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Editor's Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on February 1, 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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Week Ending Friday, February 1, 2008

The President's Radio Address

January 26, 2008

Good morning. On Monday night, I will address the American people about the state of our Union. I will report that over the last 7 years, we've made great progress on important issues at home and abroad. I will also report that we have unfinished business before us and we must work together to get it done.

In my speech, I will lay out a full plate of issues for Congress to address in the year ahead. Two of these issues require immediate attention.

First is the economy. I know many of you are worried about the risk of an economic downturn because of the instability in the housing and financial markets. You should know that while economic growth has slowed in recent months, the foundation for long-term growth remains solid. And I believe that with swift action, we can give our economy the boost it needs to continue expanding and creating new jobs for our citizens.

On Thursday, my administration reached a bipartisan agreement with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader John Boehner on an economic growth package. This package will deliver direct tax relief to hard-working Americans. It will also include incentives for businesses—including small businesses—to make new investments this year. I ask the House and Senate to enact this package into law as soon as possible. And while I understand the desire to add provisions from both the left and the right, it would be a mistake to undermine this important bipartisan agreement. By working together, we can provide our economy with a shot in the arm when we need it most.

The other urgent issue before Congress is a matter of national security. Congress needs to provide our intelligence professionals with the tools and flexibility they need to protect America from attack. In August, Congress passed a bill that strengthened our ability to monitor terrorist communications. The problem is that Congress set this law to expire on February 1st. That is next Friday. If this law expires, it will become harder to figure out what our enemies are doing to infiltrate our country, harder for us to uncover terrorist plots, and harder to prevent attacks on the American people.

Congress is now considering a bipartisan bill that will allow our professionals to maintain the vital flow of intelligence on terrorist threats. It would protect the freedoms of Americans while making sure we do not extend those same protections to terrorists overseas. It would provide liability protection to companies now facing billion-dollar lawsuits because they are believed to have assisted in efforts to defend our Nation following the 9/11 attacks. I call on Congress to pass this legislation quickly. We need to know who our enemies are and what they are plotting. And we cannot afford to wait until after an attack to put the pieces together.

When I go before Congress on Monday, I will speak more about how we can keep our economy strong and our people safe. I am confident that we can work together to meet our responsibilities in these areas and leave our children a stronger and more prosperous America.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 25 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Situation in Lebanon

January 26, 2008

I strongly condemn the terrorist bombing in Beirut that killed Lebanese Internal Security Forces Captain Wissam Eid and many other Lebanese. I extend condolences to the families of the innocent Lebanese killed in this brutal attack and hope for a rapid recovery for all those wounded.

This bombing, the latest in a series of terrorist attacks targeting those who are working to secure Lebanon's independence and sovereignty, is a part of the continuing assault on Lebanon's institutions. We will not falter in our support for the democratically elected Lebanese Government. We renew our call for the immediate selection of a new President in accordance with Lebanon's Constitution. We demand that Syria, Iran, and their allies end their interference in and obstruction of Lebanon's political process.

The Lebanese people should be able to enjoy security and liberty without the threat of terrorism, violence, and foreign intimidation. I appreciate the U.N.'s efforts to rapidly stand up the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which will hold accountable those who are responsible for this systematic campaign of murder and intimidation. I urge Lebanon's friends and allies to commit immediately the remaining funds required for the tribunal to commence its work.

Statement on the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

January 27, 2008

On the third International Day of Commemoration, we remember and mourn the victims of the Holocaust.

I was deeply moved by my recent visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum. Sixty-three years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a totalitarian ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred, bigotry, and extermination. It is also our responsibility to honor the survivors and those courageous souls who refused to be bystanders and instead risked their own lives to try to save the Nazis' intended victims.

Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust remains important today. We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all forms in America and abroad. Today provides a sobering reminder that evil exists and a call that when we find evil, we must resist it.

May God bless the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and may we never forget.

Statement on the Death of Gordon B. Hinckley

January 28, 2008

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of our friend Gordon B. Hinckley. While serving for over seven decades in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gordon demonstrated the heart of a servant and the wisdom of a leader. He was a tireless worker and a talented communicator who was respected in his community and beloved by his congregation. As president of his church, he traveled to more than 60 countries to spread a message of love and optimism to the millions of people around the world who shared his faith.

A Mayflower descendent and the grandson of Mormon pioneers, Gordon was a deeply patriotic man. His leadership and service strengthened the board of trustees of Brigham Young University, the Boy Scouts of America, and the 2002 Winter Olympic games in Salt Lake City. In 2004, I was honored to present him with the Medal of Freedom, our Nation's highest civil award, in recognition of his lifelong public service.

Laura and I will miss Gordon's friendship and wisdom. Our thoughts and prayers are with his five children and the rest of the Hinckley family.

Statement on the Death of Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Christodoulos

January 28, 2008

Laura and I offer our condolences to the people of Greece at this time of mourning for the death of the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece Christodoulos. The late Archbishop was well-known as an articulate voice of the Orthodox faith, for his engagement in interreligious dialog, and for his promotion of social programs to help the vulnerable. Our prayers are with the people of Greece and all those who followed his spiritual guidance.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Edward T. Schafer as Secretary of Agriculture

January 28, 2008

I appreciate that the Senate today unanimously confirmed Ed Schafer to be our next Secretary of Agriculture. As a two-term Governor and business leader, Ed has distinguished himself as an executive with a proven record of results.

Ed will lead a Department that oversees our food, agriculture, natural resources, food safety, and health and nutrition programs. He will be an advocate for farmers, ranchers, and consumers as he works to open new markets for their products. And he will work with the Congress to pass a responsible farm bill that will provide a safety net for farmers and protect our lands and the environment while at the same time ensuring Federal tax dollars are spent wisely.

I look forward to seeing Ed take his seat along with the rest of my Cabinet at this evening's State of the Union.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008

January 28, 2008

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4986, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. The Act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, and for national security-related energy programs.

Provisions of the Act, including sections 841, 846, 1079, and 1222, purport to impose requirements that could inhibit the President's ability to carry out his constitutional obligations to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, to protect national security, to supervise the executive branch, and to execute his authority as Commander in Chief. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 28, 2008.

NOTE: H.R. 4986, approved January 28, was assigned Public Law No. 110–181.

Proclamation 8219—Sixth Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps, 2008

January 28, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

People across this great Nation have heard the universal call to love a neighbor and are using their time and talents to make a difference in the lives of others. On the sixth anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps, we celebrate the spirit of service in America and honor the volunteers whose good work represents the generous character of our country.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, I created the USA Freedom Corps to build on the countless acts of service, sacrifice, and generosity undertaken by our citizens. The USA Freedom Corps is dedicated to expanding volunteer service and extending the goodwill of the American people across our country and around the globe. By connecting individuals with volunteer opportunities, the USA Freedom Corps has helped ensure that millions of people have a chance to make a difference in the lives of those

in need. The USA Freedom Corps also helps strengthen the non-profit sector and supports other national service programs and initiatives such as the Peace Corps, Citizen Corps, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps. These efforts can help us build a more hopeful country and create a chain of compassion for generations to come.

Volunteers demonstrate kindness and touch lives. With hard work and dedication, volunteers help the less fortunate, respond to crises, mentor children, assist the elderly, and strengthen our communities. I urge all Americans to serve others and to learn more about service opportunities by visiting the USA Freedom Corps website at volunteer.gov. By providing help and hope to others, Americans can lead the world toward a more caring and compassionate tomorrow.

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 January 29, 2008, as the Sixth Anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps. I call upon the citizens of this great country to find ways to volunteer and to use their time, energy, and talents to help their fellow Americans, and I commend the efforts of the USA Freedom Corps and all those who answer the call to serve.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of January, 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, 8:45 a.m., January 30, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 31.

Memorandum on Waiver of Section 1083 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008

January 28, 2008

Presidential Determination No. 2008–9

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Section 1083 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and section 1083(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (the "Act"), I hereby determine that:

- All provisions of section 1083 of the Act, if applied to Iraq or any agency or instrumentality thereof, may affect Iraq or its agencies or instrumentalities, by exposing Iraq or its agencies or instrumentalities to liability in United States courts and by entangling their assets in litigation.
- The economic security and successful reconstruction of Iraq continue to be top national security priorities of the United States. Section 1083 of the Act threatens those key priorities. If permitted to apply to Iraq, section 1083 would risk the entanglement of substantial Iraqi assets in litigation in the United States—including those of the Development Fund for Iraq, the Central Bank of Iraq, and commercial entities in the United States in which Iraq has an interest. Section 1083 also would expose Iraq to new liability of at least several billion dollars by undoing judgments favorable to Iraq, by foreclosing available defenses on which Iraq is relying in pending litigation, and by creating a new Federal cause of action backed by the prospect of punitive damages to support claims that may previously have been foreclosed. If permitted to apply to Iraq, section 1083 would have a significant financial impact on Iraq and

would result in the redirection of financial resources from the continued reconstruction of Iraq and the harming of Iraq's stability, contrary to the interests of the United States.

- A waiver of all provisions of section 1083 with respect to Iraq and any agency or instrumentality of Iraq is therefore in the national security interest of the United States and will promote the reconstruction of, the consolidation of democracy in, and the relations of the United States with, Iraq.
- Iraq continues to be a reliable ally of the United States and a partner in combating acts of international terrorism. The November 26, 2007, Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America confirmed the commitment of the United States and Iraq to build an enduring relationship in the political, diplomatic, economic, and security arenas and to work together to combat all terrorist groups, including al-Qaida.

Accordingly, I hereby waive all provisions of section 1083 of the Act with respect to Iraq and any agency or instrumentality thereof.

You are authorized and directed to notify the Congress of this determination and waiver and the accompanying memorandum of justification, incorporated by reference herein, and to arrange for their publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 4, 2008]

NOTE: This memorandum and its accompanying justification will be published in the *Federal Register* on February 5.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

January 28, 2008

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Seven years have passed since I first stood before you at this rostrum. In that time, our country has been tested in ways none of us could have imagined. We faced hard decisions about peace and war, rising competition in the world economy, and the health and welfare of our citizens. These issues call for vigorous debate, and I think it's fair to say, we've answered the call. [*Laughter*] Yet history will record that amid our differences, we acted with purpose, and together we showed the world the power and resilience of American self-government.

All of us were sent to Washington to carry out the people's business. That is the purpose of this body. It is the meaning of our oath. It remains our charge to keep.

The actions of the 110th Congress will affect the security and prosperity of our Nation long after this session has ended. In this election year, let us show our fellow Americans that we recognize our responsibilities and are determined to meet them. Let us show them that Republicans and Democrats can compete for votes and cooperate for results at the same time.

From expanding opportunity to protecting our country, we've made good progress. Yet we have unfinished business before us, and the American people expect us to get it done.

In the work ahead, we must be guided by the philosophy that made our Nation great. As Americans, we believe in the power of individuals to determine their destiny and shape the course of history. We believe that the most reliable guide for our country is the collective wisdom of ordinary citizens. And so in all we do, we must trust in the ability of free peoples to make wise decisions and empower them to improve their lives for their futures.

To build a prosperous future, we must trust people with their own money and empower them to grow our economy. As we meet tonight, our economy is undergoing a period of uncertainty. America has added jobs for a record 52 straight months, but jobs are now growing at a slower pace. Wages are up, but so are prices for food and gas. Exports are rising, but the housing market has declined. At kitchen tables across our country, there is a concern about our economic future.

In the long run, Americans can be confident about our economic growth. But in the short run, we can all see that that growth is slowing. So last week, my administration reached agreement with Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader Boehner on a robust growth package that includes tax relief for individuals and families and incentives for business investment. The temptation will be to load up the bill. That would delay it or derail it, and neither option is acceptable. This is a good agreement that will keep our economy growing and our people working, and this Congress must pass it as soon as possible.

