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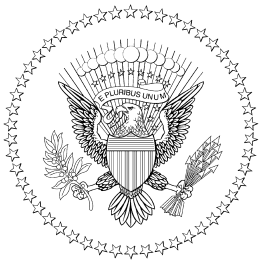

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on April 11, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia in Zagreb, Croatia

April 5, 2008

[*Prime Minister Sanader spoke in Croatian, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. It's really good to be with you again. I remember very fondly our visit to the Oval Office.

[*The interpreter began to translate President Bush's remarks.*]

Prime Minister Sanader. No, there is no need.

President Bush. Even though you did a brilliant job. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Sanader. They understand; they understand.

President Bush. I understand. But, anyway, I—you suggested I come to your country then, and I'm really glad we came. Thanks. It's good news. And the fact that Croatia has been invited to join NATO is a historic moment. And I hope the people of your country are as proud as I am to be here to welcome you into NATO.

The—my only regret is I didn't get to see the coast. But I suspect when more Americans learn of the beauty of your coast, they'll want to come. And that's why the Open Skies agreement that we negotiated is going to be important to open up travel and trade. We will take you up on your request to have a trade mission come. I appreciate the fact that you have an open government, an honest government, a transparent government, which will help attract foreign capital—well-educated, hard-working people that will help attract foreign capital as well.

We talked about the neighborhood, and I appreciate the Prime Minister's advice and counsel on how the United States can help continue to promote stability and freedom. And I want to thank you very much for that.

We talked about an issue that I know is on the minds of the people of Croatia, and that is the visa waiver policy. I fully understand, Mr. Prime Minister, that some in your country wonder why our visa waiver policy is for you—different for you than it is for other people, perhaps, in Europe. After all, you've—you're sacrificing in Afghanistan alongside U.S. troops. And they wonder why they can't go see their relatives in America in an easier way.

I think they should be able to. Congress has passed a law that we now must live with. And we'll work with your Government to facilitate the new law in such a way, hopefully, that people will be able to realize their dreams of going to America to see relatives and loved ones. There's a lot of people in America that have fond memories of their homeland, and they want to be able to see their relatives in an easier fashion.

So we'll work government-to-government to meet our laws and, at the same time, hopefully facilitate travel. I don't want to create false expectations. On the other hand, people should know that we have committed to working to see to it that the policy is implemented in a way that hopefully will ease travel quickly.

All in all, it's been an honor to be with you. I'm so grateful for your Government and for the people of your country for welcoming me and Laura. And I look forward to future visits.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Sanader. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. at the Banski Dvori.

Remarks in Zagreb

April 5, 2008

The President. *Dobro jutro*. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much. I'm honored

to be here with the leaders from Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia. The United States appreciates the leadership you have shown in the cause of freedom. We're pleased Albania and Croatia have been invited to join NATO, and we look forward to Macedonia taking its place very soon in this great alliance for freedom.

Laura, who has joined me today, and I are proud to stand on the soil of an independent Croatia. Our countries are separated by thousands of miles, but we're united by a deep belief in God and the blessings of liberty He gave us. And today on the edge of a great Adriatic, we stand together as one free people.

Croatia is a very different place than it was just a decade ago. The Croatian people have overcome war and hardship to build peaceful relations with your neighbors and to build a maturing democracy in one of the most beautiful countries on the face of the Earth. Americans admire your courage and admire your persistence. And we look forward to welcoming you as a partner in NATO.

The invitation to join NATO that Croatia and Albania received this week is a vote of confidence that you will continue to make necessary reforms and become strong contributors to our great alliance. Henceforth, should any danger threaten your people, America and the NATO alliance will stand with you, and no one will be able to take your freedom away.

I regret that NATO did not extend an invitation to Macedonia at this week's summit. Macedonia has made difficult reforms at home and is making major contributions to NATO missions abroad. Unfortunately, Macedonia's invitation was delayed because of a dispute over its name. In Bucharest, NATO allies declared that as soon as this issue is resolved, Macedonia will be extended an invitation to join the alliance. America's position is clear: Macedonia should take its place in NATO as soon as possible.

The NATO alliance is open to all countries in the region. We welcome the decisions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to take the next steps toward membership called intensive dialog. And we hope that soon a free and prosperous Serbia will find its rightful place in the family of Europe and live at peace with its neighbors.

With the changes underway in this region, Europe stands on the threshold of a new and hopeful history. The ancient and costly rivalries that led to two World Wars have fallen away. We've seen the burning desire for freedom melt even the Iron Curtain. We've witnessed the rise of strong and vibrant democracies and free and open markets. And today, the people of Europe are closer than ever before to a dream shared by millions: a Europe that is whole, a Europe that is at peace, and a Europe that is free.

The people of this region know what the gift of liberty means. You know the death and destruction that can be caused by the followers of radical ideologies. You know that in the long run, the only way to defeat a hateful ideology is to promote the hopeful alternative of human freedom. And that is what our nations are doing today in the Middle East. The lack of freedom and opportunity in that region has given aid and comfort to the lies and ambitions of violent extremists. Resentments that began on the streets of the Middle East have resulted in the killing innocent people across the world. A great danger clouds the future of all free men and women, and this danger sits at the doorstep of Europe.

Together the people of this region are helping to confront this danger. Today, soldiers from Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are serving bravely in Afghanistan, helping the Afghan people defeat the terrorists and secure their future of liberty. Forces from Albania and Macedonia are serving in Iraq, where they're helping the Iraqi people build a society that rejects terror and lives in freedom. It's only a matter of time before freedom takes root across that troubled region. And when it does, millions will remember the people of your nation stood with them in their hour of need.

At this great moment in history, you have a vital role. There are many people who don't appear to understand why it takes so long to build a democracy. You can tell them how hard it is to put in place a new and complex system of government for the first time. There are those who actually wonder if people were better off under their old tyranny.

You can tell them that freedom is the only real path to prosperity and security and peace. And there are those who ask whether the pain and sacrifices for freedom are worth the costs. And they should come to Croatia, and you can show them that freedom is worth fighting for.

The great church in this square has stood since the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, it has seen long, dark winters of occupation and tyranny and war. But the spring is here at last. This is an era in history that generations of Croatians have prayed for. It is an era that Pope John Paul II envisioned when he came to this land and prayed with the Croatian people and asked for "a culture of peace." Today in this square, before this great church, we can now proudly say those prayers have been answered.

Interpreter. [*Inaudible*]

The President. They can't hear you. Don't worry about it.

May you always remember the joy of this moment in your history. And may the hopeful story of a peaceful Croatia find its way to those in the world who live as slaves and still await a joyful spring.

May God bless Croatia. And thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. in St. Mark's Square. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Sanader.

The President's Radio Address

April 5, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Europe, where I attended the NATO summit and witnessed the hopeful progress of the continent's youngest democracies.

The summit was held in Romania, one of the 10 liberated nations that have joined the ranks of NATO since the end of the cold war. After decades of tyranny and oppression, today, Romania is an important member of an international alliance dedicated to liberty, and it is setting a bold example for other former Communist nations that desire to live in peace and freedom.

One of those nations is Croatia, which I'm also visiting on my trip. Croatia is a very different place than it was just a decade ago. Since they attained their independence, the Croatian people have shown the world the potential of human freedom. They've overcome war and hardship to build peaceful relations with their neighbors, and they have built a maturing democracy on the rubble of a dictatorship.

This week NATO invited Croatia, as well as the nation of Albania, to join the NATO alliance. These countries have made extraordinary progress on the road to freedom, prosperity, and peace. The invitation to join NATO represents the alliance's confidence that they will continue to make necessary reforms and that they will become strong contributors to NATO's mission of collective defense.

I regret that NATO was not able to extend an invitation to a third nation, Macedonia, at this week's summit. Like Croatia and Albania, Macedonia has met all the criteria for NATO membership. Unfortunately, its invitation was delayed because of a dispute over its name. I made clear that the name issue should be resolved quickly, that NATO should intensify its engagement with Macedonia, and that we look forward to the day when this young democracy takes its place among the members of the NATO alliance.

After a century when the great wars of Europe threatened destruction throughout the world, the continent has now entered into a promising new era. Less than two decades ago, Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia suffered under the yoke of Communist oppression. The people in these countries know what the gift of liberty means, because they know what it is like to have their liberty denied. They know the death and destruction that can be caused by the followers of radical ideologies who kill the innocent in pursuit of political power. And these lessons have led them to work alongside America in the war on terror.

Today, soldiers from Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are serving bravely in Afghanistan, helping the Afghan people defeat terrorists and secure a future of liberty. And forces from Albania and Macedonia are also serving in Iraq, where they're helping the

Iraqi people build a society that rejects terror and lives in freedom. These nations have displayed the ultimate devotion to the principle of liberty, sacrificing to provide it for others.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia are not alone in discarding the chains to their past and embracing the promise of freedom. Another burgeoning democracy is Ukraine. Earlier this week, I traveled to Kiev to express America's support for beginning the process of bringing both Ukraine and Georgia into NATO. In recent years, both of these nations have seen tens of thousands take to the streets to peacefully demand their God-given liberty. The people of Ukraine and Georgia are an inspiration to the world, and I was pleased that this week NATO declared that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO.

Nearly 7 years ago, I came to Europe and spoke to the students and faculty at Warsaw University in Poland. On that day, I declared that all of Europe's new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, should have the same chance for security and freedom and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe. Seven years later, we have made good progress toward fulfilling this vision, and more work remains.

In many parts of the world, freedom is still a distant aspiration. But in the ancient cities and villages of Europe, it is at the center of a new era of hope.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:30 p.m. on April 3 in Bucharest, Romania, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on April 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 6-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Croatia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Sochi, Russia

April 6, 2008

President Putin. Dear Mr. President, let me once again welcome you here in Sochi. I am very pleased that you've accepted this invitation. And I'm pleased that after the meeting in Bucharest, you now have the opportunity to discuss with me our bilateral relations and security issues.

