free immediately, with the remaining agricultural tariffs phased out over time. This will help to level the playing field, as 91 percent of U.S. imports from Colombia already enjoy duty-free access to our market under U.S. trade preference programs.

My Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the Congress on a bipartisan path forward to secure approval of this legislation that builds on the positive spirit of the May 10, 2007, agreement on trade between the Administration and the House and Senate leadership, and the strong bipartisan support demonstrated by both Houses of Congress in overwhelmingly approving the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement last year. The United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement represents an historic step forward in U.S. relations with a key friend and ally in Latin America. Congressional approval of legislation to implement the Agreement is in our national interest, and I urge the Congress to act favorably on this legislation as quickly as possible.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 7, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 8.

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Petty Officer Michael A. Monsoor

April 8, 2008

Good afternoon, and welcome.

The Medal of Honor is America's highest decoration for military valor. Over the years, many who have received the medal have given their lives in the action that earned it. The name of Petty Officer Michael Anthony Monsoor will now be among them.

September 2006, Michael laid down his life for his brothers in arms. Today we remember the life of this faithful Navy SEAL. And on behalf of a grateful nation, we will present Michael Monsoor's family with the Medal of Honor that he earned.

I welcome the Vice President. Secretary of Defense Gates, thank you for coming; Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peake; Secretary Don Winter of the Navy; Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and wife, Deborah; General James Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Annette; Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, and wife, Ellen; Senator John McCain; Congressman Ed Royce; Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez.

Previous Medal of Honor recipients, thank you for joining us.

I appreciate Chaplain Burt, Navy SEALs—the finest warriors on the face of the Earth, the Monsoor family, and everybody else.

The Medal of Honor is awarded for an act of such courage that no one could rightly be expected to undertake it. Yet those who knew Michael Monsoor were not surprised when he did. The son of Orange County, California, grew up in a family where helping others was a way of life. Mike's father was a marine; his mother, a social worker. Together they raised their four children to understand the meaning of service and sacrifice.

From a very early age, Mike showed the strength of his own convictions. Apparently going to kindergarten wasn't one of them. Mike had no complaints after the first week of school, until someone broke the news to him that he had to go back the next week. [*Laughter*] Many mornings, Mike refused to put on the nice clothes for school. Instead, he insisted on wearing mismatched outfits. Mike's mother soon discovered there was no stopping the determined young boy from mixing plaids and stripes. And years later, there would be no stopping an even more determined young man from donning a uniform of navy blue.

In some ways, Mike was an unlikely candidate for the Navy. He suffered from terrible asthma as a child. On some nights, his coughing fits would land him in the hospital. But Mike would not lay low for long. He strengthened his lungs by racing his siblings in the swimming pool. He worked to wean himself off his inhaler. He built himself into a superb athlete, excelling from sports like football to snowboarding.

After enlisting in the Navy, he began preparing for the ultimate test of physical endurance: SEAL training. Less than a third of those who begin this training become SEALs. But Mike would not be denied a spot. In September 2004, he earned the right to wear the Navy SEAL trident.

The newly minted frogman became a beloved member of the SEAL team community. His teammates liked to laugh about the way his shiny Corvette would leave everybody in the dust. But deep down, they always knew Mike would never leave anybody behind when it counted. He earned their confidence with his attention to detail and quiet work ethic. One of Mike's officers remembers an instructor once asking after an intense training session, quote, "What's the deal with the Monsoor guy? He just says, 'Roger that,' to everything."

When Mike deployed with his team to Ramadi in the spring of 2006, he brought that attitude with him. Because he served as both a heavy machine gunner and a communications operator, he often had a double load of equipment, sometimes more than 100 pounds worth. But under the glare of the hot desert sun, he never lost his cool.