We have other work to do on taxes. Unless Congress acts, most of the tax relief we've delivered over the past 7 years will be taken away. Some in Washington argue that letting tax relief expire is not a tax increase. Try explaining that to 116 million American taxpayers who would see their taxes rise by an average of $1,800. Others have said they would personally be happy to pay higher taxes. I welcome their enthusiasm. I'm pleased to report that the IRS accepts both checks and money orders. [*Laughter*]

Most Americans think their taxes are high enough. With all the other pressures on their finances, American families should not have to worry about their Federal Government taking a bigger bite out of their paychecks. There's only one way to eliminate this uncertainty: Make the tax relief permanent. And Members of Congress should know, if any bill raises taxes reaches my desk, I will veto it.

Just as we trust Americans with their own money, we need to earn their trust by spending their tax dollars wisely. Next week, I'll send you a budget that terminates or substantially reduces 151 wasteful or bloated programs, totaling more than $18 billion. The budget that I will submit will keep America on track for a surplus in 2012. American families have to balance their budgets; so should their Government.

The people's trust in their Government is undermined by congressional earmarks, special interest projects that are often snuck in at the last minute, without discussion or debate. Last year, I asked you to voluntarily cut the number and cost of earmarks in half. I also asked you to stop slipping earmarks into committee reports that never even come to a vote. Unfortunately, neither goal was met. So this time, if you send me an appropriations bill that does not cut the number and cost of earmarks in half, I'll send it back to you with my veto.

And tomorrow I will issue an Executive order that directs Federal Agencies to ignore any future earmark that is not voted on by Congress. If these items are truly worth funding, Congress should debate them in the open and hold a public vote.

Our shared responsibilities extend beyond matters of taxes and spending. On housing, we must trust Americans with the responsibility of homeownership and empower them to weather turbulent times in the housing market. My administration brought together the HOPE NOW Alliance, which is helping many struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure. And Congress can help even more. Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, modernize the Federal Housing Administration, and allow State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages. These are difficult times for many American families, and by taking these steps, we can help more of them keep their homes.

To build a future of quality health care, we must trust patients and doctors to make medical decisions and empower them with better information and better options. We share a common goal: making health care more affordable and accessible for all Americans. The best way to achieve that goal is by expanding consumer choice, not government control. So I have proposed ending the bias in the Tax Code against those who do not get their health insurance through their employer. This one reform would put private coverage within reach for millions, and I call on the Congress to pass it this year.

The Congress must also expand health savings accounts, create association health plans for small businesses, promote health information technology, and confront the epidemic of junk medical lawsuits. With all these steps, we will ensure that decisions about your medical care are made in the privacy of your doctor's office, not in the Halls of Congress.

On education, we must trust students to learn, if given the chance, and empower parents to demand results from our schools. In neighborhoods across our country, there are boys and girls with dreams, and a decent education is their only hope of achieving them.

Six years ago, we came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, and today, no one can deny its results. Last year, fourth and eighth graders achieved the highest math scores on record. Reading scores are on the rise. African American and Hispanic students posted alltime highs. Now we must work together to increase accountability, add flexibilities for States and districts, reduce the number of high school dropouts, provide extra help for struggling schools.

Members of Congress, the No Child Left Behind Act is a bipartisan achievement. It is succeeding. And we owe it to America's children, their parents, and their teachers to strengthen this good law.

We must also do more to help children when their schools do not measure up. Thanks to the DC Opportunity Scholarships you approved, more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation's Capital have found new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school. Sadly, these schools are disappearing at an alarming rate in many of America's inner cities. So I will convene a White House summit aimed at strengthening these lifelines of learning. And to open the doors of these schools to more children, I ask you to support a new $300 million program called Pell Grants for Kids. We have seen how Pell grants help low-income college students realize their full potential. Together we've expanded the size and reach of these grants. Now let us apply the same spirit to help liberate poor children trapped in failing public schools.

On trade, we must trust American workers to compete with anyone in the world and empower them by opening up new markets overseas. Today, our economic growth increasingly depends on our ability to sell American goods and crops and services all over the world. So we're working to break down barriers to trade and investment wherever we can. We're working for a successful Doha round of trade talks, and we must complete a good agreement this year. At the same time, we're pursuing opportunities to open up new markets by passing free trade agreements.

I thank the Congress for approving a good agreement with Peru. And now I ask you to approve agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea. Many products from these nations now enter America duty free, yet many of our products face steep tariffs in their markets. These agreements will level the playing field. They will give us better access to nearly 100 million customers. They will support good jobs for the finest workers in the world, those whose products say "Made in the USA."

These agreements also promote America's strategic interests. The first agreement that will come before you is with Colombia, a friend of America that is confronting violence and terror and fighting drug traffickers. If we fail to pass this agreement, we will embolden the purveyors of false populism in our hemisphere. So we must come together, pass this agreement, and show our neighbors in the region that democracy leads to a better life.

Trade brings better jobs and better choices and better prices. Yet for some Americans, trade can mean losing a job, and the Federal Government has a responsibility to help. I ask Congress to reauthorize and reform trade adjustment assistance so we can help these displaced workers learn new skills and find new jobs.

To build a future of energy security, we must trust in the creative genius of American researchers and entrepreneurs and empower them to pioneer a new generation of clean energy technology. Our security, our prosperity, and our environment all require reducing our dependence on oil.

Last year, I asked you to pass legislation to reduce oil consumption over the next decade, and you responded. Together we should take the next steps. Let us fund new technologies that can generate coal power while capturing carbon emissions. Let us increase the use of renewable power and emissions-free nuclear power. Let us continue investing in advanced battery technology and renewable fuels to power the cars and trucks of the future. Let us create a new international

clean technology fund, which will help developing nations like India and China make a greater use of clean energy sources. And let us complete an international agreement that has the potential to slow, stop, and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases.

This agreement will be effective only if it includes commitments by every major economy and gives none a free ride. The United States is committed to strengthening our energy security and confronting global climate change. And the best way to meet these goals is for America to continue leading the way toward the development of cleaner and more energy efficient technology.

To keep America competitive into the future, we must trust in the skill of our scientists and engineers and empower them to pursue the breakthroughs of tomorrow. Last year, Congress passed legislation supporting the American Competitiveness Initiative, but never followed through with the funding. This funding is essential to keeping our scientific edge. So I ask Congress to double Federal support for critical basic research in the physical sciences and ensure America remains the most dynamic nation on Earth.

On matters of life and science, we must trust in the innovative spirit of medical researchers and empower them to discover new treatments while respecting moral boundaries. In November, we witnessed a landmark achievement when scientists discovered a way to reprogram adult skin cells to act like embryonic stem cells. This breakthrough has the potential to move us beyond the divisive debates of the past by extending the frontiers of medicine without the destruction of human life.

So we're expanding funding for this type of ethical medical research. And as we explore promising avenues of research, we must also ensure that all life is treated with the dignity it deserves. And so I call on Congress to pass legislation that bans unethical practices, such as the buying, selling, patenting, or cloning of human life.

On matters of justice, we must trust in the wisdom of our Founders and empower judges who understand that the Constitution means what it says. I've submitted judicial nominees who will rule by the letter of the law, not the whim of the gavel. Many of these nominees are being unfairly delayed. They are worthy of confirmation, and the Senate should give each of them a prompt up-or-down vote.

In communities across our land, we must trust in the good heart of the American people and empower them to serve their neighbors in need. Over the past 7 years, more of our fellow citizens have discovered that the pursuit of happiness leads to the path of service. Americans have volunteered in record numbers. Charitable donations are higher than ever. Faith-based groups are bringing hope to pockets of despair, with newfound support from the Federal Government. And to help guarantee equal treatment of faith-based organizations when they compete for Federal funds, I ask you to permanently extend charitable choice.

Tonight the armies of compassion continue the march to a new day in the gulf coast. America honors the strength and resilience of the people of this region. We reaffirm our pledge to help them build stronger and better than before. And tonight I'm pleased to announce that in April, we will host this year's North American Summit of Canada, Mexico, and the United States in the great city of New Orleans.

There are two other pressing challenges that I've raised repeatedly before this body and that this body has failed to address: entitlement spending and immigration. Every Member in this Chamber knows that spending on entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid is growing faster than we can afford. We all know the painful choices ahead if America stays on this path: massive tax increases, sudden and drastic cuts in benefits, or crippling deficits. I've laid out proposals to reform these programs. Now I ask Members of Congress to offer your proposals and come up with a bipartisan solution to save these vital programs for our children and our grandchildren.

The other pressing challenge is immigration. America needs to secure our borders, and with your help, my administration is taking steps to do so. We're increasing worksite enforcement, deploying fences and advanced technologies to stop illegal crossings. We've effectively ended the policy of catch-and-release at the border, and by the end of this

year, we will have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents. Yet we also need to acknowledge that we will never fully secure our border until we create a lawful way for foreign workers to come here and support our economy. This will take pressure off the border and allow law enforcement to concentrate on those who mean us harm.

We must also find a sensible and humane way to deal with people here illegally. Illegal immigration is complicated, but it can be resolved. And it must be resolved in a way that upholds both our laws and our highest ideals.

This is the business of our Nation here at home. Yet building a prosperous future for our citizen also depends on confronting enemies abroad and advancing liberty in troubled regions of the world.

Our foreign policy is based on a clear premise: We trust that people, when given the chance, will choose a future of freedom and peace. In the last 7 years, we have witnessed stirring moments in the history of liberty. We've seen citizens in Georgia and Ukraine stand up for their right to free and fair elections. We've seen people in Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. We've seen Afghans emerge from the tyranny of the Taliban and choose a new President and a new Parliament. We've seen jubilant Iraqis holding up ink-stained fingers and celebrating their freedom. These images of liberty have inspired us.

In the past 7 years, we've also seen the images that have sobered us. We've watched throngs of mourners in Lebanon and Pakistan carrying the caskets of beloved leaders taken by the assassin's hand. We've seen wedding guests in blood-soaked finery staggering from a hotel in Jordan, Afghans and Iraqis blown up in mosques and markets, and trains in London and Madrid ripped apart by bombs. On a clear September day, we saw thousands of our fellow citizens taken from us in an instant. These horrific images serve as a grim reminder: The advance of liberty is opposed by terrorists and extremists, evil men who despise freedom, despise America, and aim to subject millions to their violent rule.

Since 9/11, we have taken the fight to these terrorists and extremists. We will stay on the offense; we will keep up the pressure; and we will deliver justice to our enemies.

We are engaged in the defining ideological struggle of the 21st century. The terrorists oppose every principle of humanity and decency that we hold dear. Yet in this war on terror, there is one thing we and our enemies agree on: In the long run, men and women who are free to determine their own destinies will reject terror and refuse to live in tyranny. And that is why the terrorists are fighting to deny this choice to the people in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Palestinian Territories. And that is why, for the security of America and the peace of the world, we are spreading the hope of freedom.

In Afghanistan, America, our 25 NATO allies, and 15 partner nations are helping the Afghan people defend their freedom and rebuild their country. Thanks to the courage of these military and civilian personnel, a nation that was once a safe haven for Al Qaida is now a young democracy where boys and girls are going to school, new roads and hospitals are being built, and people are looking to the future with new hope. These successes must continue, so we're adding 3,200 marines to our forces in Afghanistan, where they will fight the terrorists and train the Afghan Army and police. Defeating the Taliban and Al Qaida is critical to our security, and I thank the Congress for supporting America's vital mission in Afghanistan.

In Iraq, the terrorists and extremists are fighting to deny a proud people their liberty and fighting to establish safe havens for attacks across the world. One year ago, our enemies were succeeding in their efforts to plunge Iraq into chaos. So we reviewed our strategy and changed course. We launched a surge of American forces into Iraq. We gave our troops a new mission: Work with the Iraqi forces to protect the Iraqi people; pursue the enemy in its strongholds; and deny the terrorists sanctuary anywhere in the country.

The Iraqi people quickly realized that something dramatic had happened. Those who had worried that America was preparing to abandon them instead saw tens of thousands of American forces flowing into their country. They saw our forces moving into neighborhoods, clearing out the terrorists,

and staying behind to ensure the enemy did not return. And they saw our troops, along with Provincial Reconstruction Teams that include Foreign Service officers and other skilled public servants, coming in to ensure that improved security was followed by improvements in daily life. Our military and civilians in Iraq are performing with courage and distinction, and they have the gratitude of our whole Nation.