Yesterday we actually started discussing those issues, and today we'll have to—we have the opportunity to discuss this in a calmer working manner. And on top of all, I am delighted to show you around Sochi, which will be the capital of the Olympic games in 2014.

Welcome, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you. I, first of all, was most grateful for the dinner that you gave last night. Secondly, thank you very much for providing fantastic entertainment. I'm only happy that our press corps didn't try—see me trying to dance the dance that I was asked to do. [*Laughter*]

President Putin. We were able to see that you are a brilliant dancer. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Yes, well, thank you very much. We'll leave it at that, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

I do want to—you know, it's going to be a very interesting meeting. This is the final meeting that we will have as Presidents of our respective countries. We have met a lot over the past years, and I've come to, you know, respect you. I respect the fact that you love your country. You've been a strong leader. You're not afraid to tell me what's on your mind. And when it's all said and done, we can shake hands.

And so I thank you very much for your wonderful hospitality here. Thank you, sir. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. at the Bocharov Ruchei. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks During a Meeting With President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia in Sochi

April 6, 2008

President-elect Medvedev. Good afternoon, Mr. President. I'm happy to meet you again. And I would like to once again thank

you for warm congratulations on my election——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President-elect Medvedev. ——as President of the Russian Federation.

President Putin and you, over these last 8 years, did a lot to advance Russian-U.S. relationship. And the relationship between Russia and the United States is a key factor of international security. When I officially assume my duties, I would like to do my best to keep up——

President Bush. And thank you.

President-elect Medvedev. ——that direction that—our relationship, so there will be constructive engagement between us.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you. Look, it seems like there's a lot of interest in you, Mr. President-elect. You've attracted a lot of cameras.

President-elect Medvedev. Surprise, surprise. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Yes. But I thank you for your kind words. Thank you for meeting with me and my delegation. And I'm looking forward to getting to know you, so we'll be able to work through common problems and find common opportunities.

Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the President's Office at the Bocharov Ruchei. President-elect Medvedev referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. President-elect Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Sochi

April 6, 2008

President Putin. Good afternoon, dear ladies and gentlemen. First and foremost, I would like to thank the President of the United States, Mr. Bush, for accepting the invitation to meet here in Sochi in order to, sort of, draw the bottom line of the 8 years of our parallel terms in office. And he will probably agree with me, the result has been positive on the whole.

Since our first meeting in Ljubljana back in 2001, we have had an open and sincere relationship, and this has allowed us, without any circumventions or conventions, to start discussing the most pressing issues on the international and bilateral agenda. This dialog is not always easy between our two countries. There have been and there remain certain disagreements on a number of issues, but the search of common denominators is going on.

George and I, I have already mentioned, have been able to build our agenda in a way that would prevent our disagreements on one set of issues from negatively influencing the state of play in other areas where we do have progress and where we are converging our positions. This has strengthened the entire architecture of the U.S.-Russian relationship.

In preparing for this meeting and in the course of this meeting, we have taken stock of major issues on the U.S.-Russian agenda, and here in Sochi, we have adopted a declaration on strategic framework. Of course, it does not provide any breakthrough solutions on a number of issues, but we did not really expect this. It is important that the document sums up the positive achievements of the past few years—these in such areas as security, nonproliferation, including the initiatives that President Bush and I put forward, be it in counterterrorism and building business partnerships.

The declaration also reflects our continuing disagreements, primarily in the political-military field, but we reaffirm our willingness to work towards overcoming those differences. The most important thing is that we are talking about a strategic choice of our nations in favor of developing a constructive relationship that goes beyond the previous model of mutual containment. This declaration is a forward-looking one, and it provides a much more accurate assessment of the level of our partnership than what is normally believed based on stereotypes.

Certainly we have taken advantage of this meeting in order to sincerely, without protocol, discuss the most pressing issues of today, primarily those that influence strategic stability and international security for the long term, which is also very important.

I will not conceal that on a number of the most—one of the most difficult issues was and remains the issue of missile defense in

Europe. This is not about language; this is not about diplomatic phrasing or wording; this is about the substance of the issue. I would like to be very clear on this: Our fundamental attitude to the American plans have not changed. However, certain progress is obvious. Our concerns have been heard by the United States. In March at the 2-plus-2 meeting, and earlier today in my conversation with President Bush, we have been offered a set of confidence building and transparency measures in the field of missile defense, and we can feel that the President of the United States takes a very serious approach here and is sincerely willing to resolve this problem.

We do support this approach, and certainly, in principle, adequate measures of confidence building and transparency can be found. They can be important and useful in addressing this kind of issues. Thus, we now have room for cooperation; we are ready for such interaction. As far as the concrete substance of the U.S. proposals, it is too early to speak about it at this point. It is up to the experts to discuss the technical details of these proposals, and it is up to them to make any final conclusions. And the alternative that we offered last year is still relevant. We hope that it will be an issue for discussion in the future.

As far as strategic offensive weapons are concerned, we do have certain differences, still, in our basic approaches. And of course, both Russia and the United States are in favor of the continuation of a process of nuclear disarmament, and we have found some common ground here.

Last year in Kennebunkport, Mr. Bush and I agreed to start work on a new agreement that would replace the START Treaty, which will expire in 2009. We agreed that it would be necessary to maintain all the useful and necessary parts of the START Treaty. We're going to continue working on this. Our concerns are clear to both sides, in such fields as the development of state-of-the-art technology. And I hope that experts will be able to find some agreement here as well.

We also discussed the CFE Treaty. We discussed the enlargement policy of NATO. We spoke very frankly, in a very substantive fashion. And overall, I am satisfied that our partners are listening to us quite attentively, and I hope that here, as well, we are going to reach some true understanding. Of course, the Sochi declaration had to reflect our cooperation.

In business, we reaffirmed our mutual willingness to ensure Russia's early accession to the WTO on commercially viable terms and commercially justified terms that would not undermine Russia's economic interests. We hope that the United States this year will make Russia exempt from the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and we hope that the United States will establish permanent normal trade relations with Russia. We have also reaffirmed our willingness to continue our business-to-business cooperation. Another relevant issue is the work on a new incremental agreement on the encouragement and mutual protection of investment.

Another important area of our cooperation is energy. Here we do have certain good progress. We hope that our energy dialog will carry on, and we hope that it will involve major projects that would be in line with the interests of both countries.

This is my last meeting with President Bush in my current capacity, and I would like to mention here that I have always found it rewarding and interesting to deal with the U.S. President. I have always appreciated his honesty and his openness, his willingness to listen to his counterpart. And this is precious. We have been motivated by our sincere willingness to strengthen our partnership and to strengthen mutual understanding between our two nations. We have sought to find new horizons for our cooperation. And I'm grateful to George for the achievement that we can register, and this achievement is very much due to him and his support.

President Bush. [*Inaudible*]—Vladimir, thanks for your gracious invitation. This is the very room where you served an unbelievably good dinner last night, with fabulous entertainments. Thank you for your hospitality. Laura and I are thrilled to be with you. And also, thank you for the briefing on the winter Olympics. I'm sure the people in this area are really excited about the fact that you've been awarded the winter Olympics. I congratulate you and wish you all the very best.

And maybe you'll invite me to come as your guest, who knows.

We spent a lot of time in our relationship trying to get rid of the cold war. It's over; it ended. And the fundamental question in this relationship is, could we work together to put the cold war in the past? And I fully recognize there are people in America and Russia that think the cold war still exists. And sometimes that makes relations difficult. But it's very important for leaders to think strategically and not get stuck in the past and be willing to advance agendas.

And so we've worked very hard over the past years to find areas where we can work together and find ways to be agreeable when we disagree. And I think we've done a pretty good job of it. And I want to thank you for your openness as well. It's been a remarkable relationship.

Today the signing of this strategic framework declaration really does show the breadth and the depth of our cooperation. It shows where we differ, as Vladimir mentioned, but it shows that when you work hard, you can find areas where you can figure out how to cooperate. The document speaks of the respect of rule of law, international law, human rights, tolerance of diversity, political freedom, and a free market approach to economic policy and practices.

One of the areas where we've agreed to work together is in missile defense. And obviously, as Vladimir mentioned, this an area where we've got more work to do to convince the Russian side that the system is not aimed at Russia. As the agreement mentioned, we agree today that the United States and Russia want to create a system for responding to potential missile threats, in which Russia and the United States and Europe will participate as equal partners.

This is a powerful and important strategic vision. It's the vision that Vladimir Putin first articulated in Kennebunkport, Maine. For those of you there, you might remember the moment. And this is what we're building on. We're taking the vision that we discussed in Kennebunkport, and now we're putting it in a document form to help not only this administration but future American administrations work with future Russian administrations on this very important issue.

To help counter those threats, the United States is working with the Czech Republic and Poland. And as the President has done consistently, he expressed his concerns about those relationships. There's no doubt where he stands. That's why I like him. You don't have to guess. And he is concerned about it. Yet Russia appreciates the confidence building and transparency measures that we have proposed and declared that if agreed and implemented, such measures will be important and useful in ensuring [assuaging] * Russia concerns.

He's got doubts about whether or not these systems are aimed at him. My view is, is that the more open we are, the more transparent we are, the more we share technological information, the more likely it will be that people throughout the system understand that this is an opportunity to deal with the threats of the 21st century, such as a launch from the Middle East or elsewhere. And the document shows areas where we agree and where we disagree but where we can work together in the future. And I appreciate that very much.

We're talk—we're working together to stop the spread of dangerous weapons, and I appreciate the fact that we're implementing the Bratislava Nuclear Security Initiative, which is an important initiative. We continue to work together to meet the threat of nuclear terrorism, including through the Global Initiative To Combat Nuclear Terrorism. It's an important initiative in which the Russians and the United States have worked cooperatively and have taken the lead.

We talked about Iran. As I told Vladimir, that in the States, when asked about this at the press conferences, I've always told people how much I appreciate his leadership on the Iranian issue. After all, Russia went to the Iranians and said, "You should have civilian nuclear power." I agree. He then went on to say, "And we'll provide the fuel for you; therefore, there's no need for you to enrich." And it's your leadership on this issue, Mr. President, that's very important in making sure that the regime honors the international commitments that we expect it to.

