

Telephone Remarks to the Crew of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*

August 2, 2005

The President. Commander Collins, can you hear me?

Commander Eileen M. Collins. Yes, sir, we hear you loud and clear. Good morning.

The President. Good morning. Thank you for taking my phone call. I just wanted to tell you all how proud the American people are of our astronauts. I want to thank you for being risktakers for the sake of exploration. I want to welcome our Japanese and Australian and Russian friends. And I wish you Godspeed in your mission. I know you've got very important work to do ahead of you. We look forward to seeing the successful completion of this mission. And obviously, as you prepare to come back, a lot of Americans will be praying for a safe return.

So it's great talking to you. Thanks for being such great examples of courage for a lot of our fellow citizens.

Commander Collins. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We want to tell you that we really enjoy what we're doing. We really believe in our mission, and we believe in space exploration and getting people off the planet and seeing what's out there. So the steps that we're taking right now are really worth it, and we want everybody to know that. And thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to us.

The President. Well, listen, I want to thank you, Commander, and thank your fellow astronauts there. I agree with you. I think what you're doing is really important. And you've got a strong supporter for your mission, here in the White House. I will tell you Laura went down and watched the launch in Florida with my little brother Jeb and came back all excited about the energy that—there on the east coast of Florida. But we're with you and wish you all the very best. Thanks for taking my phone call. Now get back to work.

Commander Collins. Thank you very much, sir. We did fly over Texas today and had a good look at it. It was beautiful. Have a good day.

The President. Thank you. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks on Signing the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act

August 2, 2005

Thanks for the warm welcome. Welcome to the White House. Last week, Congress passed the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement. I want to thank the Republicans and Democrats who came together to support this important agreement. The bill I'm about to sign is good for America. I'm pleased that Congress has taken a step to eliminate the barriers to America's goods and crops to 44 million customers.

I welcome the opportunity to make our Nation more secure by strengthening our ties with democracies that share our belief in free markets and free government. I appreciate the vision and leadership of Bob Zoellick and Rob Portman and the many others who worked hard to get this agreement passed. I want to thank the Secretary of State, Condé Rice, for the outstanding job she's doing on behalf of the American people. I want to thank Secretary Mike Johanns from the Department of Agriculture for joining us. And Stephanie, thank you for being here. I appreciate Secretary Carlos Gutierrez of the Department of Commerce for his good work.

We're honored to be joined by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Dick Lugar. I appreciate you coming, Senator. I'm honored you're here. Senator Norm Coleman, who is the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. I appreciate Congressman Clay Shaw, who is the chairman of the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee. I'm honored that these three Members of Congress are standing with us today.

I appreciate *los Embajadores* from the Central American countries, Ambassador