The Iraqis launched a surge of their own. In the fall of 2006, Sunni tribal leaders grew tired of Al Qaida's brutality, started a popular uprising called the "Anbar Awakening." Over the past year, similar movements have spread across the country. And today, the grassroots surge includes more than 80,000 Iraqi citizens who are fighting the terrorists. The Government in Baghdad has stepped forward as well, adding more than 100,000 new Iraqi soldiers and police during the past year.

While the enemy is still dangerous and more work remains, the American and Iraqi surges have achieved results few of us could have imagined just 1 year ago. When we met last year, many said that containing the violence was impossible. A year later, high-profile terrorist attacks are down, civilian deaths are down, sectarian killings are down.

When we met last year, militia extremists—some armed and trained by Iran—were wreaking havoc in large areas of Iraq. A year later, coalition and Iraqi forces have killed or captured hundreds of militia fighters. And Iraqis of all backgrounds increasingly realize that defeating these militia fighters is critical to the future of their country.

When we met last year, Al Qaida had sanctuaries in many areas of Iraq, and their leaders had just offered American forces safe passage out of the country. Today, it is Al Qaida that is searching for safe passage. They have been driven from many of the strongholds they once held. And over the past year, we've captured or killed thousands of extremists in Iraq, including hundreds of key Al Qaida leaders and operatives.

Last month, Usama bin Laden released a tape in which he railed against Iraqi tribal leaders who have turned on Al Qaida and admitted that coalition forces are growing stronger in Iraq. Ladies and gentlemen, some may deny the surge is working, but among the terrorists there is no doubt. Al Qaida is on the run in Iraq, and this enemy will be defeated.

When we met last year, our troop levels in Iraq were on the rise. Today, because of the progress just described, we are implementing a policy of return on success, and the surge forces we sent to Iraq are beginning to come home.

This progress is a credit to the valor of our troops and the brilliance of their commanders. This evening I want to speak directly to our men and women on the frontlines. Soldiers and sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen: In the past year, you have done everything we've asked of you and more. Our Nation is grateful for your courage. We are proud of your accomplishments. And tonight in this hallowed Chamber, with the American people as our witness, we make you a solemn pledge: In the fight ahead, you will have all you need to protect our Nation. And I ask Congress to meet its responsibilities to these brave men and women by fully funding our troops.

Our enemies in Iraq have been hit hard. They are not yet defeated, and we can still expect tough fighting ahead. Our objective in the coming year is to sustain and build on the gains we made in 2007 while transitioning to the next phase of our strategy. American troops are shifting from leading operations to partnering with Iraqi forces and, eventually, to a protective overwatch mission. As part of this transition, one Army brigade combat team and one Marine expeditionary unit have already come home and will not be replaced. In the coming months, four additional brigades and two Marine battalions will follow suit. Taken together, this means more than 20,000 of our troops are coming home.

Any further drawdown of U.S. troops will be based on conditions in Iraq and the recommendations of our commanders. General Petraeus has warned that too fast a drawdown could result in, quote, "the disintegration of the Iraqi security forces, Al Qaida-Iraq regaining lost ground, and a marked increase in violence." Members of Congress, having come so far and achieved so much, we must not allow this to happen.

In the coming year, we will work with Iraqi leaders as they build on the progress they're making toward political reconciliation. At the local level, Sunnis, Shi'a, and Kurds are beginning to come together to reclaim their communities and rebuild their lives. Progress in the Provinces must be matched by progress in Baghdad. We're seeing some encouraging signs. The national Government is sharing oil revenues with the Provinces. The Parliament recently passed both a pension law and de-Ba'athification reform. They're now debating a Provincial powers law. The Iraqis still have a distance to travel, but after decades of dictatorship and the pain of sectarian violence, reconciliation is taking place, and the Iraqi people are taking control of their future.

The mission in Iraq has been difficult and trying for our Nation. But it is in the vital interest of the United States that we succeed. A free Iraq will deny Al Qaida a safe haven. A free Iraq will show millions across the Middle East that a future of liberty is possible. A free Iraq will be a friend of America, a partner in fighting terror, and a source of stability in a dangerous part of the world.

By contrast, a failed Iraq would embolden the extremists, strengthen Iran, and give terrorists a base from which to launch new attacks on our friends, our allies, and our homeland. The enemy has made its intentions clear. At a time when the momentum seemed to favor them, Al Qaida's top commander in Iraq declared that they will not rest until they have attacked us here in Washington. My fellow Americans, we will not rest either. We will not rest until this enemy has been defeated. We must do the difficult work today so that years from now, people will look back and say that this generation rose to the moment, prevailed in a tough fight, and left behind a more hopeful region and a safer America.

We're also standing against the forces of extremism in the Holy Land, where we have new cause for hope. Palestinians have elected a President who recognizes that confronting terror is essential to achieving a state where his people can live in dignity and at peace with Israel. Israelis have leaders who recognize that a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state will be a source of lasting security. This month in Ramallah and Jerusalem, I assured leaders from both sides that America will do, and I will do, everything we can to help them achieve a peace agreement that defines a Palestinian state by the end of this year. The time has come for a Holy Land where a democratic Israel and a democratic Palestine live side by side in peace.

We're also standing against the forces of extremism embodied by the regime in Tehran. Iran's rulers oppress a good and talented people. And wherever freedom advances in the Middle East, it seems the Iranian regime is there to oppose it. Iran is funding and training militia groups in Iraq, supporting Hizballah terrorists in Lebanon, and backing Hamas efforts to undermine peace in the Holy Land. Tehran is also developing ballistic missiles of increasing range and continues to develop its capability to enrich uranium, which could be used to create a nuclear weapon.

Our message to the people of Iran is clear: We have no quarrel with you. We respect your traditions and your history. We look forward to the day when you have your freedom. Our message to the leaders of Iran is also clear: Verifiably suspend your nuclear enrichment so negotiations can begin. And to rejoin the community of nations, come clean about your nuclear intentions and past actions, stop your oppression at home, cease your support for terror abroad. But above all, know this: America will confront those who threaten our troops; we will stand by our allies; and we will defend our vital interests in the Persian Gulf.

On the homefront, we will continue to take every lawful and effective measure to protect our country. This is our most solemn duty. We are grateful that there has not been another attack on our soil since 9/11. This is not for the lack of desire or effort on the part of the enemy. In the past 6 years, we've stopped numerous attacks, including a plot to fly a plane into the tallest building in Los Angeles and another to blow up passenger jets bound for America over the Atlantic. Dedicated men and women in our Government toil day and night to stop the terrorists from carrying out their plans. These good citizens are saving American lives, and everyone in this Chamber owes them our thanks.

And we owe them something more; we owe them the tools they need to keep our people safe. And one of the most important tools we can give them is the ability to monitor terrorist communications. To protect America, we need to know who the terrorists are talking to, what they are saying, and what they're planning. Last year, Congress passed legislation to help us do that. Unfortunately, Congress set the legislations to expire on February the 1st. That means if you don't act by Friday, our ability to track terrorist threats would be weakened and our citizens will be in greater danger. Congress must ensure the flow of vital intelligence is not disrupted. Congress must pass liability protection for companies believed to have assisted in the efforts to defend America. We've had ample time for debate. The time to act is now.

Protecting our Nation from the dangers of a new century requires more than good intelligence and a strong military. It also requires changing the conditions that breed resentment and allow extremists to prey on despair. So America is using its influence to build a freer, more hopeful, and more compassionate world. This is a reflection of our national interests; it is the calling of our conscience.

America opposes genocide in Sudan. We support freedom in countries from Cuba and Zimbabwe to Belarus and Burma.

America is leading the fight against global poverty with strong education initiatives and humanitarian assistance. We've also changed the way we deliver aid by launching the Millennium Challenge Account. This program strengthens democracy, transparency, and the rule of law in developing nations, and I ask you to fully fund this important initiative.

America is leading the fight against global hunger. Today, more than half the world's food aid comes from the United States. And tonight I ask Congress to support an innovative proposal to provide food assistance by purchasing crops directly from farmers in the developing world, so we can build up local agriculture and help break the cycle of famine.

America is leading the fight against disease. With your help, we're working to cut by half the number of malaria-related deaths in 15 African nations. And our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is treating 1.4 million people. We can bring healing and hope to many more. So I ask you to maintain the principles that have changed behavior and made this program a success. And I call on you to double our initial commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS by approving an additional $30 billion over the next 5 years.

America is a force for hope in the world because we are a compassionate people, and some of the most compassionate Americans are those who have stepped forward to protect us. We must keep faith with all who have risked life and limb so that we might live in freedom and peace. Over the past 7 years, we've increased funding for veterans by more than 95 percent. And as we increase funding, we must also reform our veterans system to meet the needs of a new war and a new generation. I call on Congress to enact the reforms recommended by Senator Bob Dole and Secretary Donna Shalala, so we can improve the system of care for our wounded warriors and help them build lives of hope and promise and dignity.

Our military families also sacrifice for America. They endure sleepless nights and the daily struggle of providing for children while a loved one is serving far from home. We have a responsibility to provide for them. So I ask you to join me in expanding their access to child care, creating new hiring preferences for military spouses across the Federal Government, and allowing our troops to transfer their unused education benefits to their spouses or children. Our military families serve our Nation; they inspire our Nation; and tonight our Nation honors them.

The strength—the secret of our strength, the miracle of America is that our greatness lies not in our Government, but in the spirit and determination of our people. When the Federal Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, our Nation was bound by the Articles of Confederation, which began with the words, "We the undersigned delegates." When Governor Morris was asked to draft the preamble to our new Constitution, he offered an important revision and opened with words that changed the course of our Nation

and the history of the world: "We the people."

By trusting the people, our Founders wagered that a great and noble nation could be built on the liberty that resides in the hearts of all men and women. By trusting the people, succeeding generations transformed our fragile young democracy into the most powerful nation on Earth and a beacon of hope for millions. And so long as we continue to trust the people, our Nation will prosper, our liberty will be secure, and the state of our Union will remain strong.

So tonight, with confidence in freedom's power and trust in the people, let us set forth to do their business. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:09 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; and former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 8218—National African American History Month, 2008

January 28, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National African American History Month, we honor the achievements and celebrate the rich heritage of African Americans.

Throughout our Nation's history, African Americans from all walks of life have offered their talents to the betterment of American society. Scholars such as Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois were early leaders who placed great importance on educating all people about the need for justice and racial equality. Athletes such as Jackie Robinson and Althea Gibson persevered while breaking the color barrier and competing at the highest levels of sports. Musicians like Nat King Cole and Billie Holiday lifted the American spirit with their creativity and musical gifts. Through their extraordinary accomplishments, these leaders helped bring our Nation closer to fulfilling its founding ideals.

This year's theme, "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism," honors an educator who taught his fellow citizens about the traditions and contributions of African Americans. His dedication to educating Americans about cultural diversity initiated this celebration of African-American history. Our Nation is now stronger and more hopeful because generations of leaders like him have worked to help America live up to its promise of equality and the great truth that all of God's children are created equal.

Throughout African American History Month, we celebrate the many contributions African Americans have made to our Nation, and we are reminded of their courage in their struggle to change the hearts and minds of our citizens. While much progress has been made, we must continue to work together to achieve the promise and vision of our great Nation.

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 February 2008 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of January, 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, 8:45 a.m., January 30, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 29, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on January 31.

Remarks During a Visit to the Jericho Program in Baltimore, Maryland

January 29, 2008

Thank you all for coming. I'm proud to be standing with you men. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your hospitality.

Last night in my State of the Union, I highlighted the important work being done by faith-based organizations. This morning I was pleased to visit one of these inspiring groups, the Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, right here in Baltimore. I cannot thank you enough for the chance to take a tour. And Bonnie, you and your staff have been most hospitable.

I've come to look firsthand at the Jericho Program, which is helping former prisoners make a successful transition back to society. There's no more important goal than to help good souls become—come back to our society as productive citizens. I'm honored to have been with those who have worked hard to deal with their circumstances in such a way that they become productive citizens. I'm standing next to two such men, and I met probably seven others downstairs.