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* White House correction.

We briefly touched about the six-party talks with North Korea, the need for us to work together to help that nation move forward.

We talked about fighting terror. The United States has suffered terrorist attacks on its soil, as have Russia. And I will tell you, there's been no firmer person in the world who understands the threat of radicalism and the capacity of these radicals and extremists to murder the innocent people. I remember full well when that happened on your soil. I remember our discussions right thereafter.

And I want to thank you for working hard to deal with terrorists and terrorist finance and to share intelligence to protect our people. That's our most important job, and we've improved our relations along these fronts.

We did talk about—Vladimir did talk about economic cooperation. I support Russia's efforts to join the WTO. I support Russia's efforts to join the OECD. I think we ought to get rid of Jackson-Vanik. I think it's time to move this relationship in a new light. And I look forward to reminding Congress that it's in our interest to do such.

And so we had a—this is a good agreement and a good understanding. And, Mr. President, this is our last meeting as Presidents and—it won't be our last meeting as people, but it will be our last meeting as Presidents of our country. And it's a little bit nostalgic. It's a moment where it just proves life moves on. And I want to thank you for introducing me to the new President. We had a good meeting, and I appreciate you providing the opportunity for us to meet. And I look forward to working with him throughout the rest of my term.

In the meantime, thanks very much for your hospitality and your friendship and for giving me a chance to have yet another press conference with you. [*Laughter*]

Moderator. Dear colleagues, two questions from each side. The first question will be asked by our guests, the United States.

Russian Foreign Policy/President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia

Q. President Putin, President Bush has expressed some confusion about who's going to run Russia's foreign policy when you step down and become Prime Minister. And he wondered who was going to represent Russia at the G–8. Who is in charge? And will you represent Russia at the G–8?

And, Mr. President, 7 years ago, you said that you looked into Mr. Putin's soul and that you found him to be trustworthy.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. You met today with his successor. Did you have a similar experience, and what was your take?

President Bush. I did find him to be trustworthy, and he was trustworthy.

Q. No, I mean his successor.

President Bush. No, I know. I'm just setting it up. [*Laughter*] He's going to go first, though.

President Putin. Regarding foreign policy of the Russian Federation, in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, foreign policy is determined by the President. And the newly elected President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev, will represent Russia at the most important international fora, including the G–8 summit.

Once again, I would like to emphasize that over the past years, as head of the administration, the President of Russian Federation, first Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, and member of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Mr. Medvedev has been one of the coauthors of the Russian foreign policy. He is in the course of—he's quite knowledgeable about all the current affairs and our strategic plans. Therefore, this will be a reliable partner, a professional partner, who will be ready for constructive dialog, with priority given to Russia's national interest, of course.

I don't know if there's anything I can add to what I've just said. Now, as far as your humble servant, myself, if I become Prime Minister, the Prime Minister will have many other issues and problems on his agenda. Those relate mostly to the state of the economy and various social policy issues. And those are issues that the rank and file citizen in any country is concerned with, including in the Russian Federation. And I intend to focus my intention—my attention and my efforts at addressing precisely these tasks.

President Bush. My comments about Vladimir Putin were aimed to say that I

found him to be the kind of person—I thought he'd be the kind of person who would tell me what's on his mind. A lot of times in politics you have people look you in the eye and tell you what's not on their mind. He looks you in the eye and tells you what's on his mind. He's been very truthful. And that's—to me, that's the only way you can find common ground and to—be able to deal in a way that you don't let your disputes interrupt your relationships.

And, you know, I just met the man for about 20 minutes, the President-elect, and it seemed—he seemed like a straightforward fellow, somebody who would tell you what's on his mind. But he is not the President. This man is the President. And so our conversation was—he was very respectful of the fact that he is waiting his time until he gets duly sworn in as President of the Russian Federation, and then he'll act as the President.

And so my first impressions are very positive—a smart fellow. You know, I got to see him at Crawford once before, and then he came to the White House, I think, with Vladimir and then came on his own one time. But we never really had a full discussion. And I just repeat to you: From my observation, he understands there's a certain protocol, and that he is taking his time; he's studying; he's preparing to assume office. But he is not going to act like a President nor assume Presidential duties until he gets to be the President.

And so you can write down, I was impressed and looking forward to working with him.

Missile Defense System

Q. My first question is to Mr. Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich. We can see from the declaration what you say about missile defense; the concerns are still there. Issues relating to the third site in Russia are still on the agenda.

And my question to Mr. Bush—you talk about transparency. Will you be able to convince your colleagues in Poland and the Czech Republic to be as transparent as you are going to be in missile defense issues?

President Putin. True, we have not resolved all the problems relating to missile defense and the third site in Europe. However, I have already mentioned, before and today, we have seen once again that our U.S. partners not only understand our concerns but are sincerely trying to overcome our concerns. And another important observation is that I do have certain cautious optimism with regard to mutual agreements. I believe that this is possible. But the devil is in the details, and it is important here that our experts could work at the expert level. It is important for them to agree on the concrete confidence-building measures, and they should see how those measures will be implemented in practical terms.

And the third issue mentioned by President Bush—he said that we should work together on these systems. It would be desirable. I believe that this is the most important thing, if, at the expert level and then at the political level, we are able to start cooperation on a global missile defense system, as we are now talking about—[*inaudible*]—missile defense in Europe. If we manage to achieve this kind of level of cooperation on a global missile defense system, this will be the best kind of result for all our proceeding efforts.

President Bush. Precisely what he said is true. And that is, is that if we can, first of all, earn enough trust to be able to cooperate regionally and then globally, that's in our interest, because one of the concerns from the Russian side, a clear concern, is that if they believe the system is aimed at them, they're going to obviously do something about it. They'll spend money to avoid the system.

And I view this as defensive, not offense. And obviously we've got a lot of work to do to convince the experts that the system is not aimed at Russia. It's really to help deal with the threats that we all are going to face. And therefore, the vision about having a global system is something I strongly support, where we're working cooperatively together. Look, there's a lot of—we got a lot of way to go.

And as to your question about the Czech Republic and Poland, it's important for the leaders in those countries—and I've discussed the issue with them—to understand that Russia is not an enemy; Russia is somebody with whom we need to work. And we'll work through the differences there as well.

Transparency is going to require more than just a briefing. Transparency is going to require true openness in a system.

I have no problem with that. I have no problem sharing technologies and information to make sure that all people understand this system is designed to deal with multiple—I mean, single- or dual-launch regimes that could try to hold us hostage. This system is not designed to deal with Russia's capacity to launch multiple rockets.

Now, we got work to do, but we've come a long way since our first discussions. And this document really does express a vision that will make it better for America and Russia when—to work together along these lines. And so, yes, I thank you for your question.

Russia-U.S. Relations/Missile Defense System/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, your joint statement on missile defense is still far short of a deal for Russian support or even acquiescence on this project. Isn't this just a matter of kicking the can down the road, in the twilight of both of your terms, to a new U.S. administration that may or may not even support it?

And, President Putin, what would it take for you to be convinced that such a system would not be a threat to Russian security? And how would Russia respond if the U.S. went ahead with this anyway, as well as bringing Ukraine and Georgia into NATO?

President Bush. I think I just explained how far we have come on this issue. This is a concept that I talked to Vladimir about a while ago, and we have come a long way. Read the document, and read what it says. It clearly talks about a strategic relationship. It talks about the need for transparency and confidence-building measures. It is a really good opportunity to put a framework in place for our nations to work together.

Now, you can cynically say, it's kicking the can down the road. I don't appreciate that, because this is an important part of my belief that it's necessary to protect ourselves. And I have worked—reached out to Vladimir Putin. I knew this was of concern to him, and I have used my relationship with him to try to get something in place that causes Russia to be comfortable with it.

Is it going to happen immediately? No, it's not going to happen immediately. But is this a good opportunity to work together? You bet it is—for the common good. And so I feel comfortable with it, and I think it is—you know, I happen to believe it is a significant breakthrough, simply because I've been very much involved with this issue and know how far it's come.

President Putin. What could convince Russia that this system is not aimed against our nation? I would like to point out several elements here. First, the best thing to do is to work jointly on a global missile defense, with an equal, democratic-style access to managing such a system. This is what George was just talking about when he said that, at the technological level, certain exchanges made it possible—information exchange may be possible. We can work jointly if we launch such joint work with equal democratic access to managing the system. This will be the best guarantee of the security of all.

If we fail to do it at this point, then we will insist that the system, the transparency that we talk about, verification matters, could be objective and could work on—could function on an ongoing basis, on a permanent basis, with the help of experts that should be present at those sites on a permanent basis. This is the answer to the first part of your question.

As far as NATO enlargement is concerned, we talked about it at length earlier today. I reaffirmed Russia's position on this count. I believe that in order to improve relations with Russia, it is necessary not to pull the former Soviet republics into political/military blocs but to develop relations with Russia itself. And then the actions of the bloc, of this or that issue, in a few years will not be perceived so acutely in this country, as is the case today.

As far as enlargement is concerned, technical enlargement of NATO, I believe that this is a policy which is in conformity with a former, old logic, when Russia was perceived as an adversary, which is no longer the case today. As Churchill said, "If you can't change the subject, it is a sign of radicalism."

Global Security/Russia-U.S. Relations/ President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia

Q. My question is—first to both Presidents—you mentioned that yesterday and today you summed up the 8 years of your cooperation. I would like to ask you, if you assess your work, have there been more pluses or minuses? And please tell me, what have you achieved, and what concrete things will be bequeathed to your successors? Do you think the world has become a safer and more secure place? And how has the U.S.-Russian relationship influenced world politics?

And my question to the United States now—to the President of the United States now—you have met President-elect today—Dmitry Medvedev. You talked about the impression you have of him. I would like to ask you, did you discuss the schedule of your further exchanges with him in the course of this year—for the remaining part of this year?

