

them, the esprit de corps, and we want to thank them for their courage.

I want to thank all those who are helping making the effort work here. People are working long hours, and the citizens of this part of the world really, really thank you for it.

I want to thank the Boy Scouts. We've got three scouts here who are representative of a bunch of scouts who are working on the Healthy Forest Initiative and are helping make sure these firefighters are—don't have to deal with some of these hot blazes the way they have in the past.

And finally, I'd like to just let the people out here know that we're paying attention in Washington, DC; we care about you; and that we'll respond as best as we possibly can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at the Northern Operations Command Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Diane Feinstein of California. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Schwarzenegger.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**

July 17, 2008

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114)(the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 2008, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Thad Cochran, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House

Committee on Foreign Affairs; and David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

**Remarks on Arrival in Houston, Texas**

July 18, 2008

**Congressional Candidate Pete Olson**

It sure is good to be back in Houston, Texas. I am—I've come back to help Pete Olson win the congressional seat in the 22d Congressional District. I'm proud to support him. He's a Rice University graduate; he went to the University of Texas Law School; Navy fighter pilot; proud father, loyal husband, and a smart guy.

I—our country faces some big issues, one of which is to make sure we defend our homeland against coldblooded killers. I'm convinced Congressman Olson understands that. We've got to make sure we keep our taxes low. And one thing is for certain, we need to explore for more oil and gas here at home. People are worried about the high gasoline prices. One way to take the pressure off gasoline prices is to make it clear that the United States is going to be active about finding crude oil and natural gas right here in our own hemisphere, in our own country. And I'm convinced we can do so in environmentally friendly ways.

No doubt in my mind, Pete Olson will make a fine United States Congressman, and I'm proud to be here to support him.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. at Ellington Field.

**Statement on the 90th Birthday of Nelson Mandela**

July 18, 2008

On behalf of the people of the United States, Laura and I extend congratulations to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela on his 90th birthday. I applaud the leadership he is providing on many vital causes in South Africa and around the world. Mr. Mandela is a great example of courage, hope, and the power of freedom.

## **Proclamation 8274—Captive Nations Week, 2008**

*July 18, 2008*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Freedom is the longing of every soul and the birthright of all mankind. During Captive Nations Week, we underscore our commitment to advancing democracy, defending liberty, and protecting human rights around the world.

It is in our Nation's interest to help those who are suffering under oppressive regimes defeat the ideologues of hate with an ideology of hope. Advancing the cause of liberty advances the cause of peace. A free society upholds justice and defends human dignity. Over the years, many have underestimated the power of freedom to overcome tyranny, but history has shown us that freedom will prevail.

In the 20th century, the evils of Soviet communism and Nazi fascism were defeated and freedom spread around the world as new democracies emerged. Today, our Nation faces new struggles with adversaries who murder the innocent and seek to subject millions to their violent, totalitarian rule. Still, we remain confident that the light of liberty will again overcome this darkness.

To bring that day about, we must support young democracies in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. In countries like Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe, people continue to live under oppressive regimes, and we will work for the day when all these nations are free. By opposing these despots and helping young democracies grow, we will lay the foundation of peace and prosperity for generations to come. Throughout Captive Nations Week, we renew our pledge that as people across the world find their own paths to freedom, they will also find a friend in the United States of America.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959 (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as "Captive Nations Week."

**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 July 20 through July 26, 2008, as Captive Nations Week. I call upon the people of the United States to reaffirm our commitment to all those seeking liberty, justice, and self-determination.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., July 22, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 23. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

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## **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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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.

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### **July 12**

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

### **July 13**

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

### **July 14**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to the home of former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow in Alexandria, VA, where they met with Tony's family and expressed their condolences for Tony's death on July 12. They then returned to Washington, DC.