I do want to thank Bonnie Ariano for joining me and the Secretary. I'm going to talk about the Secretary's role here in a minute, in this important program. I thank very much Greg Carpenter, a former prisoner who is now a mentor, a leader in this program. And he's a—I appreciate his heart.

I welcome Jay Hein, Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the White House. I do want to thank State Senator David Brinkley for joining us. Senator, I'm proud you're here. I appreciate the Jericho staff. I want to thank the Episcopal Community Services of Maryland board of directors. I appreciate you all coming. I thank you very much for supporting this program.

When I came into office, the Nation's traditions of religious freedom and equal opportunity were facing unnecessary obstacles. Throughout America, religious and community groups were providing effective assistance to people in need, but there was a great reluctance on the part of the Federal Government to help them. There was the notion that somehow that there needed to be a clear separation of church and state, and therefore, we shouldn't be using taxpayers' money to help programs that were helping to meet important national goals.

Unfortunately, in some instances where there was an interface with Government, people were told that in order to interface, you have to take the cross off the wall or take down the Star of David. In other words, you had to abandon the very principle by which you existed in the first place. And it made no sense. If a program was effective because they were willing to recognize a higher power, if a program was effective because people responded because they felt a call from a higher power, then to deny the higher power really reduced the effectiveness of the program.

And so 7 years ago, my administration created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to deal with this problem. We wanted to focus our Government and taxpayers' money on solutions, on effective programs, and we recognized that many of the effective programs existed in the faith community. Washington, DC, oftentimes is a process-oriented town. We need to work hard to make it a results-oriented town. And if one of the compelling national interests is to help good people who have been in prison come back and readjust and learn skills and the attitudes necessary to be a productive citizen, if that's an important national concern, then we ought to turn to programs that are meeting those results. That's what we ought to do.

And that's what's happening right here. That's why I'm here. This is a program that is working, and it is supported by the Federal Government, and it should be.

Since 2001, the Government has leveled the playing field. That's one of our objectives early on in my administration, was to level the playing field, to make it easier for faith-based and community groups to compete for billions of dollars in Federal grants, grants that would help them accomplish their objectives.

With this newfound support, America's faith-based groups are getting results. If you ask people here, is a program working? The answer is, absolutely. It's one thing to ask

the Director; more importantly, it's another thing to ask those who have benefited. These are men who were, in some ways, lost and lonely and found love and redemption at Jericho. I'm going to talk about them in just a second.

But there are all kinds of programs that are helping meet our national needs and goals. There are programs to help provide mentors for 70,000 children whose parents are incarcerated. There are programs to help deal with drug addiction and alcohol addiction, programs to help young people in our inner cities escape gangs. These are all programs where a faith-based or community group has dedicated their lives to solve a problem. And it makes sense for the Federal Government to give these programs a chance to access taxpayers' money.

When we begin the work, we didn't settle for just opening an office in the White House; we opened 11 offices for faith-based and community initiatives throughout the Federal Government. It's one thing for the White House to have an office, but most of the money—or all the money, for that matter is appropriated to different Cabinet officers and their secretariats, and then those distribute the money. And so we wanted to make sure that this faith-based initiative was rooted throughout the Government.

And one of the offices is at the Department of Labor, ably headed by Secretary Elaine Chao. She's a member of my Cabinet. Every year, nearly 650,000 men and women are released from prison, and one of her top priorities, along with the Department of Justice, is to help those readjust to our society. And there's a compelling reason to: half the people getting released from prison go back. And the idea is to help deal with that issue. We don't want people going back to prison. We want to help them readjust in society. And it turns out that faith-based programs are very effective. And this is such a program.

The whole purpose of Jericho is a prisoner reentry initiative. That's why you exist. It's interesting how a program like this works. This is a small program, really, to some of the really large faith-based programs. And by the way, part of our initiative was to encourage what I call social entrepreneurship. It's to stand side by side with smaller programs, because smaller programs, when they're proved to be successful, turn out to be larger programs. And larger programs obviously help more people, but they also serve as an example.

I like the fact that you call yourselves "the Jericho." After all, the walls came tumbling down. That's what's happening here. Old walls are tumbling down, and new lives are being built.

One of the great things about a faith-based program—one of the great aspects of a faith-based program is, there's a lot of people in our society who hear the call to love a neighbor. That's, after all, one of the key tenets of faith, love a neighbor like you'd be—like to love—be loved yourself. And so what you find here is programs supported by people who want to make a difference in our society, and it doesn't require a government law to cause them to do so. You need to pass a law and sign a law that says, you will love your neighbor; there's a higher law that does that. And these programs just gather that love and work to save societies one soul at a time.

And we've got two such souls here. Adolphus Mosely—he came here last summer after having been released from prison, and he graduated from one of Jericho's work training programs. And he started—got him a new job. And he's proud of that.

By the way, first, there's a—people have got to come here and realize that there are people who love them and want to help them. And second, there is the practical application of helping somebody find work. Addiction is hard to overcome. As you might remember, I drank too much at one time in my life. I understand faith-based programs. I understand that sometimes you can find the inspiration from a higher power to solve an addiction problem. This program helps along these folks who have—had been dealing with addictions.

I also appreciate Thomas Boyd. He spent nearly 4 years in prison. He came here in September. And thanks to the program, he's got a new dilemma: He had to choose between several job offers. [*Laughter*] That's a good dilemma to have. He's supporting himself. He's—both these men are reunited with their daughters. They find great pride in the fact that they have chosen a path with

the help of the folks at Jericho. They shared with me their love for their little girls, and I know the feeling. And I appreciate the fact that, you know, that you're on your feet and you're feeling good and strong and you're assuming the responsibility of fatherhood.

And so I've come to herald programs such as the Jericho Program. Our Government should not fear the influence of faith in our society. We ought to welcome faith-based programs. Last night I called on the Government to make the charitable choice provisions of our law permanent. We shouldn't say to programs such as this, we'll help you through a Department of Labor and Justice grant, and then turn our back on the program when it's successful. There ought to be consistency of policy. Our Government ought to welcome results. We ought to say, thank God there are people such as this in our neighborhoods and societies helping these good men.

So it's an honor to be here. I'm proud to be in the presence of Americans who care deeply about our country and are willing to do something about the future of the country by helping lost souls find love and hope in their lives. And I want to thank the—I want to thank very much the Episcopal Community Services for sponsoring this program.

Again, I want to thank you all for leading with your hearts. Thank these two good men for joining me today. God bless you. Proud to be with you. Thank you.

All right. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. at the Robert M. Davis House. In his remarks, he referred to Bonnie Ariano, director, and Greg Carpenter, coordinator for mentoring and training, Jericho Program.

Remarks on Signing the Executive Order on Protecting American Taxpayers From Government Spending on Wasteful Earmarks

January 29, 2008

Director Nussle, thank you. Before I sign the Executive order on earmarks, I do want to congratulate the House of Representatives for overwhelmingly passing a economic growth package that will help our economy. The temptation is going to be for the Senate to load it up. My concerns is that we need to get this bill out of the Senate and on my desk so the checks can get in the hands of our consumers and our businesses can be assured of the incentives necessary to make investments.

Anyway, I do want to thank the Speaker and Leader Boehner for working quickly and working in a bipartisan fashion. This is a very good start.

And now I'm going to sign this Executive order. Last night I said that it's very important for Congress to earn the trust of the American taxpayer, and one way they should do so is to end the practice of earmarks. Now, I said last year that they should voluntarily cut the number in half—not only the number but the amount of earmarks in half. They chose not to do so. So last night I told the Congress that I would veto any bill, appropriations bill, that does not cut the number and the amount of earmarks in half.

Secondly, there's a practice here in Washington—and I'm not sure many of our citizens understand it takes place—where Members just put in special spending projects into what's called report language. That means that these projects never were voted on, never really saw the light of day. And this Executive order says that any such earmarks this year and into the future will be ignored by this administration and, hopefully, future administrations, unless those spending projects were voted on by the Congress.

The American people expect there to be transparency in the process. They expect the people to be—here in Washington to be wise about how they spend their money. And this Executive order will go a long way toward sending that signal to the Congress and, at the same time, earning the trust of the American people.

So, Mr. Director, thank you for your leadership on the issue. It was the right course of action to take, and I am proud to have signed the Executive order. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Office of Management and Budget Director James A. Nussle. He also referred to Executive Order 13457.

Executive Order 13457—Protecting American Taxpayers From Government Spending on Wasteful Earmarks

January 29, 2008

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Policy*. It is the policy of the Federal Government to be judicious in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars. To ensure the proper use of taxpayer funds that are appropriated for Government programs and purposes, it is necessary that the number and cost of earmarks be reduced, that their origin and purposes be transparent, and that they be included in the text of the bills voted upon by the Congress and presented to the President. For appropriations laws and other legislation enacted after the date of this order, executive agencies should not commit, obligate, or expend funds on the basis of earmarks included in any non-statutory source, including requests in reports of committees of the Congress or other congressional documents, or communications from or on behalf of Members of Congress, or any other non-statutory source, except when required by law or when an agency has itself determined a project, program, activity, grant, or other transaction to have merit under statutory criteria or other merit-based decisionmaking.

Sec. 2. *Duties of Agency Heads*. (a) With respect to all appropriations laws and other legislation enacted after the date of this order, the head of each agency shall take all necessary steps to ensure that:

(i) agency decisions to commit, obligate, or expend funds for any earmark are based on the text of laws, and in particular, are not based on language in any report of a committee of Congress, joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference of the Congress, statement of managers concerning a bill in the Congress, or any other non-statutory statement or indication of views of the Congress, or a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff thereof;

(ii) agency decisions to commit, obligate, or expend funds for any earmark are based on authorized, transparent, statutory criteria and merit-based decision making, in the manner set forth in section II of OMB Memorandum M–07–10, dated February 15, 2007, to the extent consistent with applicable law; and

(iii) no oral or written communications concerning earmarks shall supersede statutory criteria, competitive awards, or merit-based decisionmaking.

(b) An agency shall not consider the views of a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff of the Congress with respect to commitments, obligations, or expenditures to carry out any earmark unless such views are in writing, to facilitate consideration in accordance with section 2(a)(ii) above. All written communications from the Congress, or a House, committee, Member, officer, or staff thereof, recommending that funds be committed, obligated, or expended on any earmark shall be made publicly available on the Internet by the receiving agency, not later than 30 days after receipt of such communication, unless otherwise specifically directed by the head of the agency, without delegation, after consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to preserve appropriate confidentiality between the executive and legislative branches.

(c) Heads of agencies shall otherwise implement within their respective agencies the policy set forth in section 1 of this order, consistent with such instructions as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may prescribe.

(d) The head of each agency shall upon request provide to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget information about earmarks and compliance with this order.

Sec. 3. *Definitions*. For purposes of this order:

(a) The term "agency" means an executive agency as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, and the United States Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission, but shall exclude the Government Accountability Office; and

(b) the term "earmark" means funds provided by the Congress for projects, programs, or grants where the purported congressional direction (whether in statutory text, report language, or other communication) circumvents otherwise applicable merit-based or competitive allocation processes, or specifies the location or recipient, or otherwise curtails the ability of the executive branch to manage its statutory and constitutional responsibilities pertaining to the funds allocation process.

Sec. 4. *General Provisions*. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) authority granted by law to an agency or the head thereof; or

(ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented in a manner consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 29, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:02 a.m., January 31, 2008]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 1.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combatant Commanders

January 29, 2008

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, we're glad you're here. The Vice President and I welcome you all. One of the highlights of my year is to meet with combatant commanders and the Joint Chiefs. We'll have a visit here in the Cabinet Room, talking about the war on terror and the ideological struggle that we're engaged in. We'll talk about our common desire to protect America and how best to do so. And then we're going to have dinner with your spouses, and Laura and I are really looking forward to having you upstairs.