President Putin. Okay, I will start answering. Has it become better, or has it become worse? We always want to have more of a good thing, and we shouldn't forget that the—as we say, the better is the worst enemy of the good.

Let us remember the world on the brink of a nuclear disaster during the Caribbean crisis, and now let us look at the U.S.-Russia relationship today. A crisis like the Cuban crisis would not be possible now; it would be unthinkable. I agree with George when he said that Russia and the United States no longer consider each other as enemies. At a minimum, they look at each other as partners, and I believe this is very important.

Of course, a lot of outstanding issues remain. It is true that we do have disagreements on some sensitive areas of our cooperation, but at the same time, we do have enough strength to search for solutions. And as our meeting today has shown, we are capable of achieving positive results—that is, on the whole—in counterterrorism, in fighting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology, of fighting the drug threat. All of these create a reliable platform for cooperation, not only between Russia and the United States but a platform that contributes to ensuring international security.

If we mention on top of that our economic cooperation, we can state that in the past 8 years, we have been able to improve the relations between our two countries and in the world as a whole.

President Bush. Yes, I agree with that answer. And secondly, I spent—I told President-elect that I would see him in Japan at the G–8, and that's the only scheduling matters that we discussed. And I'm going to finish out my term—my time with Vladimir, and then I'll turn my attention to the President when he gets to be the President. But the first time I suspect we'll meet will be in the scheduled meeting in Japan.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:07 p.m. in the Press Center at the Bocharov Ruchei. President Putin and some reporters spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Death of Charlton Heston

April 6, 2008

Laura and I are saddened by the death of our friend Charlton Heston. Charlton Heston was one of the most successful actors in movie history and a strong advocate for liberty.

Widely acclaimed for his long, award-winning film career, he also had a profound impact off the screen. He served his country during World War II, marched in the civil rights movement, led a labor union, and vigorously defended Americans' second amendment rights. He was a man of character and integrity, with a big heart. For all these reasons, in 2003, I was proud to award Charlton Heston the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nations's highest civil honor.

Our prayers are with his wife, Lydia, and the entire Heston family during this difficult time.

Remarks on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement

April 7, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for joining me here today. Madam Ambassador, thank you for coming. I appreciate those who support free trade and fair trade for joining us on this important occasion.

In a few minutes, I will sign a letter to Congress that will transmit legislation implementing the United States free trade agreement with Colombia. This agreement will advance America's national security interests in a critical region. It will strengthen a courageous ally in our hemisphere. It will help America's economy and America's workers at a vital time. It deserves bipartisan support from the United States Congress.

During the 16 months since the Colombia free trade agreement was signed, my administration has worked closely with the Congress to seek a bipartisan path for considering the agreement. We held more than 400 consultations and meetings and calls. We led trips to Colombia for more than 50 Members of the Congress. We've worked closely with congressional leaders from both parties, including the Speaker, Leader Hoyer, and Chairman Rangel, Minority Leader Boehner, Ranking Member McCrery, and Senators Baucus and Grassley.

On May 10th last year, my administration and congressional leaders concluded a bipartisan agreement that provided a clear path for advancing free trade agreements, including the agreement with Colombia. As part of that agreement, we included the strongest labor and environmental provisions of any free trade agreement in history. Those provisions were negotiated with and agreed by, by the leadership of Congress—like the Democratic leadership in Congress.

For the last 16 months, we've worked with congressional leaders to set a schedule for the consideration of the Colombian free trade agreement. While we'll continue to work closely with Congress, the need for this agreement is too urgent, the stakes for our national security are too high to allow this year to end without a vote. By statute, Congress has 90 legislative days to complete action once I transmit a bill implementing this agreement. Waiting any longer to send up the legislation would run the risk of Congress adjourning without the agreement ever getting voted on.

Transmitting the agreement is neither the beginning nor the end of our cooperative efforts but, instead, an important milestone. My administration is eager to work with members from both parties to make sure the vote is a positive one. Congress needs to move forward with the Colombian agreement, and they need to approve it as quickly as possible.

Approving this agreement is urgent for our national security reasons. Colombia is one of our strongest allies in the Western Hemisphere. They are led by a very strong and courageous leader, President Uribe. He's taken courageous stands to defend our shared democratic values. He's been a strong and capable partner in fighting drugs and crime and terror. And he's delivering results. The Colombian Government reports that since 2002, kidnapings, terrorist attacks, and murders are all down substantially, as is violence against union members.

Despite this progress, Colombia remains under intense pressure in the region. It faces a continuing assault from the terrorist network known as FARC, which has seized hostages and murdered innocent folks, including Americans, in an attempt to overthrow Colombia's democracy. Colombia also faces a hostile and anti-American regime in Venezuela, which has met with FARC terrorist leaders and deployed troops to the Colombian border as a means of intimidating the Colombian Government and its people.

President Uribe has stood strong against these threats. And he has done so with the assurance of America's support, because his fight against tyranny and terror is a fight that we share. President Uribe has told Members of Congress, as me—and me as well, that approving the free trade agreement is the best way for America to demonstrate our support for Colombia. People throughout the hemisphere are watching to see what the United States will do. If Congress fails to approve this agreement, it would not only abandon a brave ally, it would send a signal throughout the region that America cannot

be counted on to support its friends. As Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said, "If the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve."

Approving the free trade agreement will also strengthen our economy. Today, almost all of Colombian's exports enter the United States duty free, while American products exported to Colombia face tariffs of up to 35 percent for non-agricultural goods and much higher for many agricultural products. In other words, the current situation is one-sided. Our markets are open to Colombian products, but barriers exist that make it harder to sell American products in Colombia. I think it makes sense to remedy this situation. I think it makes sense for Americans' goods and services to be treated just like Colombia's goods and services are treated. And so it's time to level the playing field.

As soon as it's implemented, the agreement I'm sending Congress will eliminate tariffs on more than 80 percent of American exports of industrial and consumer goods. Many products in key American sectors, such as agriculture and construction equipment, aircraft and auto parts, and medical and scientific equipment, will enter Colombia duty free. If you're an American farmer, it's in your interest that this agreement get passed. After all, farm exports like high-quality beef, cotton, wheat, soybeans, and fruit will enter duty free. And in time, this agreement will eliminate tariffs on all of America's exports to Colombia.

Level the playing field for American exporters is especially important during this time of economic uncertainty. Last year, exports accounted for more than 40 percent of America's total economic growth. With the economy slowing recently, we should be doing everything we can to open up new opportunities for growth. More than 9,000 American companies, most of them small and midsized businesses, export to Colombia. Approving this agreement will help them increase their sales and grow their businesses and create high-paying jobs.

The economic effects of expanding trade in goods and services are overwhelmingly positive, but trade can also have a negative impact for some of our citizens. In those cases, government has a responsibility to help workers obtain the skills they need to successfully reenter the workforce. My administration is actively engaged in discussions on legislation to improve and reauthorize trade adjustment assistance program. We're committed to advancing the discussions as quickly as possible. I look forward to completing an agreement on trade adjustment that draws on many of the good ideas contained in bills introduced in the House and the Senate. I look forward to signing a good bipartisan piece of legislation.

In discussions about the Colombia free trade agreement, some Members of Congress have raised concerns about the conditions in Colombia. President Uribe has addressed those issues. He's addressed violence by demobilizing tens of thousands of paramilitary figures and fighters. He's addressed attacks on trade unionists by stepping up funding for prosecutions, establishing an independent prosecutors unit, and creating a special program that protects labor activists. He's made clear that the economic benefits the agreement brings to Colombia would strengthen the fight against drugs and terror by creating a more hopeful alternative for the people of Colombia.

If this isn't enough to earn America's support, what is? President Uribe has done everything asked of him. While Colombia still works to improve, the progress is undeniable, and it is worthy of our support.

There's a clear model for Members of Congress to follow as they move forward with this agreement. Just last year, Congress considered a trade agreement with Peru that was almost identical to this one. The only difference between them is that the Colombian Government has an even greater economic potential because Colombia is a larger market and even greater national security importance because of Colombia's strategic location. Congress passed the Peru agreement with strong bipartisan support and should do the same with this agreement with Colombia.

The stakes are high in South America. By acting at this critical moment, we can show a watching world that America will honor its commitments. We can provide a powerful rebuke to dictators and demagogues in our

backyard. We can expand U.S. exports and export-related jobs. We can show millions across the hemisphere that democracy and free enterprise lead to a better life. Congress's path is clear: Members should have a healthy debate, hold a timely vote, and send the bill implementing the Colombia free trade agreement to my desk so I can sign it into law.

And now I would like members of my Cabinet who are here today to join me for the signing of the letter.

[*At this point, the President signed the letter.*]

Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Colombia's Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Small and Midsize Business Owners

April 7, 2008

I just had a fascinating discussion with fellow citizens who happen to be small-business owners, people who run small businesses. And I'm talking about a variety of small business. We got a meatpacker, an apple processor; we've got a grinder, a large equipment manufacturer, education man. I mean, we got a lot of folks from different backgrounds and different States, all of whom were talking about the effects of the progrowth economic package that was passed by the Congress and how that package is causing them to make capital investments that they might not have made in the year 2008.

And that's important, because in times of economic uncertainty, we want people making investment, so when a person buys an apple press, somebody is going to have to manufacture that press. When somebody manufactures that press, it means there's more likely to be work and income.

And so I'm very pleased to have heard from the small-business owners here that the package is going to cause them to make decisions that will help us recover out of this economic slowdown.

Now, having said that, they did share concerns with me. And I understand those concerns, and I feel the same way. One, there's concern about the high price of fuel. I mean, people have to make a living, and they're driving their cars and their trucks, and it's—fuel is hurting people. And so I fully understand that not only are people worried about their homes, they're worried about the cost of fuel—and one of the reasons why we got to keep taxes low.

