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cultivation. Nevertheless, during the past year the country has destroyed substantial areas of illicit poppy cultivation. The Indian Government must also continue to investigate cases of large, illicit poppy production and accordingly bring perpetrators to trial. The United States, along with other foreign governments and international organizations, has a good working relationship with India to interdict the flow of narcotics being smuggled across India's borders.

You are hereby authorized and directed to submit this report under section 706 of the FRAA, transmit it to the Congress, and publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 16. This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 24.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts in Houston, Texas

September 16, 2008

The President. So listen, I have come home to the great State under very difficult circumstances for the people who live down here. My first observation is that the State government and local folks are working very closely and working hard and have put a good response together. The evacuation plan was excellent in its planning and in execution. The rescue plan was very bold. And we owe a debt of gratitude to those who were on the frontline pulling people out of harm's way, like the Coast Guard people behind us here.

I'm now asking questions about how the Federal Government can help the response and help the recovery effort begin. One thing is, is that we have decided to match 100 percent—or pay 100 percent with no State match for debris removal, as well as the emergency preparedness that the State and local governments have put in place and executed.

Secondly, obviously, people are concerned about electricity and, you know, the—what I look for—or is there enough help to get these energy companies to do what they instinctively want to do, which is get the grid up and running. And I'm told by the folks who are monitoring this that there is a lot of people that are coming into this State to help restring wires, and that there's a lot of focus on getting the grid up. And so the sooner this electricity gets going, obviously, the easier it is going to be to help recover.

People have been moved out of their homes, and I know a lot of people are anxious to get back in. I urge you to listen to State and local authorities before you come back. It is their considered judgment which is important for you. And I know some are concerned about whether or not the government will reimburse you for your stay, and the answer is yes. We've got a plan for the next 30 days, and of course, we'll continue to monitor this situation as to reimbursing you for your time away from home.

One thing that's a concern is to whether or not we're getting water and fuel distributed. We just had a good discussion about how to make sure that we continue the—making sure these points of distribution are fully supplied. Step one is, do we have points of distribution in place? And then, how do we make sure they are supplied in a way that meets the people's needs? And the State and the Federal Government are sharing that responsibility—the Federal Government inside Harris County, primarily the State outside Harris County. Thus far—I know there are some shortages, but thus far the demand has been met. And we'll continue to monitor the situation to make sure that people are taken care of.

We're fixing to go down to Galveston and, obviously, going to see a devastated part of this fantastic State. And it'll give the Governor and me, and the Congressmen, Senator, and others a chance to express our heartfelt sympathies for those whose lives have been, you know, disrupted. It's—you know, it's a tough situation on the coast. I have been President long enough to have seen tough situations and have seen the resilience of the people be able to deal with a tough situation. It may be hard for people to now envision a better Galveston or a better Orange or some of these other communities that have been affected. But I know, with

proper help from the Federal Government and State government, there will be a better tomorrow.

And so it is with—you know, it is—it's good to be home. I'm just sorry it's under these circumstances.

I do want to say something about the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross is working closely with the emergency rescue efforts. A lot of people are sheltered, and the Red Cross is helping those people who have been displaced from their homes. It is very important for our citizens to support the American Red Cross. You can get on their web page and find a way to contribute. You know, I hope the country does not have disaster fatigue. The Red Cross is a vital part of helping people recover and helping people find the compassionate care that our citizens expect when there's a disaster such as this.

Anyway, Governor, thanks——

Governor Rick Perry of Texas. Very good, sir.

The President. ——for having us.

Gov. Perry. Glad to have you home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m. in the U.S. Coast Guard hangar at Ellington Field. In his remarks, he referred to Representatives Kevin Brady, John A. Culberson, Sheila Jackson-Lee, Ted Poe, and Senator John Cornyn of Texas. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Multi-National Force—Iraq Former Commander General David H. Petraeus

September 17, 2008

The President. The United States is fortunate to have great men and women who volunteer to serve in a time of danger. I have been incredibly impressed by the sacrifice of our troops who have been put in harm's way, and I've been incredibly impressed by the level of leadership for those troops.

General David Petraeus was asked to do a very difficult job, and he did it with distinction and honor. He was a part of the planning for the surge. He implemented the surge, along with a lot of other brave people, and the United States and the world is better off because of it.

And now the General has agreed to be commander of CENTCOM, which oversees the very important part of the world, the Middle East. And I want to thank you for taking on that assignment, General.

Recently, we saw how important it is, with the attack on our Embassy in Yemen. There were some security forces that lost their lives there, and we send our condolences to their families. This attack is a reminder that we are at war with extremists who will murder innocent people to achieve their ideological objectives. One objectives of these extremists is they kill; is to try to cause the United States to lose our nerve and to withdraw from regions of the world. And our message is, is that we want to help governments survive the extremists. We want people to live normal lives. We want mothers to be able to raise their sons and daughters in a peaceful environment so they can realize the hopes and dreams of a better world.

And I want to thank our diplomats who stand in harm's way. I thank our military who stands in harm's way. And I want to thank General Petraeus and his family for being so dedicated to our great country.

General.

General Petraeus. Thanks, Mr. President. Great to be home, sir. And it was a great privilege to serve there with our young men and women.

The President. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama

September 17, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming. It's—*bienvenidos*.

President Torrijos. Yes.

President Bush. Yes. President Torrijos has been a good personal friend, and he has been a good friend to freedom, prosperity,