I love our military, and the reason I do is because the character of those who wear our uniform, whether they be the general or the private, is remarkable. We're a nation that has produced people who are willing to volunteer in the face of danger—thank goodness. And as a result, we are a nation in the lead in helping defend this world against extremists who murder the innocent to achieve an ideological objective.

And our military is compassionate as well. I'm looking forward to the stories from our commanders who will share with us the great compassion of our soldiers, whether it's to provide relief from a disaster or to help some child recognize the beauty of going to school.

And so I want to thank you for coming and thank you for serving, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:11 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Margaret Truman Daniel

January 29, 2008

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Margaret Truman Daniel. The only child of our 33d President, she supported her father as he confronted the difficult challenges of his Presidency, witnessing firsthand the leadership of Harry Truman in both war and peace. An accomplished author and singer, her life was one of tremendous personal achievement. Our thoughts and prayers are with Margaret Truman Daniel's sons and the rest of the Truman family.

Memorandum on Unexpected Urgent Refugee and Migration Needs Related to Africa and the Middle East

January 29, 2008

Presidential Determination No. 2008–10

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Unexpected Urgent Refugee and Migration Needs Related to Africa and the Middle East

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 2 and 4(a)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (the "Act"), as amended (22 U.S.C. 2601 and 2603), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code:

(1) I hereby determine, pursuant to 2(c)(1) of the Act, that it is important to the national interest to furnish assistance under the Act in an amount not to exceed $32 million from the United States Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund for the purpose of meeting unexpected and urgent refugee and migration needs, including by contributions to international, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations and payment of administrative expenses of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the Department of State, related to humanitarian needs in Africa and in the West Bank and Gaza; and

(2) the functions of the President in relation to this memorandum under 2(d) of the Act, and of establishing terms and conditions under section 2(c)(1) of the Act, are assigned to you.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:58 a.m., February 1, 2008]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on February 4.

Memorandum on Review of Recommendations From the Public Interest Declassification Board

January 29, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Director of National Intelligence, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Counsel to the President, and the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism

Subject: Review of Recommendations From the Public Interest Declassification Board

The Public Interest Declassification Board, an advisory group established by the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000, as amended (50 U.S.C. 435 note), has submitted a report entitled "Improving Declassification." The report addresses 15 issues and makes 49 recommendations relating to declassification of classified national security information.

Please submit in writing no later than April 15, 2008, through the Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs and for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, your views on each of the recommendations, including with respect to each recommendation your view of whether and to what extent it should be implemented. Your views with respect to the recommendations should take into account the public interest in declassification of national security information, effective records management, and the effective conduct of United States diplomatic, economic, military, energy, homeland security, and intelligence activities, as well as such other matters as you deem appropriate for consideration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 30.

Remarks at Robinson Helicopter Company in Torrance, California

January 30, 2008

Thank you all. So my daughters are going to be envious I was introduced by Arnold. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you, Governor. Thanks for your strong leadership; thanks for your friendship. You know, California is a really important State for our country, and I think a lot of Californians appreciate the fact that you're steady at the helm. Thank you for having us.

Frank, thank you very much for your hospitality. Some say, "Why do you want to come to Robinson Helicopter Company?" Well, first, I love entrepreneurs and dreamers. And your boy told me that you dreamt about a company, and you started it in your kitchen. Isn't it interesting? The company was started in the kitchen, and now he's got the Terminator coming by to herald the success. [*Laughter*] I mean, this is—I love America, because we stand for dreams that can be accomplished.

And so the first reason I'm here is, I want to congratulate the Robinsons for living a dream and for giving people good work. Arnold and I had the pleasure of working the floor and shaking hands with people who are making a living for their families. And so you're building good helicopters, but more importantly, you're providing people a chance to work, and I appreciate that a lot.

The other reason I'm here is, I want to spend a little time talking about the economy and about what we can do to help in the short term and in the long term.

Before I do, I do want to also welcome Congresswoman Jane Harman. This is her district, and I'm proud to have traveled from Washington to California with her. Jane, thank you for coming; appreciate your time being here.

And Dreier and Royce are with us too, as well—that would be Congressman Dreier and Congressman Royce. I appreciate you all joining us; thank you for your time. Mayor, thanks for coming.

I hope you're confident about our economy. I am. We've got some short-term issues to deal with. Fourth quarter growth slowed to .6 percent. In other words, there are signs that our economy are slowing. There's some uncertainty in the economy, but in the long run, you've got to be confident about your economy. Inflation is down; interest rates are low; productivity is high. Our economy is flexible; it is resilient. We've been through problems before. As a matter of fact, we've been through problems before since I was your President. We've had a recession, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America; we've had major national disasters. And every time, we've come through strong, and that what's going to happen this time too.

But the Federal Government can help. We can have some smart policy out of Washington. And the smartest thing we can do is to help deal with the uncertainty by putting about $145 billion into your pockets so you can spend it, which will help this economy stay strong, and at the same time, part of that $145 billion is to provide incentives for businesses, large and small, to invest. See, when you provide an incentive for a company to invest, they go out and buy a machine. And when they buy that machine, somebody has to put labor into the machine; somebody is working.

So the whole purpose of a stimulus package is to have something robust enough to make a difference, temporary enough that—so that we can balance our budget over time, and simple enough to be effective. And as the Governor mentioned, we reached an agreement with both Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives on a package that's simple, robust, and effective. And now the Senate is debating the issue. And I understand people having their points of view, and of course, we welcome points of view in Washington. There appears to be a lot of them up there. [*Laughter*]

But whatever the Senate does, they should not delay this package. They should not keep money out of your pocket. The sooner you get a check, the more likely it is that the stimulus package will kick in and make a difference. So my attitude is, if you're truly interested in dealing with the slowdown of the economy, the Senate ought to accept the House package, pass it, and get it to my desk as soon as possible. That's what I want to talk about.

I also want to talk about trade. Now, people in our country—let's be perfectly frank about it—you hear them say, trade isn't any good; it doesn't help. If I were a worker at Robinson, I'd be arguing against that. You've got good jobs here. People are working, and 70 percent of what you make gets sold overseas. So you can't tell the people at Robinson Helicopter that trade isn't good. When 70 percent of that which you manufacture gets sold somewhere else other than the United States, they ought to have a sign walking in here and say, trade is not only good, it is great, and we want the Federal Government to make it easier for us to sell products.

That's what trade is really about, isn't it? If you're good at something—and you're good at making helicopters—then you ought to have your Government making it easier to sell your product, not harder. Mr. Robinson said 70 percent of the revenues from his company are a result of products being sold overseas. And that happens in a lot of companies in America, by the way. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that our growth last year, a third of that growth was caused by exports. When people are selling something overseas, it means somebody is working. And there's a lot of customers overseas.

So one of the goals of this administration is to reduce trade barriers. The interesting thing about what I'm about to tell you on three free trade agreements that we're hoping Congress votes on here pretty soon is that we're not treated the same way. In other words, they got their goods and services coming to our country without a lot of tariffs. And when we're trying to sell into their countries, they're taxing it, which makes it much harder to sell.

Reasonable policy says to nations, you treat us the way we treat you. That's all we're asking for. We're saying to countries, if your goods and services are coming here—which, by the way, are good for our consumers; like if you're a consumer, you want a lot of choices, you want a lot of different options. But we want to be treated equally too. Good trade policy is fair trade policy.

And so these trade agreements I'm about to describe to you level the playing field. When I say level the playing field, it means we'll be treated equally. And that's important, because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, just as long as the rules are fair. That's what I think. I think our workers are the best in the world. I said in the State of the Union the other night, let's open the—level the playing field, open up markets, so the best workers in the world can have the fruits of their labor sold overseas. And that's what trade is all about. You got people in this country saying, "Oh, trade doesn't matter." I'm telling you it matters. It matters to our economy, and it matters to the jobs right here at Robinson Manufacturer—Robinson Helicopter.

The other interesting thing about trade is, if you're working for a company that's selling goods overseas, you're likely to be paid higher wages. Trade yields better pay.

So what are you going to do about it, Mr. President? It's one thing to talk about the benefits of trade. Well, we've negotiated free trade agreements. In other words, we sat down with countries and said, let's get a free trade agreement in place. And we reduced barriers and tariffs through the negotiations, and there are three such agreements before the Congress. There was four; Congress recently passed a deal with Peru. And we want to do the same thing with Colombia and Panama and South Korea.

Now, for the person working here at Robinson, I don't know if you know this, but when you try to sell into Colombia, part of your—part of the helicopter parts face a 5-percent surcharge. That makes it harder to sell something in—when something is taxed, it's harder to sell into a market.

The free trade agreement we've negotiated will eliminate that surcharge. It makes it more likely that these products will be sold to Colombia and Panama. There's a 15-percent tax on the helicopter you manufacture. I've been told there's a 15-percent tax. I believe there's a 15-percent tax, and I know that a free trade agreement will reduce that tax, which means it's more likely you're going to sell a helicopter into Panama. And when you're more likely to sell a helicopter to Panama, it means you're more likely to keep work, that's what that means.

Free trade means jobs for Americans. Free trade means good-paying jobs for Americans.

And so Congress needs to pass these agreements for the sake of economic vitality. And Arnold talked about the effect for the State of California—you're selling hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods out of California to other parts of the world. And we need to keep that trend going. I mean, if we don't want to worry about our economy long term, you need your Government knocking down barriers to our products and on goods and services.

Congress is going to have a vote coming up pretty soon on Colombia. If it were an easy vote, I wouldn't be talking about it, but it's going to be a tough vote. Some say trade hurts our economy. These are good, decent people. I just beg to disagree—I respectfully disagree and would ask them to think about the example of this company right here. Some say it really doesn't matter. I think it matters a lot to our standing in the world as to whether or not we support a friend.

Colombia is an important country for our interests. They've got a good President, named President Uribe. And he inherited a tough deal, a tough situation, where he's fighting off drug lords and drug traffickers, people who are manufacturing drugs that come and pollute our kids. And he's taking the fight to this enemy. And he's an ally. And he wants this free trade agreement passed. It's in his country's interests.

And if we reject this opportunity to support a friend with good economic policy, if we turn down this free trade agreement, it will hurt our relations in South America. It will give the voices of false populism something to say. It is in our strategic interests that we support democracies in our neighborhood. And it's in our strategic interest and our economic interest that the United States Congress passes this free trade agreement with Colombia.

I'm looking forward to making the case for Panama and South Korea as well. The first vote coming up is Colombia. And I'm looking forward to traveling this country, talking to people about the benefits of free trade and the importance of this free trade agreement. We're also going to try to get a Doha round of trade, in other words, opening up—around the world, opening up trade.

I hope you share the same concern I have about people living in terrible poverty. You know, we're in this ideological struggle against, I called them last night "evil men," and I meant what I said. There are people that murder the innocent to achieve political objectives. And the only way they can sell their ideology is when they find hopeless people. And you can find hopeless people in places where there's no hope because the economies are sick. The best way to help people is not to give people your taxpayers' money, but to encourage enterprise through commerce and trade. So the Doha round is a great opportunity to advance prosperity around the world and deal a serious blow to those who exploit the hopeless.

The other thing about trade that I want you to know is that sometimes when trade takes place, somebody loses work, and I understand that, and that's not a happy circumstance. And the Government has a—ought to help people. One response is, okay, let's just don't trade at all, which would be bad, in my judgment. The other response is, let's have job training to help somebody get the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. It's called trade adjustment assistance, and it's a vital program.

And when you combine trade adjustment assistance with our community colleges, what you've got is a great opportunity to help people who've lost a job because of trade find the skills necessary to get a better paying job. And so for the critics who say, "Well, people lose work," my answer is, the benefits for the country as a whole are important, but we will help you, the individual, get your life back together with good education.

And finally, I want to say something about investment. It's very important for our country to be open for investment without sacrificing our national security. There's some countries around the world that have accumulated large amounts of money. Sometimes it's our money. And it makes sense to say to somebody, sure, you can invest in America. I noticed the other day one of these Wall Street firms had a big chunk of foreign money invest on their—in their balance sheet. We ought to say, you bet, absolutely, you're welcome to invest in the United States

of America. Investment means jobs and productivity increases.