As a matter of fact, one of the things that's going to happen with this progrowth package is that not only is it going to affect small businesses like it's affected folks here, but 130 million families are going to get some money, their own money. And of course, the purpose of that is to help boost consumption. We're in a rough time right now. I'm confident we're going to come out of it. And when we do, we're going to be a stronger and better country.

Congress, of course, is contemplating different measures. And my only advice to them is, one, make sure you give the progrowth package that was passed overwhelmingly a chance to work. Let's see what the effects are. Secondly, anything they do should not hurt the economy. And thirdly, I—you know, I think we ought to—in terms of progrowth packages—I think we ought to, again I repeat, give this one a chance to kick in. The experts tell me that this progrowth package is going to add some—you know, a percent, percent-and-a-half to the economy here in the latter part of this year. If that's the case, it's going to be an important part of recovering.

Anyway, long and short of it is, I thank you all for coming—very useful meeting. I thank you for being entrepreneurs. Thank you for working hard to provide for your families. Thank you for looking after your employees the way you do. Appreciate the fact that you're making investments in the year 2008 which will get this economy going.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2007 NCAA Football Champion Louisiana State University Tigers

April 7, 2008

Good to see you all. Welcome. Go Tigers! Sit down. Please sit down. Thanks for coming.

So I met some of these men in 2004; they feel pretty comfortable they were going to be back here. Some of them weren't so sure I was going to be back here. [*Laughter*] It's good to welcome you back. Proud you're here. Nothing like being called national champs. LSU has the honor of being the first school to win two BCS titles. This year there is no split.

I appreciate Les Miles and Kathy. Thanks for coming. Proud to have met you, coach. It was a great honor for me to have called you after you won that day. And I know you told the team that at least one guy called to congratulate. [*Laughter*] I welcome the LSU administrators, personnel, coaches, trainers, locker room folks, and most of all, the players.

I want to welcome Members of Congress—Jim McCrery. Jim, good to see you, sir. And Scott and Clark, good to see you boys. Rodney Alexander—Congressman, good to see you. Charles Boustany—I'm glad to see you, Charles. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you taking time to be here.

Out of the State government is State Treasurer John Kennedy. John, thank you for coming. Appreciate you coming up for that. Glad you brought Preston. Is Breaux here? No, he—[*laughter*]—he's working—[*laughter*]—which is a major upset—no. [*Laughter*]

Winning requires very strong leadership; that's what it takes. After 8 years of welcoming national champs, there's always one common denominator, and that is, it requires a strong leader to motivate people toward a common goal. And that's exactly what you have in Coach Les Miles. Coach Miles's 3 years has helped the team compile a 34 and 6 record. And this is a guy who's not afraid to take risks. He tried two fake field goals, fake punt, went for fourth down—went for first down on fourth down 15 times. Made it nearly every time. Of course, he had the players who helped him take that risk.

He also had to deal with some delicate situations away from the field, like inaccurate press stories. [*Laughter*] Coach, let me just say, I know the feeling. [*Laughter*]

This is Coach Miles's first time celebrating here at the White House. And a lot of folks are going to remember it, because it's the first time he's been seen in public without a hat on. [*Laughter*]

LSU fans had an amazing season. They—first of all, in the season, the number one ranking changed hands six times. Of course, LSU was number one on the day it counted; that's why they're here. The—you had to overcome adversity to get here. You played as a team, and you won some dramatic football games. And when you lost, it was pretty dramatic too. You beat Florida in a comeback with the largest crowd ever to watch a game at Tiger Stadium. Two weeks later, you rallied to beat Auburn on a touchdown scored with 1 second left on the clock.

After you lost to Arkansas, a lot of folks counted you out, but you held a team meeting and decided you had something to play for. In other words, you didn't let adversity affect you. You said, "We're going to do something about it." And then you beat Tennessee to win the SEC Championship, and you went from number seven to number two. And you went straight to the national title game, which didn't start off so good. And yet you had 31 unanswered points, like a true champion team, to win 38 to 24. And you're here at the White House representing LSU University as the national champs, and we congratulate you.

Being raised in Texas and growing up in Texas, I've got a lot of friends in Louisiana. And you inspired people across the State. I thought Matt—quarterback Matt Flynn put it best. He said, "You can't dream it any better than that." And that's what a lot of people were saying around your State.

You earned your place in the record books. You scored the most points in school history. And the seniors will go down as LSU's winningest class. No other senior class has had a better record than those who—[*applause*].

I welcome defensive tackle Glenn Dorsey, and so did the team when he turned down—when he decided not to turn pro last year.

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.

At the time, Ramadi was in the clutches of Al Qaida terrorists and insurgents. Together the SEALs and the Army 1st Battalion of the 506 Infantry Regiment took the offense against the enemy. The SEALs carried out a broad range of special operations, including providing sniper cover in tough urban conditions and conducting raids against terrorists and insurgents. Overall, Mike's platoon came under enemy attack during 75 percent of their missions. And in most of these engagements, Mike was out front defending his brothers.

In May 2006, Mike and another SEAL ran into the line of fire to save a wounded teammate. With bullets flying all around them, Mike returned fire with one hand while helping pull the injured man to safety with the other. In a dream about the incident months later, the wounded SEAL envisioned Mike coming to the rescue with wings on his shoulders.

On Saint Michael's Day, September 29, 2006, Michael Monsoor would make the ultimate sacrifice. Mike and two teammates had taken position on the outcropping of a rooftop when an insurgent grenade bounced off Mike's chest and landed on the roof. Mike had a clear chance to escape, but he realized that the other two SEALs did not. In that terrible moment, he had two options: to save himself or to save his friends. For Mike, this was no choice at all. He threw himself onto the grenade, and absorbed the blast with his body. One of the survivors puts it this way: "Mikey looked death in the face that day and said, 'You cannot take my brothers. I will go in their stead.' "

Perhaps the greatest tributes to Mike's life is the way different service members all across the world responded to his death. Army soldiers in Ramadi hosted a memorial service for the valiant man who had fought beside them. Iraqi Army scouts, whom Mike helped train, lowered their flag and sent it to his parents. Nearly every SEAL on the west coast turned out for Mike's funeral in California. As the SEALs filed past the casket, they removed their golden tridents from their uniforms, pressed them onto the walls of the coffin. The procession went on nearly half an hour. And when it was all over, the simple wooden coffin had become a gold-plated memorial to a hero who will never be forgotten.

For his valor, Michael Monsoor becomes the fourth Medal of Honor recipient in the war on terror. Like the three men who came before him, Mike left us far too early. But time will not diminish his legacy. We see his legacy in the SEALs whose lives he saved. We see his legacy in the city of Ramadi, which has gone from one of the most dangerous places in Iraq to one of the most safest. We see his legacy in the family that stands before us filled with grief, but also with everlasting pride.

Mr. and Mrs. Monsoor: America owes you a debt that can never be repaid. This Nation will always cherish the memory of your son. We will not let his life go in vain. And this Nation will always honor the sacrifice he made. May God comfort you. May God bless America.

Come on up. And now George and Sally Monsoor will be here—a Military Aide will read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. Robert F. Burt, USN, Chief of Navy Chaplains. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Col. Gina C. Humble, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Afghanistan Provincial Governors

April 8, 2008

I've just had a fascinating opportunity to discuss Afghanistan with eight Governors. I started off the meeting by telling them I was a Governor once. And I—and they were then telling me their stories, their concerns. First of all, they universally thanked the American people for standing with them as this new democracy takes hold.

Secondly, there's concerns about unemployment, about economic development. Some Provinces are quiet. And the Governor wondered whether or not, because it's quiet, people remember the people in the Province exist. Other Provinces have got some difficult security problems.

They shared with me very candidly their concerns about different types of operations,

their desire to see to it that the police get better training and better equipment.

And I shared with them our desire to help them succeed, because one of the things that really matters in democracy is that local governance is strong and good and honest, that the people are being able to see the benefits of democracy. And it's hard work in Afghanistan, but I told these leaders I think it's necessary work.

And I want to thank them for coming to America. They've got a very busy schedule. They've been to several States. And I think it's going to be very important for our fellow citizens to meet these good men and to understand the problems they face, and their desire to have their families live in peace, and young girls go to school, and be people treated with dignity.

So I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for the wonderful gift, and I'm proud you're here.

I'm now going to show them the Oval Office, a shrine to democracy. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Proclamation 8234—National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2008

April 8, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America is blessed to have brave men and women willing to step forward to defend our freedoms and keep us safe. The members of the United States Armed Forces have proudly held fast against determined and ruthless enemies, protected our citizens from harm, and freed millions from oppression. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we pay tribute to the courageous and selfless individuals who were taken captive while serving the cause of peace and securing liberty across the globe.

America's former prisoners of war set an example of vision, valor, and unshakeable love of country that inspires our citizens. Through unspeakable conditions, they upheld their oath to defend America with honor and dignity. Their extraordinary spirit, patriotism, and resolve helped defeat tyranny and build democratic and just societies, enabling decent men and women around the world to live in freedom.

Our Nation is extremely proud of our former prisoners of war, and we owe them and their families a debt we can never fully repay. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we honor our country's heroes who were prisoners of war, recognize their sacrifice, and express our deepest gratitude to those who helped write a more hopeful chapter in our history.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2008, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in honoring the service and sacrifices of all of America's former prisoners of war. I call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, 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, 8:58 a.m., April 10, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 11.

Message to the Senate Transmitting Amendments to the International Telecommunication Union Constitution and Convention

April 8, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the amendments to the Constitution and Convention of the International Telecommunication Union (Geneva, 1992),

as amended by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) and the Plenipotentiary Conference (Marrakesh, 2002), together with the declarations and reservations by the United States, all as contained in the Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006). I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning the amendments.

The Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006) adopted amendments that, among other things: clarify the functions of certain International Telecommunication Union (ITU) officials and bodies; reduce the frequency of certain ITU conferences; clarify eligibility for re-election to certain ITU positions; enhance oversight of the ITU budget and provide for results-based (as well as cost-based) budget proposals; expand the scale of available contribution levels for Member States and Sector Members; and, clarify the definition of and role of observers participating in ITU proceedings.

Consistent with longstanding practice in the ITU, the United States, in signing the 2006 amendments, made certain declarations and reservations. Subject to those declarations and reservations, I believe the United States should ratify the 2006 amendments to the International Telecommunication Union Constitution and Convention. These amendments will contribute to the ITU's ability to adapt to changes in the global telecommunications sector and, in so doing, serve the needs of the United States Government and United States industry. It is my hope that the Senate will take early action on this matter and give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 8, 2008.

Remarks on Signing the Second Chance Act of 2007

April 9, 2008

The President. Please be seated. Thank you. Please sit down. Thanks for coming. I'm about to sign a piece of legislation that will help give prisoners across America a second chance for a better life. This bill is going to support the caring men and women who help America's prisoners find renewal and hope.

I can't thank the folks who care enough about a fellow citizen to offer their love and compassion. It's through the acts of mercy that compassionate Americans are making the Nation a more hopeful place, and I want to thank you all for joining us today.

And I thank the Members of Congress who have joined us as well: Senator Arlen Specter, ranking member of the Judiciary Committee; Chairman Joe Biden, not of the Judiciary Committee——

Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Thank God. [*Laughter*]

The President. ——but of Foreign Relations; but a key member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Sam Brownback, as well. So we've got three United States Senators here, and I'm honored they are here. Members of the United States Congress—chairman of the House Judiciary, John Conyers, and Ranking Member Lamar Smith, I want to thank you all for coming.

I appreciate very much Danny Davis joining us as well—bill sponsor. I want to thank Jim Sensenbrenner and Bobby Scott and Howard Coble and Chris Cannon—all good Members and all Members who worked hard to get this piece of legislation here in timely fashion.

I thank the Attorney General, Judge Michael Mukasey, for joining us as well. Elaine Chao—thank you for coming, Madam Secretary; Rob Portman, former Director of the OMB; and all the supporters of the Second Chance legislation. Thanks for caring about your country; thanks for working on this piece of legislation.

The country was built on the belief that each human being has limitless potential and worth. Everybody matters. We believe that even those who have struggled with a dark past can find brighter days ahead. One way we act on that belief is by helping former prisoners who've paid for their crimes. We help them build new lives as productive members of our society.

The work of redemption reflects our values. It also reflects our national interests. Each year, approximately 650,000 prisoners

are released from jail. Unfortunately, an estimated two-thirds of them are rearrested within 3 years. The high recidivism rate places a huge financial burden on taxpayers; it deprives our labor force of productive workers; and it deprives families of their daughters and sons and husbands and wives and moms and dads.

Our Government has a responsibility to help prisoners to return as contributing members of their community. But this does not mean that the Government has all the answers. Some of the most important work to help ex-convicts is done outside of Washington, DC, in faith-based communities and community-based groups. It's done on streets and smalltown community centers. It's done in churches and synagogues and temples and mosques.

I like to call the folks who are engaged in this compassionate work members of the armies of compassion. They help addicts and users break the chains of addiction. They help former prisoners find a ride to work and a meal to eat and place to stay. These men and women are answering the call to love their neighbors as they'd like to be loved themselves. And in the process, they're helping prisoners replace anger and suffering and despair with faith and hope and love.

The bill I'm signing today, the Second Chance Act of 2007, will build on work to help prisoners reclaim their lives. In other words, it basically says, we're standing with you, not against you.

First, the act will authorize important parts of the administration's prison reentry initiative. The goal of this initiative is to help America's prisoners by expanding job training and placement services, improving their ability to find transitional housing, and helping newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith-based groups.

The past 3 years, congressional appropriations have supported the work in 20 States through a series of pilot programs awarded to community- and faith-based organizations by the U.S. Department of Labor. The early efforts have fielded promising results. In the first 2 years of the program, more than 12,800 offenders have enrolled in the prisoner reentry program. More than 7,900 have been placed in jobs. Only 18 percent of those enrolled in the program have been arrested again within a year; that's less than half the national average. We like to measure results, and the results of these pilot programs are very encouraging.

With the legislation I'll sign today, Congress has recognized the success of this good policy, and I thank them for their good work. Secondly, act will support the Justice Department's ongoing work to help our Nation's prisoners. This bill will help State and local governments and Indian tribes and nonprofit groups implement programs that will improve the prisoner reentry process.

These programs will provide further—former prisoners with essential services, like housing and medical care. It will help develop prisoner drug treatment programs and support prisoner mentoring initiatives. It will support family counseling and other services to help prisoners reestablish their place in the community.

In both these ways, the Second Chance Act will live up to its name. It will help ensure that where the prisoner's spirit is willing, community's resources are available. It will help our armies of compassion use their healing touch so lost souls can rediscover their dignity and sense of purpose.

I recently went to a program in Baltimore, Maryland, called the Jericho. I met a man there, who has kindly joined us today, named Thomas Boyd. He's 53 years old. He spent more than 20 years of his life using drugs and going back and forth to jail. He remembers the day when his daughter sat down, looked him in the eye, and said, "Daddy, I think it's time for you to start doing something with your life."

He took his daughter's advice. He sought out the Jericho reentry program, which is supported by the reentry initiative. When I visited the program, I tried to remind them that the least shall be first. I also reminded him I was a product of a faith-based program. I quit drinking, and it wasn't because of a government program. It required a little more powerful force than a government program in my case.

And he told me that he appreciates the love and compassion he felt—feels on a regular basis. He's working; he's back with his

family; he's a good guy. And I want to thank you for coming, Thomas.

I want to thank you for coming, Thomas.

Thomas Boyd. Yes, sir, thank you.

The President. There's a lot of other Thomases out there that we're going to help with this bill. And so I thank the Members of Congress for joining us. Thanks for your hard work. I thank the members of my administration who are going to see to it that the bill is implemented properly.

And now it is my honor to sign this important piece of legislation. May God bless the country, and may God bless those who are trying to help. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 1593, approved April 9, was assigned Public Law No. 110–199.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore

April 9, 2008

President Bush. Welcome the Senior Minister from our very close ally, Singapore, back to the Oval Office. Gosh, I think we must have met, seems like a half a dozen, at least, times since I've been the President.

Senior Minister Goh. Yes.

President Bush. And every time I meet with you, I come away with a better understanding of a lot of issues, particularly in your part of the world. I thank you very much for briefing me and sharing your wisdom.

We spent a lot of time talking about the neighborhood. But before I get to a couple of countries in the neighborhood, I do want to say, one, how much I appreciate your firm stance against extremists and radicals who use the tactics of murder and intimidation to advance their ideologies. Singapore is a very strong ally in the war against the extremists.

And I also am so pleased that the trade agreement that we negotiated during our respective times has kicked in. I'm a believer in free and fair trade, as are you, sir, and our FTA with Singapore was a very positive accomplishment for our two countries.

We did spend time talking about the countries in the neighborhood. We spent time on Burma and the need for the military regime there to understand that they shouldn't fear the voices of people. And yet they do. I'm disappointed with the progress made to date there and would urge the military leadership there to open up and respond to the will of the people.

And the other issue is China and its relations with Tibet. We both agree that it would stand the Chinese Government in good stead if they would begin a dialog with the representatives of the Dalai Lama. They'll find—if they ever were to reach out to the Dalai Lama, they'd find him to be a really fine man, a peaceful man, a man who is antiviolence, a man who is not for independence but for the cultural identity of the Tibetans being maintained.

And so I want to thank you, sir. You got good knowledge, and you've had a lot of experience, and you're kind to share it with me.

Senior Minister Goh. Well, thank you very much, President, for welcoming me back to Oval Office. It's a joy coming back here and to see you. I was very interested in developments in the Middle East. And the President briefed me on the developments in Iraq, on concerns which he has over Iran, which is still a very big problem, not just for the U.S. but for the region and for the world.

Then President was interested in developments in Asia, so I was able to add some value to his knowledge—[*laughter*]—on Southeast Asia and on Asia.

On Tibet, I agree with the President that the way forward will be for the Chinese leaders to talk to some representatives of the Dalai Lama. And that is to—if they can—to talk directly to the Dalai Lama. I think that's the only way for them to contain this problem.

On Myanmar, I told the President that while the army is the problem, the army has to be part of the solution. Without the army playing a part in solving problems in Myanmar, there will be no solution. So these are the issues which we discussed.

And of course, I emphasized the importance of keeping the world—having this free

trade regime. The Doha round should be encouraged to move forward. It's moving too slowly, but it should move forward.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Senior Minister Goh. Thank you.

President Bush. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama of Tibet.

Proclamation 8235—National D.A.R.E. Day, 2008

April 9, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For 25 years, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) has given school children across America an opportunity to gain the skills they need to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs, and violence. On National D.A.R.E. Day, we recognize those individuals who teach America's children how to resist peer pressure and live productive, drug-free, and violence-free lives.

Millions of our Nation's young people have learned about the dangerous effects of drug abuse with the help of the D.A.R.E. program. Parents, law enforcement officials, teachers, and counselors are on the front lines of this effort and are sending our kids a clear message that drug use is dangerous and unacceptable. In classrooms across the country, police officers are answering students' tough questions about drugs and crime and encouraging an open line of communication between students and law enforcement.

My Administration is committed to reducing drug use among young people, and we are working to cut the supply of drugs coming into our country and fight demand here at home. Additionally, we are helping spread the message of drug prevention through the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. The Helping America's Youth initiative, led by First Lady Laura Bush, is working with community leaders to address challenges facing young people on a daily basis. These and other efforts are helping to combat the destructive cycle of drug addiction.

All Americans have a responsibility to encourage others to turn away from drug abuse and to make good choices in life. During National D.A.R.E. Day, we renew our commitment to providing our youth the knowledge and encouragement they need to resist the pressures that can lead them to experiment with drugs and violent activities. By working together, we can help our children build lives of purpose and strengthen our communities, one heart and one soul at a time.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 10, 2008, as National D.A.R.E. Day. I urge all young people to make right choices and call upon all Americans to recognize our collective responsibility to combat every form of drug abuse and to support all those who work to help our children avoid drug use and violence.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, 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, 8:58 a.m., April 10, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 11.