Now, we're going to do it in a way that doesn't sacrifice national security. We'll analyze investments. But this Nation ought to not close our doors and be fearful. We ought to be confident because we're a great people. We've overcome problems throughout our history. There will be other problems in the future, and every time, we can overcome them.

So I appreciate you giving me a chance, Mr. Robinson, to come and visit with you. I especially was pleased to meet your employees. It's a good group of folks, highly motivated and hard-working, and they were very hospitable, and for that, the Governor and I are very grateful.

Governor, I've got my own helicopter driver, thank you. [*Laughter*] But I'm proud to be with you, and more importantly, I'm proud to be with you all. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; Frank Robinson, president and chief executive officer, and his son, Kurt Robinson, vice president for product support, Robinson Helicopter Company; and Mayor Frank Scotto of Torrance, CA.

Remarks on the War on Terror in Las Vegas, Nevada

January 31, 2008

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thank you. So what Ranson didn't tell you is he believes in free speech, and that's what I'm here to give. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the invitation. [*Laughter*] Sharon, thank you very much as well.

I'm honored to be here with the Governor. Governor—the Governor has been a friend of mine for a long time. We served together in Washington. He came back to Nevada—[*laughter*]—to serve the great State. As my wife said, when you get over there, don't mispronounce it again. [*Laughter*] I learned my lesson. But Governor, thank you for being here. I appreciate all the State and local officials who are here, and I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and share some thoughts about the world in which we live.

I do appreciate very much your advocacy of open markets, ownership. I believe the ownership society is necessary for a hopeful America. We want people owning their homes. We want people owning and managing their own health care accounts. We want people managing their pension plans. We ought to trust people. And at my State of the Union—one of the themes at the State of the Union was that government ought to trust people and empower them to make their own decisions about their future. And this institute does that, and I appreciate it very much. I thank you for being on the forefront of good, optimistic thought.

The world in which we live is a dangerous world, but a world full of great opportunity. We're involved in an ideological struggle, the likes of which we have seen before in our history. It's an ideological struggle between those of us who love freedom and human rights and human dignity and those who want to impose their dark vision on how people should live their lives. This is a—not a political conflict—I mean, a religious conflict. And I'll tell you why: Because one of the tactics—and the main tactic of those enemies of freedom—is to murder the innocent to achieve their objectives. Religious people do not murder the innocent.

And so we're facing this ideological struggle of people who use asymmetrical warfare. What distinguishes this ideological struggle from previous ideological struggles, those with—against fascism or communism, is that in this war, individuals use weapons to kill innocent people—car bombs and suicide vests. And they do so to frighten the West. They do so to create chaos and confusion. They do so with the aim of creating vacuums into which their hateful ideology can flow. And that's why you see the September 11th attacks, in London, in Madrid, in Jordan, attacks around the world. Some will say these are just isolated moments of—where all we need is a good, strong law enforcement response. I think they're all part of an ideological struggle.

And the interesting development that is taking place in the beginnings here of the

21st century is the freedom movement is on the march. I'm not surprised, and you shouldn't be either. I believe there is an Almighty. I believe the gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom. I believe that people, if given a chance, will always go to freedom, and that's what you're beginning to see.

And yet every time freedom tries to advance, these ideologues murder innocent people—in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Israel, in Palestine. People who can't stand the thought of free societies unleash their hatred by killing innocent people. And the great challenge facing America and the world is, one, will we recognize the challenge? Do we understand the consequences of success and failure? And will the United States be bold and stay in the lead? And my answer is, we have been, we will continue to be, and we must be engaged in making sure we lay the foundation of peace for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

We will prevail. We will prevail in this ideological struggle because liberty is powerful. Liberty is hopeful. The enemy we face can only convince people to join their cause is when they find hopelessness. And so our strategy is threefold: One, protect the homeland; two, stay on the offense against these folks; and three, provide an alternative, a hopeful alternative to despair and doubt and hopelessness.

So today I want to spend some time on the strategy. The first—our most important job in government—whether it be the Federal Government, State government, or local government—is to protect you. And remember the lessons of September the 11th, that oceans cannot protect us, that we face cold-blooded killers who, in our case, resorted to mass murder to send a message. We've got—you know, thankfully there hasn't been an attack on our homeland since then. That's not for the lack of effort by these evil people.

I hope you take heart in knowing there are a lot of really fine people working long, long hours to get the best information possible to protect the homeland. There's a—unbelievably dedicated folks. And as I said in the State of the Union the other night, we owe these folks a debt of gratitude. And we owe them more; we owe them the tools necessary to protect the American people.

And one such tool in this different kind of war is to fully understand the intentions, the motives, the plans of people who use suicide and bombs to kill the innocent. If these terrorists and extremists are making phone calls into our country, we need to know why they're calling, what they're thinking, and what they're planning. In order to protect the American people, our professionals need to have the tools necessary to do their job you expect them to do. And one such tool is a surveillance program that guarantees the rights of our citizens, but doesn't extend those same guarantees to those who would do us harm.

Congress passed such a bill last year. They recognized that this tool was important to protect America. And yet, unfortunately, the bill they passed is set to expire tomorrow—or was set to expire tomorrow. Now, it's an interesting train of logic, isn't it? The tool was necessary 6 months ago, and yet it was set to expire as if the threat to our country was set to expire. But it's not. There's still ongoing threats.

I will sign today, here in Las Vegas, an extension, 15-day extension to the Protect America Act. This will give people in Congress time to pass a good piece of legislation that makes sure that our professionals have the tools necessary to do their job and provides liability protection to carriers who it is assumed helped us in protecting the American people. This Protect America Act and its strengthening is essential to the security of the United States of America. I will sign the extension, but I expect members from both political parties to get this work done so our professionals can protect the American people.

The second part of our strategy is to stay on the offense against these folks—I mean, every day, stay on the offense, an unrelenting effort to find them and bring them to justice. It's hard to plot, plan, and attack America if you're running and hiding. It's hard to recruit if you're cutting off money. It is hard to spread your poison if other reasonable people join the cause. And so we spend a lot of time doing everything we can to keep

the pressure on these folks. And we got some good people working it.

I repeat to you, I know there's some good folks who think this is just simply a law enforcement matter. It is not. This is an effort that requires all assets of the United States and requires coalitions working together. I mean, we need to be sharing intelligence. We need our military on the hunt. We need to be working with allies to keep the pressure on them. And that's exactly what we're doing. America must not relent. If our most important job is to protect the American people, we have got to stay on the offense and defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

The third part of our strategy is to spread liberty. I love to tell folks that one of the most unique relationships I had as your President was with the Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi. He's no longer the Prime Minister, but for a good period of time during my Presidency, he was. You might remember, he's the fellow that Laura and I took to Elvis's place in Memphis. [*Laughter*] He loved Elvis, and he wanted to go to Elvis's place. [*Laughter*] And it was a—we had a—it was a remarkable experience. [*Laughter*]

Even more remarkable was the fact that the United States had no stronger ally in defeating terror, no stronger ally than understanding the power of freedom to be transformative. I say "no stronger ally"—Tony Blair was strong; there was a lot. But so was Prime Minister Koizumi. What's ironic about that is that my dad fought the Japanese. Many of your relatives fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. I mean, there was unbelievable hatred in our culture toward the Japanese. After all, they attacked us—the second largest attack on American soil—the first being that on September the 11th, 2001.

And yet 60 years later, the son of a Navy fighter pilot was sitting at the table with the Prime Minister of the former enemy strategizing on how to win this ideological war. I find it ironic. The summary I've come away with is that liberty is transformative. People want to be free, and if given the chance, will be free, do the hard work necessary to be free. And liberty has got the capacity to transform an enemy to an ally.

And therefore, we ought to have confidence in liberty's power to bring the peace we want, and not shy away from helping people realize the great blessings of freedom. We've got to be confident in the transformative powers of liberty, recognizing that deep in everybody's soul is the desire to be free. I recognize that is a—there are some in the world who dismiss the capacity of liberty to take hold in parts of the world. There used to be a foreign policy that advocated stability as the cornerstone of our policy. But stability just masked the hopelessness that seethed beneath the surface. If you believe this is an ideological struggle, like I do, then it's paramount to help people realize a different ideology than that of the enemy. And that's what you're seeing unfold.

And the two most evident places that that's happening right now is in Afghanistan and Iraq. Both those countries are part of the war on terror. These aren't separate, you know, wars; they're part of the same war—different theaters, certainly different circumstances, but the outcome is essential for our security. And so I want to spend a little time on Afghanistan and a little time on Iraq.

In Afghanistan—the interesting lesson on Afghanistan for the world to see is that how the vision of the enemy would be implemented—in other words, these poor folks had the Taliban as their oppressors. The Taliban also, as you might remember, provided safe haven to those who came and attacked us. But if you lived in Afghanistan in those days and were a mom of a child, particularly a female child, you had no hope. These thugs didn't believe in freedoms; they didn't believe in women having equal status; they didn't believe young girls should be educated. And if you dared express your opinion that didn't mesh with theirs, you'd be whipped in the public square or killed. These are brutal people. That's the vision that these folks have for the world. That's what they want. Some Americans probably just missed that and say, "Oh, that's just a pipedream, pie in the sky on their part."

I think the United States needs to take that vision seriously. I think it's in our interest to liberate people. I think it's in our interest

that when we find human suffering, we help deal with it.

In Afghanistan, I am proud to report that the United States of America, thanks to a brave military, liberated 25 million people and gave them a chance to realize the blessings of liberty. Since liberation from the Taliban and since Al Qaida was routed out of that country, where they no longer had safe havens to plot and plan an attack, the people of Afghanistan voted for a President; they voted for a Parliament; girls now go to school; highways are being built; health clinics are being constructed around the country.

Is it perfect Government? No, but neither were we. I would remind our fellow citizens that we believed all men were created equal and for a 100 years had slaves. Afghanistan is working on their—on democracy. And it's hard work. It's not easy. It's like it doesn't happen overnight. But it's in our interest to help them. It's in our interest to help them because we believe that liberty is transformative. And a part of the world that was once a safe haven for an enemy that attacked us will be a more hopeful place when freedom takes hold.

The other night to the Nation I said, we're sending 3,200 marines in to supplement our troops there. And the reason why is because this enemy is relentless in trying to overthrow this democracy, and it's in our interest to stop them. You see, we've got to do the hard work now to make sure that a future generation of Americans can grow up in peace.

In Iraq, the decision to remove Saddam Hussein was the right decision. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power, and so are the Iraqi people. There has been some interesting progress in Iraq. They wrote a Constitution. They voted. Imagine a society going from a brutal tyrant to being able to vote in a short period of time.

And yet the enemy—in this case, Al Qaida as well as militia, militia fighters, some sponsored by Iran, some of them just pure criminals—resented the fact that freedom was moving and in early 2006 began a campaign, and they were looking like they were successful. There was unspeakable violence, and I was concerned about it. I was concerned about it because I understand the consequences of failure for our peace, for the future peace for our children.

I had to make a tough decision. And the decision I made was based on the considered judgment of military people, considered judgment of a lot of folks who were following Iraq. It was not based upon any Gallup Poll or focus group. It was based upon what was right for the future of the United States, and that is, as opposed to pulling troops out, send more in. And we went in with a counterinsurgency strategy, all aimed at, of course, helping the Iraqis stand up and do the hard work necessary, but in the meantime, making sure that when the enemy was cleaned out of neighborhoods, there was somebody there to provide security for the folks.

Our surge, by the way, was more than just military. We surged diplomats and public service officials, Provincial Reconstruction Teams to make sure that in neighborhoods where an enemy had been routed—and we had folks there, along with the Iraqis, to provide security—that there was also a opportunity to improve life for the average citizen. The Iraqis surged. They created 100,000 new soldiers and police. But curiously enough, and I don't know whether a lot of our citizens understand this, 80,000 local citizens stepped up and said, "We want to help patrol our own neighborhoods. We're sick and tired of violence and extremists."