Remarks on the War on Terror

April 10, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. Good morning. Fifteen months ago, I announced the surge. And this week, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker gave Congress a detailed report on the results.

The immediate goal of the surge was to bring down the sectarian violence that threatened to overwhelm the Government in Baghdad, restore basic security to Iraqi communities, and drive the terrorists out of their

safe havens. As General Petraeus told Congress, American and Iraqi forces have made significant progress in all these areas. While there is more to be done, sectarian violence is down dramatically. Civilian deaths and military deaths are also down. Many neighborhoods once controlled by Al Qaida have been liberated. And cooperation from Iraqis is stronger than ever, with more tips from residents, more Iraqis joining their security forces, and a growing movement against Al Qaida called the Sons of Iraq.

Improvements in security have helped clear the way for political and economic developments described by Ambassador Crocker. These gains receive less media coverage, but they are vital to Iraq's future. At the local level, businesses are reopening, and Provincial councils are meeting. At the national level, there's much work ahead, but the Iraqi Government has passed a budget and three major benchmark laws. The national Government is sharing oil revenues with the Provinces. And many economic indicators in Iraq, from oil production to inflation, are now pointed in the right direction.

Serious and complex challenges remain in Iraq, from the presence of Al Qaida to the destructive influence of Iran to hard compromises needed for further political progress. Yet with the surge, a major strategic shift has occurred. Fifteen months ago, America and the Iraqi Government were on the defensive. Today, we have the initiative. Fifteen months ago, extremists were sowing sectarian violence. Today, many mainstream Sunni and Shi'a are actively confronting the extremists. Fifteen months ago, Al Qaida had bases in Iraq that it was using to kill our troops and terrorize the Iraqi people. Today, we have put Al Qaida on the defensive in Iraq, and we're now working to deliver a crippling blow. Fifteen months ago, Americans were worried about the prospect of failure in Iraq. Today, thanks to the surge, we've renewed and revived the prospect of success.

With this goal in mind, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker have submitted recommendations on the way forward. After detailed discussions with my national security team, including the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I've accepted these recommendations.

A recommendation likely to receive the most attention is on troop levels. General Petraeus has reported that security conditions have improved enough to withdraw all five surge brigades by the end of July. That means that by July 31st, the number of U.S. combat brigades in Iraq will be down by 25 percent from last year.

Beyond that, General Petraeus says he'll need time to consolidate his forces and assess how this reduced American presence will affect conditions on the ground before making measured recommendations on further reductions. And I've told him he'll have all the time he needs.

Some have suggested that this period of evaluation will be a pause. That's misleading, because none of our operations in Iraq will be on hold. Instead, we will use the months ahead to take advantage of the opportunities created by the surge and continue operations across the board.

All our efforts are aimed at a clear goal: a free Iraq that can protect its people, support itself economically, and take charge of its own political affairs. No one wants to achieve this goal more than the Iraqis themselves. Those who say that the way to encourage further progress is to back off and force the Iraqis to fend for themselves are simply wrong. The Iraqis are a proud people who understand the enormity of the challenges they face and are anxious to meet them. But they know that they still need our help until they can stand by themselves. Our job in the period ahead is to stand with the Iraqi Government as it makes tough choices and makes the transition to responsibility for its own security and its own destiny.

So what will the transition look like? On the security front, thanks to the significant progress General Petraeus reported this week, it is clear that we're on the right track. In the period ahead, we will stay on the offense against the enemy. As we speak, U.S. Special Forces are launching multiple operations every night to capture or kill Al Qaida leaders in Iraq. Coalition and Iraqi forces are also stepping up conventional operations against Al Qaida in northern Iraq, where terrorists have concentrated after being largely pushed from central and western Iraq. And Prime Minister Maliki's Government

launched operations in Basra that make clear a free Iraq will no longer tolerate the lawlessness by Iranian-backed militants.

In the period ahead, we'll also continue to train, equip, and support the Iraqi security forces, continue to transfer security responsibilities to them as Provinces become ready and move over time into an overwatch role. The Iraqi Army and police are increasingly capable and leading the fight to secure their country. As Iraqis assume the primary role in providing security, American forces will increasingly focus on targeted raids against the terrorists and extremists. They will continue training Iraqi forces, and they will be available to help Iraq's security forces if required.

On the economic front, Iraq is moving forward. With Iraq's economy growing, oil revenues on the rise, and its capital investment expanding, our economic role in the country is changing. Iraqis, in their recent budget, would outspend us on reconstruction by more than 10 to 1. And American funding for large-scale reconstruction projects is approaching zero. Our share of Iraq's security costs will drop as well, as Iraqis pay for the vast majority of their own army and police. And that's the way it should be. Ultimately, we expect Iraq to shoulder the full burden of these costs. In the period ahead, Iraq's economy will increasingly move away from American assistance, rely on private investment, and stand on its own.

On the political front, Iraq has seen bottom-up progress, as tribes and other groups in the Provinces who fought terror are now turning to rebuilding local political structures and taking charge of their own affairs. Progress in the Provinces is leading to progress in Baghdad, as Iraqi leaders increasingly act together, they share power, and they forge compromises on behalf of the nation. Upcoming elections will consolidate this progress. They'll provide a way for Iraqis to settle disputes through the political process instead of through violence. Iraqis plan to hold Provincial elections later this year, and these elections will be followed by national elections in 2009.

On the diplomatic front, Iraq will increase its engagement in the world, and the world must increase its engagement with Iraq. To help in this effort, I'm directing Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus to visit Saudi Arabia on their trip back to Iraq. I'm directing our Nation's senior diplomats to meet with the leaders in Jordan, the UAE, and Qatar and Kuwait and Egypt. In each capital, they will brief them on the situation in Iraq and encourage these nations to reopen their Embassies in Baghdad and increase their overall support for Iraq. This will be followed by Secretary Rice's trip to the third Expanded Neighbors Conference in Kuwait City and the second International Compact with Iraq meeting in Stockholm.

A stable, successful, independent Iraq is in the strategic interests of Arab nations. And all who want peace in the Middle East should support a stable, democratic Iraq. And we will urge all nations to increase their support this year.

The regime in Tehran also has a choice to make. It can live in peace with its neighbor, enjoy strong economic and cultural and religious ties, or it can continue to arm and train and fund illegal militant groups which are terrorizing the Iraqi people and turning them against Iran. If Iran makes the right choice, America will encourage a peaceful relationship between Iran and Iraq. If Iran makes the wrong choice, America will act to protect our interests and our troops and our Iraqi partners.

On each of these fronts, security, economic, political, and diplomatic, Iraqis are stepping forward to assume more responsibility for the welfare of their people and the fate of their country. In all these fronts, America will continue to play an increasingly supporting role.

Our work in Iraq will still demand sacrifices from our whole Nation, especially our military, for some time to come. To ease the burden on our troops and their families, I've directed the Secretary of Defense to reduce deployment lengths from 15 months to 12 months for all active Army soldiers deploying to the Central Command area of operations. These changes will be effective for those deploying after August 1st. We'll also ensure that our Army units will have at least a year home for every year in the field. Our Nation

owes a special thanks to the soldiers and families who've supported this extended deployment. And we owe a special thanks to all who serve in the cause of freedom in Iraq.

The stress on our force is real, but the Joint Chiefs have assured me that an all-volunteer force—our All-Volunteer Force is strong and resilient enough to fight and win this war on terror. The trends in Iraq are positive. Our troops want to win. Recruiting and retention have remained strong during the surge. And I believe this: I believe the surest way to depress morale and weaken the force would be to lose in Iraq.

One key to ensuring that our military remains ready is to provide the resources they need promptly. Congress will soon consider a vital emergency war funding request. Members of Congress must pass a bill that provides our troops the resources they need and does not tie the hands of our commanders or impose artificial timelines for withdrawal. This bill must also be fiscally responsible. It must not exceed the reasonable $108 billion request I sent to Congress months ago. If the bill meets all these requirements, it will be a strong show of support for our troops. If it doesn't, I'll veto it.

Some in Washington argue that the war costs too much money. There's no doubt that the costs of this war have been high. But during other major conflicts in our history, the relative cost has been even higher. Now, think about the cold war. During the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, our defense budget rose as high as 13 percent of our total economy. Even during the Reagan administration, when our economy expanded significantly, the defense budget still accounted for about 6 percent of GDP. Our citizens recognized that the imperative of stopping Soviet expansion justified this expense.

Today, we face an enemy that is not only expansionist in its aims but has actually attacked our homeland and intends to do so again. Yet our defense budget accounts for just over 4 percent of our economy, less than our commitment at any point during the four decades of the cold war. This is still a large amount of money, but it is modest—a modest fraction of our Nation's wealth, and it pales when compared to the cost of another terrorist attack on our people.

We should be able to agree that this is a burden worth bearing. And we should be able to agree that our national interest require the success of our mission in Iraq.

Iraq is the convergence point for two of the greatest threats to America in this new century: Al Qaida and Iran. If we fail there, Al Qaida would claim a propaganda victory of colossal proportions, and they could gain safe havens in Iraq from which to attack the United States, our friends, and our allies. Iran would work to fill the vacuum in Iraq, and our failure would embolden its radical leaders and fuel their ambitions to dominate the region. The Taliban in Afghanistan and Al Qaida in Pakistan would grow in confidence and boldness. And violent extremists around the world would draw the same dangerous lesson they did from our retreats in Somalia and Vietnam. This would diminish our Nation's standing in the world and lead to massive humanitarian casualties and increase the threat of another terrorist attack on our homeland.

On the other hand, if we succeed in Iraq, after all that Al Qaida and Iran have invested there, it would be an historic blow to the global terrorist movement and a severe setback for Iran. It would demonstrate to a watching world that mainstream Arabs reject the ideology of Al Qaida and mainstream Shi'a reject the ideology of Iran's radical regime. It would give America a new partner with a growing economy and a democratic political system in which Sunnis and Shi'a and Kurds all work together for the good of their country. And in all these ways, it would bring us closer to our most important goal: making the American people safer here at home.

I want to say a word to our troops and civilians in Iraq. You've performed with incredible skill under demanding circumstances. The turnaround you have made possible in Iraq is a brilliant achievement in American history. And while this war is difficult, it is not endless. And we expect that as conditions on the ground continue to improve, they will permit us to continue the policy of return on success. The day will come when Iraq is a capable partner of the United States. The day will come when Iraq is a stable democracy that helps fight our

common enemies and promote our common interests in the Middle East. And when that day arrives, you'll come home with pride in your success and the gratitude of your whole Nation. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Colombia Free Trade Agreement Legislation

April 10, 2008

Today's unprecedented and unfortunate action by the House of Representatives—led by Speaker Pelosi—to change the rules governing legislation to implement our trade agreement with Colombia is damaging to our economy, our national security, and our relations with an important ally. It also undermines the trust required for any administration to negotiate trade agreements in the future.

By lowering tariffs for products made in America and sold in Colombia, this trade agreement would level the playing field for American workers and provide a boost for our economy at a vital time. Rather than supporting the opening of markets for our farmers and manufacturers, Democratic congressional leaders instead listened to narrow special interests and followed an isolationist path.

Today's action by the House of Representatives also sends a damaging message to the world that Congress cannot be counted on to keep its promises. Colombia is one of our strongest allies in the Western Hemisphere. Colombia's leaders are showing courage in improving the safety of their citizens while battling narcoterrorists that receive support from anti-American forces outside Colombia. The message Democrats sent today is that no matter how steadfastly you stand with us, we will turn our backs on you when it is politically convenient.

In addition, by changing the rules for how it considers legislation to implement trade agreements, the House has severed a bond of trust between the executive branch and the Congress, and with our trading partners, that has served our Nation well for decades. In order to negotiate trade agreements, we empower our trade representatives with the promise that Congress will consider trade agreements with a timely up-or-down vote. By breaking this bond, Democrats have undercut not just this administration, but future administrations as well. This will weaken our Nation's ability to negotiate fair trade agreements for American workers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers.

During the 16 months since the Colombia free trade agreement was signed, my administration has gone above and beyond any reasonable effort to achieve a bipartisan path for considering this agreement. At the expense of our economy and our national security, the House has instead chosen to take a shortsighted and partisan path.

Proclamation 8236—Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2008

April 10, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On Pan American Day and during Pan American Week, we underscore the importance of a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Western Hemisphere where our common values continue to strengthen friendships, advance freedom, and encourage fair trade.

The love of liberty is deeply rooted in our hemisphere. In the earliest days of our Republic, the people of the United States inspired patriots throughout the Americas to take their own stand for independence. Today, the decent and honorable people of both American continents are united in the desire for freedom and democracy. The United States stands with those who respect human rights and those who seek to bring change and hope to their countries. We look forward to the day when all of the Americas are wholly free and democratic.

My Administration remains committed to helping our friends as they advance the cause

of justice and economic opportunity throughout the Western Hemisphere. Through Millennium Challenge Compacts, we support development in countries that govern justly, invest in their people, and promote economic freedom. In addition, the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, signed in 2005, has opened markets and created opportunities for American businesses, strengthened economic ties with our neighbors to the south, and brought hope to people so that they can better care for themselves and for their families. In December of 2007, I signed the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act to bring economic gains for both of our countries, empower workers, and foster accountability and the rule of law. We seek to build on these successes by working with the Congress to approve the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement and the United States-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement. These and other free trade agreements enhance prosperity in the United States and signal our firm support for those who share our values of freedom and democracy.

As we recognize Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we will continue to work together to advance our common interests and build a future in which opportunity reaches into every community.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 14, 2008, as Pan American Day and April 13 through April 19, 2008, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States of America to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, 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, 9:29 a.m., April 11, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 14. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

Memorandum on Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions Regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization Office

April 10, 2008

Presidential Determination No. 2008–18

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver and Certification of Statutory Provisions Regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization Office

Pursuant to the authority and conditions contained in section 634(d) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (Div. J, Public Law 110–161), I hereby determine and certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 1003 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987, Public Law 100–204.

This waiver shall be effective for a period of 6 months from the date hereof. You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Memorandum on Designation of the Committee on Technology of the National Science and Technology Council To Carry Out Certain Requirements of the America COMPETES Act

April 10, 2008

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

Subject: Designation of the Committee on Technology of the National Science and Technology Council to Carry Out Certain Requirements of the America COMPETES Act

By the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 1006(e) of the America COMPETES Act (Public Law 110–69) (the "Act"), I hereby designate the Committee on Technology of the National Science and Technology Council to carry out the responsibilities assigned to the Council on Innovation and Competitiveness in section 1006 of the Act.

The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:52 a.m., April 14, 2008]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

Proclamation 8237—National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 2008

April 11, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week we highlight our dedication to protecting and strengthening the rights of crime victims and their families.

My Administration is committed to providing services and resources for victims of crime so that they can find justice, hope, and healing in their lives. To assist victims of domestic violence and their children, my Family Justice Center Initiative established comprehensive support centers in communities across the country. Through the Justice for All Act of 2004, we expanded DNA testing and enhanced the scope and enforceability of crime victims' rights. In 2006, I signed into law the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act to expand the National Sex Offender Registry, increase Federal penalties for crimes against children, and protect our children while on the Internet. I also support a Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the Constitution. Through these and other efforts, we can better protect our citizens and our communities.

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we recognize the advocates, counselors, and others who assist victims in their time of need, and the law enforcement personnel who work to bring offenders to justice. To learn more about victims' rights, Americans can visit www.crimevictims.gov. By working together, we can help protect crime victims and build a society that respects the life and value of every person.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 13 through April 19, 2008, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. I encourage all Americans to promote awareness of victims' rights and advance this important cause.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, 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, 8:52 a.m., April 14, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

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.

April 5

In the morning, at the Westin Zagreb hotel in Zagreb, Croatia, the President had an intelligence briefing. He and Mrs. Bush then met with U.S. Embassy staff and their families. Later, he traveled to the Banski Dvori.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to the Vila Prekrizje. He then participated in a working lunch and a photo opportunity with future NATO leaders.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Sochi, Russia, arriving in the evening.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to the Bocharov Ruchei, where they participated in a briefing on the 2014 Winter Olympic Games with President Vladimir Putin of Russia. They then participated in a social dinner and entertainment with President Putin. Later, they traveled to the Radisson SAS Lazurnaya Hotel.

April 6

In the morning, the President traveled to the Bocharov Ruchei.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a working lunch with President Vladimir Putin and President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia. Later, he and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

April 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to discuss the Colombia free trade agreement.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter W. Bodde to be Ambassador to Malawi.

The President announced his intention to appoint David Steele Bohigian as a Commissioner-Observer on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard F. Mangogna as Chief Information Officer for the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint Edward A. Mueller as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee and, upon appointment, designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to appoint John T. Stankey as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee and, upon appointment, designate him as Vice Chairman.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael W. Laphen, Thomas J. Lynch, and William A. Roper as members of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Infrastructure Advisory Council: David J. Bronczek; Wesley Bush; Philip G. Heasley; D.M. Houston; David Kepler; James A. Reid; Matthew K. Rose; Michael J. Wallace; Greg Wells; John M. Williams, Jr.; and Martha B. Wyrsch.

The President announced his intention to designate Alfred R. Berkeley III as Vice Chairman of the National Infrastructure Advisory Council.

April 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had a telephone conversation with head coach Bill Self of the University of Kansas men's basketball team to congratulate him on the team's April 7 NCAA championship. Later, in the Library, he participated in an interview with EWTN Global Catholic Network on the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the 2008 White House News Photographers Association "Eyes of History" winners.

April 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, on the North Lawn,

he and Mrs. Bush participated in a commemorative tree planting ceremony.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with bipartisan congressional leaders.

In the evening, in the Residence, the President met with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg.

The President announced that he has named William B. Wichterman as Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Public Liaison.

April 10

In the morning, in the Private Dining Room, the President had breakfast with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Special Envoy to Sudan Richard S. Williamson.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

April 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with Martha Raddatz of ABC News.

In the evening, at the Broken Spoke Ranch, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a Republican National Committee reception.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert Kelly as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board: John Willard Johnson; James L. Oblinger; Dina Habib Powell; and Donald Edward Vermeil.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mary Beth Long as a Commissioner-Observer on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council: Norman R. Bobins; Joseph M. Brodecki; Michael David Epstein; Donald Etra; David M. Flaum; Andrew Hochberg; Ezra Katz; Howard Konar; Douglas R. Korn; Hadassah F. Lieberman; and Pierre-Richard Prosper.

The President announced his intention to designate Kameran L. Onley as Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Water and Science).

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted April 7

Peter William Bodde,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released April 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released April 6

Transcripts of press briefings by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley

Fact sheet: U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration

Text of U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration

Released April 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto and U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab

Transcript of remarks by First Lady Laura Bush at a performance of "One Destiny"

Fact sheet: Encouraging American Businesses To Invest and Expand

Fact sheet: President Bush Signs Letter To Send the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Implementing Legislation to Congress

Released April 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released April 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab, Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Agriculture Edward T. Schafer, and Small Business Administration Administrator Steven C. Preston on the Colombia free trade agreement

Transcript of remarks by the President and First Lady Laura Bush at a commemorative tree planting ceremony

Statement by the Press Secretary on Egypt's April 8 local council elections

Fact sheet: President Bush Signs Second Chance Act of 2007

Released April 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: The Way Forward in Iraq

Released April 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel

Announcement: President and Mrs. Bush Release 2007 Tax Return

Acts Approved by the President

Approved April 9

H.R. 1593 / Public Law 110–199
Second Chance Act of 2007: Community Safety Through Recidivism Prevention