I'm not surprised that that happens. I believe Iraqi moms want the same thing that American moms want, and that is for their children to grow up in peace. That's what I believe. I don't believe that people welcome violence. They got sick of it. People want to be free. People want to live in peace, whether you're Methodist or a Muslim, whether you're American or Iraqi. And what you're watching play out now is that—folks are becoming more confident in their capacity to self-govern. They're becoming confident that if they step up and expose these extremists or push these extremists out of their neighborhood, there will be enough muscle to help them.

The surge is working. I know some don't want to admit that, and I understand. But the terrorists understand the surge is working. Al Qaida knows the surge is working.

They thought they could live safely in Anbar Province. This was the place from which they were going to launch attacks throughout Iraq and throughout the Middle East. This is a place where they proudly proclaimed, "This is our safe haven." They no longer have a safe haven in Anbar Province; they're on the run. We're going to keep them on the run, and it's in our interests for our own security to keep them on the run.

As a result of our successes, some of our troops are coming home. A Marine expeditionary unit and one Army brigade came home in December. It's not going back. I don't know whether my fellow citizens understand that or not. We surged; we accomplished missions; the Iraqis are more capable. The commanders on the ground say that now we can do the same job with less troops. So folks came home for Christmas. It is anticipated that five [four] * more Army brigades and two Marine battalions will be coming home by July. That's over 20,000 troops will be coming home—[*applause*]—because we've been successful, that's why.

You know, a lot of folks say, "Well, what's next, Mr. President?" And my answer is, we have come too far in this important theater in this war on terror not to make sure that we succeed. And therefore, any further troop reductions will be based upon commanders and conditions. Iraq is important for our security. I will be making decisions based upon success in Iraq. The temptation, of course, is for people to say, "Well, make sure you do the politically right thing." That's not my nature. That's not exactly what we're going to do.

The fundamental question is whether or not democracy can take hold. In other words, the security situation is improving, and therefore, will there be efforts by the Iraqi people to seize the moment? Reconciliation is taking place at the local level. People—as I told you, the basic instinct of people is to want to live in peace, and one way you do that is you put this horrible past as best you can behind you and look forward.

So the two things I look for are, one, economic development—you know, a good economy will lead to a more hopeful future, therefore, causing people to be more likely to reconcile—and politics. On the economic front, the interesting thing about Iraq, as opposed to Afghanistan, is that they've got assets and a lot of money. And we, of course, want to help them build the ministries and the bureaucracies necessary to make sure that money gets spent on people. I know that may sound counterintuitive to you, but governments do need the capacity to take a budget and distribute monies throughout the country in an equitable basis in order for people to say, "Well, this experience in democracy is worthwhile." I just want to make sure the bureaucracy doesn't get too big when you do it.

And so we—you know, we chart business startups and markets. And all I can tell you is I talk to our Ambassador and General Petraeus on a weekly basis, and they report that markets that were once shut down in dismal places as a result of attacks are beginning to come back and flourish, and life is improving dramatically. Baghdad—the capital of Baghdad is—which was once subject to unbelievable sectarian violence—is improving, and life is returning, and that's positive.

And so we watched a lot about the inflation rates and unemployment rates. And they're doing pretty well, they really are, given the fact that they've come from a tyrannical regime that let the infrastructure of the country fall apart.

The other question is politics. One of the lessons of democracy is, a lot of times what happens at the local level informs people who are at the central Government level. And competition is pretty healthy in a democracy. As I told you, the local folks are reconciling; they're getting along better; they understand they have a common future. And the people in Baghdad are beginning to respond. They pass budgets. They're now arguing about their 2008 budget. I'm not sure which Government does their budget work better, ours or theirs. [*Laughter*] I can tell you this: We definitely have an issue with earmarks. [*Laughter*] I don't know if they do yet or not. [*Laughter*]

And by the way, I'm going to do something about earmarks. I signed an Executive order the other day, basically saying if you slip

* White House correction.

these—slip this spending into bills that don't get debated or voted on, we're not going to spend your money. And this Executive order will—[*applause*]. Let me rephrase that. The money will be spent, but just not on those projects necessarily—[*laughter*]—not on those projects necessarily. And this Executive order goes beyond my Presidency.

But they passed budgets. They're sharing oil revenues. They need to pass a law codifying the oil issue there, but they are sharing oil revenues. And they've got revenues, mainly from oil, and they're distributing those revenues to the Provinces. They passed a pension law and a de-Ba'athification law, which basically is a part of reconciling with the past. They're now in the process of debating a Provincial powers law.

And what's important about that is the—there's a constant debate in free societies—at least in our free society—about the relationship between the Federal Government and State governments. The Governor is most interested in that debate. [*Laughter*] We believe to the best extent possible that we ought to devolve power. Of course, we even take it—this group here, including me—takes it a step further. We devolve power not only in local government but more importantly to individuals, which help define the political landscape of both State and locals.

But this debate is now ongoing in Iraq. Isn't it interesting? I know 4 years seems like an eternity, particularly in this world of instant news and 24-hour whatever on TV. But it's—but Saddam is removed and now a Government elected by the people debating the proper role between central Government and Provincial government. And that's an important debate. And it's ongoing in the Council of Representatives now, and we anticipate them passing that bill.

What I'm telling you is, you're watching a democracy evolve. You're watching people become more confident in their ability to self-govern. And it's important that we help them. It's important we help them for our own security, and it's important that we help them as a part of this freedom movement. People have said, "Freedom can't take hold in the Middle East." I strongly disagree. I believe freedom will take hold in the Middle East, and Iraq is an essential part of this strategy.

We will succeed in Iraq. We will succeed because the Iraqi people want to succeed. And it's in our interest to help them. Success in Iraq will show the world that freedom can take root in the Middle East and inspire others. Success in Iraq will mean that we'll have a ally in this struggle against extremists in the heart of the Middle East. Success in Iraq will send an interesting message to its neighbor, Iran.

Failure in Iraq would cause people to doubt the sincerity of the United States when it comes to keeping commitments. Failure in Iraq would embolden the extremists. Failure in Iraq would say to thugs and killers, the United States is a paper tiger. Failure in Iraq would embolden other extremists in the Middle East. Failure in Iraq would embolden Iran. It's in our strategic interests that we succeed, and we will succeed. We have done this kind of work together.

I said in my speech the other day that it is vital for this generation to do the hard work. It is vital for this generation to assume the responsibilities of peace and take the lead so that when we look back 30 to 40 years from now, people will say, "Thank goodness America didn't lose faith with liberty. Thank goodness they didn't abandon a value system that they believe is universal." And I believe an American President will be sitting down with elected leaders from the Middle East saying the same thing to audiences in Nevada that I said about Prime Minister Koizumi.

I hope that you are inspired by the fact that people are willing to take risks for freedom. I hope these examples of Iraqi citizens who step forward to protect their neighborhoods and their families and children inspire you. They certainly inspire me. I hope you're inspired by political figures who defy killers. They inspire me. And I hope you're inspired by our military.

I want to tell you an interesting story. When I was in Reno, I met a guy—a family named the Krissoff family. They had lost a son in Iraq. He was a marine. And one of my duties is to meet with the families of the fallen. I did so last night in northern California. It's an inspiring experience, by the way. It is a—you know, in many ways the

comforter becomes comforted by the spirit and—of these—and pride of these families.

And so I met the Krissoffs. Mr. Krissoff is a 60-year-old guy—I shouldn't be calling him "mister" because I'm a little older than he is—[*laughter*]—but he's a baby boomer just like me and a successful doctor. He said something very interesting to me. He said that he wanted to honor his country and honor his son by joining the military. I looked at the guy and said, yes, okay. [*Laughter*] I said, why don't you? He said, "Well, some of the folks think I'm a little old." [*Laughter*] I said, I don't—with him being a younger fella. [*Laughter*] So I helped him. And in Laura's box at the State of the Union sat Lieutenant Commander Bill Krissoff, serving the United States of America.

Ours is a fabulous country. We are a dedicated, compassionate people, aiming to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. I told you early, some see the world and tremble. I see the world and see opportunities. And the great opportunity before us is to lay the foundation of peace, and that is exactly what we're doing. God bless.

Thank you all. Okay, I got a little bit of business to do. If you don't mind sitting down for just a second, I am now going to sign this 15-day extension to give Members of the House and the Senate time to get this bill to my desk for the sake of our security. And thank you for witnessing this.

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

Thank you all very much. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at the Emerald at Queensridge. In his remarks, he referred to Ranson W. Webster, chairman of the board of directors, and Sharon J. Rossie, president, Nevada Policy Research Institute; Gov. Jim Gibbons of Nevada; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. He also referred to Executive Order 13457 and H.R. 5104, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–182.

Remarks on Signing the American Heart Month Proclamation in Kansas City, Missouri

February 1, 2008

The President. Joyce, thank you for joining me.

Joyce Cullen. Thank you.

The President. Joyce is here to join me as I sign a proclamation declaring February American Heart Month.

Part of the reason she is here is because she understands what Laura understands and what a lot of Americans are coming to understand, is that heart disease is the number-one killer of both women and men——

Ms. Cullen. Yes.

The President. ——and that through awareness of this disease, people are more likely to be able to recognize symptoms and deal with it.

And so there's what we call the Heart Truth Campaign, the Red Dress Campaign. And Laura is very much involved with that. She's in New York today at a fashion show heralding the Heart Truth Campaign. Joyce is with me because when Laura was here last in Kansas City, she went to St. Luke's Hospital and talked about the importance for people to recognize the symptoms of heart disease. Joyce had such symptoms, went to the hospital, and prevented a serious heart disease and heart attack and sits here with the President.

Ms. Cullen. How about that.

The President. But more importantly, she's very much a part of the Heart Truth Campaign here in Kansas City.

Ms. Cullen. Yes.

The President. And she's helping people understand two things: one, to be able to recognize the symptoms, and secondly, be able to prevent the symptoms from happening in the first place.

Now, people need to have screenings and checkups; people need to live healthy lives, through exercise and no tobacco. In other words, the decisions we make will affect whether or not our hearts remain strong.

And so I want to thank you for being a strong leader in the campaign for awareness. And so it's my honor, Joyce, to join you in—

as you watch me sign this proclamation declaring February American Heart Month.

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

Thank you. You bet. Thank you for being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:28 a.m. at the InterContinental Kansas City Hotel.

Proclamation 8220—American Heart Month, 2008

February 1, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women in the United States. As we observe American Heart Month, we renew our commitment to raising awareness of the serious impact of cardiovascular disease, and we encourage all citizens to take steps to help prevent it.

By exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco, limiting consumption of alcohol, following a nutritious diet, and monitoring high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure, we all can work to decrease the chances of developing cardiovascular disease. I urge all Americans to take advantage of regular screenings and consult their doctors about how to reduce their personal risk for heart disease.

In 2002, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, coordinating with other Federal agencies and national organizations, established the national campaign "The Heart Truth" to raise awareness among women of the dangers of cardiovascular disease. Today, more Americans are aware that it is the leading cause of death. The National Ambassador of "The Heart Truth" campaign, First Lady Laura Bush, continues to lead the Federal Government's efforts to send the urgent message to women about their risk for heart disease. Through this campaign, millions of women across the country have come to recognize the red dress as an important reminder to make healthy choices for their heart and encourage others to do the same.

During American Heart Month, we express our gratitude to the dedicated medical professionals, researchers, and others whose tireless efforts help save lives and make a difference for countless Americans. As we work together to fight this deadly disease, we recognize that every person can take action to reduce his or her risk for heart disease and make the decision to live a healthier life.

In acknowledgement of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 101), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 2008 as American Heart Month, and I invite all Americans to participate in National Wear Red Day on February 1, 2008. I also invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in recognizing and reaffirming our commitment to fighting cardiovascular disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, 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, 11:21 a.m., February 4, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on February 5.

Remarks at Hallmark Cards, Inc., in Kansas City

February 1, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you for letting me come by to say hello. A couple of observations: One, you work for a fabulous company of caring people. I appreciate, Don, your hospitality. I am still trying to recover from the kindergarten experience. [*Laughter*] I mean,

you talk about sapping a person's energy. [*Laughter*] But it was a fabulous experience.

I got to see Hallmark cards being made, and the fella kindly made me one that said, "For your daughters." It was sweet, but it just didn't have any warning in there about how to conduct myself for the upcoming wedding. [*Laughter*]

I'm here in Kansas City for a couple of reasons. One, I do want to spend a little time on the economy. I had breakfast this morning with entrepreneurs, small-business owners. I want to find out what's on their mind. I will tell you that there's a sense of optimism, I was pleased to hear. People are confident about the future—at least, these businessowners were—and they should be. Interest rates are low; inflation is low; productivity is high. But there are certainly some troubling signs. There's serious signs that the economy is weakening and that we got to do something about it.

Today we got such a sign when after 52 consecutive months of job creation, we lost 17,000 jobs. The unemployment rate went down, but nevertheless, a serious matter is, is that for the first time in 52 months that we didn't create jobs.

And so the question is, what do we do about it? Does Government have a responsibility, and if so, what is it? I do think Government has a responsibility. I think Government can take decisive action to help us deal with this period of uncertainty.

One such action is to help people stay in their homes. We got—some of our citizens purchased mortgages that they can't afford now. Hopefully the reason—hopefully they didn't get deceived, and if they did, the Government has a responsibility to take care of that. In other words, we don't want people buying a mortgage and the person who sold them the mortgage didn't fully disclose the reset inherent in a subprime note.

But we can help people stay in their homes by connecting the borrower with the mortgage industry. Now, what makes it difficult in this day and age is that when I bought a home, I sat down with the savings and loan officer. And had I gotten in a financial bind, I would have gone back to that same officer and said, you own my note; help me refinance so I can stay in my home. Today, that financial institution probably doesn't own the note anymore; somebody else owns the note. And therefore, we're trying to make sure we connect the borrower with somebody in the mortgage industry that will help them refinance.

And that's why we started what's called the HOPE NOW Alliance. Secretary Paulson and Secretary Jackson are bringing people together from the private sector, and they couple that with an information campaign, so that people who have a subprime loan know how to refinance and can find somebody to help them refinance. And it's been a complicated matter, but nevertheless, we're very much engaged in helping people sort through what is definitely a difficult period in their life.

The Government can help. The Federal Housing Administration has got the capacity to help refinance homes, and they need to expand the authority of the FHA to do it. And Congress needs to get that bill passed. I mean, this will be a positive step toward helping people stay in homes. And that's what we want to do. See, you notice I'm not saying, we're going to bail out the lenders. We're going to help the individual person be able to keep their home. It's in the interest of the country we do that.

Secondly, there's bonding authorities, tax-exempt bonding authorities that are now used to help people buy new homes. States and local governments ought to be able to use that money to help people stay in the home they have. And that will be helpful as well. And so here are some constructive measures that we can take. There's a cyclicality when it comes to the housing interests—housing industry. But in the meantime, or during this down cycle, we want to help individual Americans.

Secondly, a concern is whether or not our consumers will lose confidence in our economy. You don't want that to happen at Hallmark. You want the consumers to still buy your product on a regular basis. And one way to address that issue is to have a temporary, robust tax rebate. And that's what we're working on in Congress. You hear this discussion of a stimulus package. Well, a key component of that package is to give you some of your money back so you can spend it.

And the House of Representatives passed a good package. The administration worked with the House—it may surprise you that Republicans and Democrats can actually get something done in a constructive fashion, but it happened in this case, for the good of the country. And now the Senate is debating the bill, and it's very important for the Senate to finish their work quickly cause the sooner we can get money into our consumers' hands, the more likely it is, is that this economy will get back—recover from this period of uncertainty.

The fundamentals are strong. We're just in a rough patch, as witnessed by the employment figures today. And I'm confident we can get through this rough patch. And one way to do it is to—for Congress and the administration to work collaboratively and get this deal done.

Now, a key component, as well, of a growth package is to encourage businesses to invest. And why would you do that? Well, if Hallmark buys a new piece of equipment, somebody has to make that equipment. In other words, job creation happens when people make investments. And if you, therefore, stimulate businesses, both large and small, to make investments this year, as quickly as possible, it means somebody is more likely to keep work and the economy will continue to be strong.

So the two key components of this package are, one, enhance consumerism by giving consumers money—it's not like a great gift; after all, it's your own money; we're just giving it back to you—and encouraging businesses to invest. I believe we can get this package done. I know it has to be done quickly. I appreciate the fact that the Senate is trying to work through this as quickly as possible. I'm just urging them to get it done, because the sooner this package makes it to my desk, that actually focuses on ways to stimulate growth, the better off our economy is going to be.

Finally, we need to be thinking about how to effect economic growth in the long term. In other words, we'll deal with the short-term issue, but as we do so, we also need to be wise about the policy so that we can continue this period of growth that we've had.

A couple points I want to make to you on that. One is it's important for Hallmark to be able to sell your cards overseas. I mean, the more people that are exposed to the Hallmark product, the more likely it is that they'll buy. You just want a chance to compete. And so trade is an important aspect of—to making sure our economy remains strong. There are some folks who worry about trade. They want to protect America from products from overseas. I am concerned about protectionism, and so should you, because if we end up having trade wars, it's going to be less likely Hallmark products will be sold overseas.

My attitude is, just give us a chance; let's level the playing field. We can compete with anybody, anytime. We've got to have confidence in our capacity to compete in the world. And trade is an important aspect for keeping economic vitality alive.

Education is important. You've got some awfully smart people working here, but they need to be—the future of Hallmark depends upon having an educated workforce. And that's the way it is in most U.S. companies.

And so I'm very much focused on making sure our education system gets it right in the beginning—"right in the beginning" means teaching kids to read and write and add and subtract. I cannot stand a system that refuses to measure. I think it's an appropriate question to ask, can a child read, and if not, what do you intend to do about it?

Accountability is an integral part of making sure this system doesn't leave people behind. I am passionate on the subject of measuring because I used to be a Governor of a State, and I knew who got shuffled through the schools: inner-city kids; "These are people too hard to educate; let's just move them through"; or parents who—kids whose parents don't speak English as a first language. It's unacceptable to America not to insist that every child gets a good education. And so I'm going to work with Congress on this No Child Left Behind law, which is a very important part of making sure the workforce of the future is educated and ready to compete in a global economy.

Finally, taxes—there is a—you know, I'm sure you've heard that, well, we need more money in Washington; therefore, we're going to raise your taxes. Of course it's disguised

by saying, we're only going to tax rich people, but that's not the way it works. Rich people tend to hire lawyers and accountants, and you get stuck with the bill. We don't need more money. We need to prioritize your money. We need to be wise about how we spend your money.

Raising taxes in a time of economic uncertainty would be bad for the economy, and it would be bad for our people. I believe we ought to trust Americans to spend their money. I mean, the truth of the matter is, you can spend it more wisely than the Government can. And so in my State of the Union the other day, I called upon Congress to make the tax cuts permanent. I want to deal with this aspect of uncertainty. See, if you think your tax bill is fixing to go up—which it is, unless Congress acts; it will be going up in a couple of years—it could change your behavior. It could cause people to pull back and not be confident about the future.

And I also called on them to stop this business about putting special projects in legislation without being voted on. That doesn't make any sense. I mean, our process is one where there should be transparency and—like, if a project is important enough for a Member of Congress to slip into what's called a conference report, that project ought to be important enough for there to be a full vote—Members of Congress get to look at it and see if it makes any sense.

So I've got an agenda for Congress. I'm looking forward to working with them on how to stimulate the economy in the short term, but make sure we remain a strong economy in the long term. And I'm looking forward to working with them. I like the spirit I found up in the Halls of Congress. There's still a little politics in Washington, DC, but that's not to say we can't work for the common good.

And I appreciate you all giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. I hope you can tell I'm optimistic about the future of the country, realistic about the issues we face, and have—got a plan to deal with them. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Donald J. Hall, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Hallmark Cards, Inc.

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.

January 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Capital Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Alfalfa Club dinner.

January 27

In the afternoon, the President participated in a speech preparation session for his January 28 State of the Union Address.

January 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Family Theater, he participated in a speech preparation session for his State of the Union Address. Then in the Oval Office, he participated in an interview with Ann Compton of ABC News Radio.

In the afternoon, in the Second Floor Family Dining Room, the President had a background lunch with television correspondents.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek of the Czech Republic to the White House on February 27.

January 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Baltimore, MD, where he met with Jericho Program graduates.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert J. Callahan to be Ambassador to Nicaragua.

The President announced his intention to nominate Heather M. Hodges to be Ambassador to Ecuador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara J. Stephenson to be Ambassador to Panama.

The President announced his intention to nominate William E. Todd to be Ambassador to Brunei.

January 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Torrance, CA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteers Marni and Berni Barta. Later, at a private residence, he attended a Republican National Committee luncheon.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA, where, upon arrival at San Francisco International Airport, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Richard Berwick. He then met with Amador Valley High School student Kevin Laue and his parents, Jodi and Jim Jarnagin. Later, he traveled to Hillsborough, CA, where, at a private residence, he attended a Republican National Committee dinner.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada to discuss Afghanistan.

In the evening, the President returned to San Francisco International Airport, where he met with the family of a marine killed in Iraq. He then traveled to Las Vegas, NV.

The President declared a major disaster in Indiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on January 7 and continuing.

The President announced that he has asked Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt to serve as his personal representative at the funeral of Gordon B. Hinckley on February 2, 2008, in Salt Lake City, UT.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marianne M. Myles to be Ambassador to Cape Verde.

The President announced that he has nominated Elisebeth C. Cook to be Assistant Attorney General (Legal Policy).

January 31

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at a private residence, he attended a Nevada Victory luncheon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Denver, CO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Cherie Yager. He then met with Jeanne Assam, a security guard who stopped the December 9, 2007, fatal shooting at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. Later, he traveled to Cherry Hills Village, CO, where, at a private residence, he attended a Colorado Victory and Bob Schaffer for Senate reception.

In the evening, the President traveled to Kansas City, MO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Samuel Turner, Sr.

The White House announced that the President will host the North American Leaders' Summit on April 21–22 in New Orleans, LA.

February 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, at Eggtc. restaurant, he had breakfast with local business leaders. Later, he traveled to Parkville, MO.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a Missouri Victory and Sam Graves for Congress reception. Later, he traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Amadou Toumani Toure of Mali to the White House on February 8.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms from December 6–19.

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 January 30

Robert J. Callahan,
of Virginia, 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 Nicaragua.

Elisebeth C. Cook,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Rachel Brand.

Heather M. Hodges,
of Ohio, 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 Ecuador.

Barbara J. Stephenson,
of Florida, 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 Panama.

William Edward Todd,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Brunei Darussalam.

Withdrawn January 30

Dennis W. Carlton,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers, vice Katherine Baicker, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on August 2, 2007.

Andrew J. McKenna, Jr.,
of Illinois, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Robert N. Shamansky, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

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 January 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press briefing by Counselor to the President Edward W. Gillespie on the President's State of the Union Address

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek of the Czech Republic

Fact sheet: President Bush Takes Action To Prevent Wasteful Earmarks

Excerpts: State of the Union Address

Text: Guest List for the First Lady's Box at the 2008 State of the Union

Text: Memorandum of Justification for Waiver of Section 1083 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 With Respect to Iraq

Released January 29

Fact sheet: President Bush Takes Unprecedented Steps To Advance Earmark Reform

Fact sheet: The Faith-Based and Community Initiative: A Quiet Revolution in the Way Government Addresses Human Need

Released January 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the arrest of Riad Seif of Syria

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the President's telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada on Afghanistan

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Indiana

Released January 31

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: North American Leaders' Summit, April 21–22, 2008

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5104

Released February 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Amadou Toumani Toure of the Republic of Mali

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

Fact sheet: Addressing Uncertainties To Help Keep Our Economy Growing

Transcript: Radio Address by the First Lady to the Nation

Acts Approved by the President

Approved January 28

H.R. 4986 / Public Law 110–181
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008

Approved January 31

H.R. 5104 / Public Law 110–182

To extend the Protect America Act of 2007 for 15 days