

administrative methods and techniques and to the growth of international trade, without compromising standards of customs control. Accession by the United States would further the U.S. interest in reducing non-tariff barriers to international trade.

By acceding to the Protocol, a state consents to be bound by the amended 1973 Convention and the new General Annex. At the same time, or anytime thereafter, Parties have the option of accepting any of the Specific Annexes (or Chapters thereof), and may at that time enter reservations with respect to any Recommended Practices contained in the Specific Annexes. In accordance with these terms, I propose that the United States accept seven of the Specific Annexes in their entirety and all the Chapters, but one of each of two other Specific Annexes (A–E, G, and H, as well as Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of F, and Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 of J), and enter the reservations proposed by the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection as set forth in the enclosure to the report of the Department of State. The provisions for which reservation is recommended conflict with current U.S. legislation or regulations. With these proposed reservations, no new implementing legislation is necessary in order to comply with the Amended Convention.

Accession to the Protocol by the United States would contribute to important U.S.

interests. First, accession by the United States would benefit the United States and U.S. businesses by facilitating greater economic growth, increasing foreign investment, and stimulating U.S. exports through more predictable, standard, and harmonized customs procedures governing cross-border trade transactions. Setting forth standardized and simplified methods for conducting customs business is important for U.S. trade interests in light of the demands of increased trade flows, as is the use of modernized technology and techniques for customs facilitation. These achievements can best be pursued by the United States as a Party to the Amended Convention. Second, through early accession, the United States can continue to take a leadership role in the areas of customs and international trade facilitation as the U.S. accession would encourage other nations, particularly developing nations, to accede as well.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol and give its advice and consent to accession.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

April 30, 2003.

Remarks on the National Day of Prayer *May 1, 2003*

Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. I'm glad you're here at the people's house. Laura and I welcome you. We're really pleased to have you here. I want to thank each of you for participating in the National Day of Prayer. It's a good time to be praying. Every day is a good day to pray. [*Laughter*]

Today we recognize the many ways our country has been blessed, and we acknowledge the source of those blessings. Millions of Americans seek guidance every day in prayer to the Almighty God. I am one of them. I also know that many Americans remember Laura and me in their prayers, and we are so very, very grateful.

I want to thank General Hicks, chaplain of the entire U.S. Army, for being here today, and thank you for your service. Shirley, thank you as well for once again being the chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer. I see you brought your husband along too. [Laughter]

Luis, *muchas gracias*. Thank you for your beautiful prayer. Father Joe Wallroth is going to be with us in a second. I'm honored you are here, Father.

I really want to thank the Washington National Cathedral Choir of Men and Girls. It is a fabulous way to begin a morning, to walk down the corridor here and hear your beautiful voices echo throughout this magnificent house. We're really glad you're here, and thank you for sharing your talents. Julie, thank you as well for coming. Gosh, I could have sat here and listened all day to your singing. [Laughter]

We've got a lot of military chaplains who are here. I want to thank you for your service to your country and to those who wear our uniform. You make a tremendous difference in the lives, the daily lives, of people who are frightened and lonely and worried and strong and courageous. I appreciate so very much what you have done and will continue to do.

So many great events in our Nation's history were shaped by men and women who found strength and direction in prayer. The first President to live in this house composed a prayer on his second evening here for all who would follow him. Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, knew that his burdens were too great for any man, so he carried them to God in prayer. Over the radio on D-day in 1944, Franklin Roosevelt prayed for God's blessing on our mission to "set free a suffering humanity."

This past month has been another time of testing for America and another time of intense prayer. Americans have been praying for the safety of our troops and for the protection of innocent life in Iraq. Americans prayed that war would not be

necessary and now pray that peace will be just and lasting.

We continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded and for the comfort of all who have lost a loved one. The Scriptures say, "The Lord is near to all who call on Him." Calling on God in prayer brings us nearer to each other. After his son was rescued from northern Iraq, the father of Sergeant James Riley of New Jersey said, "We have been flooded with people's prayers. Everyone is praying for us, and we are so grateful."

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, many Americans have registered online to adopt a service man or woman in prayer. Others wear prayer bracelets to remind themselves to intercede on behalf of our troops. In Fountain City, Wisconsin, Lynn Cox has collected at least 80 Bibles to send to those serving in Iraq. In Green, Ohio, a group of parishioners at Queen of Heaven Catholic Church has made 2,000 rosaries for our troops. Margaret Brown, who helped start the group, said, "We want them to know that someone back here is holding them up in prayer and that God is so powerful He can supply all their needs."

To pray for someone else is an act of generosity. We set our own cares aside and look to strengthen another. Prayer teaches humility. We find that the plan of the Creator is sometimes very different from our own. Yet, we learn to depend on His loving will, bowing to purposes we don't always understand. Prayer can lead to a grateful heart, turning our minds to all the gifts of life and to the great works of God.

Prayer can also contribute to the life of our Nation. America is a strong nation, in part because we know the limits of human strength. All strength must be guided by wisdom and justice and humility. We pray that God will grant us that wisdom, that sense of justice, and that humility in our current challenges and in the years ahead.

I thank you all for helping to keep prayer an integral part of our national life. May God bless each one of you, and may God

continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:47 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army; Shirley Dobson, chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force; James C. Dobson, founder and president, Focus on the Family;

Luis Palau, president, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association; Col. Joseph Wallroth, USAF, Wing Chaplain, Andrews Air Force Base; and Julie Keim, soloist, Washington National Cathedral. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The National Day of Prayer proclamation of April 30 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters Aboard the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* May 1, 2003

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

President's Flight Aboard Navy One

The President. —No, it was not me.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—land it?

The President. Not my first time on a carrier.

Q. How was your—

The President. Really exciting. I miss flying, I can tell you that.

This is a formal press conference that you're now conducting. This counts.

Q. Not when we're dressed like this, it doesn't. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right.

Q. Mr. President, when you were flying the plane, what did you do? Did you steer it?

The President. Just steer it.

Q. Did you go straight, or did you turn it?

The President. Straight.

Q. How did you do? Did you waver?

The President. Ask the pilot.

Q. He won't tell.

Q. How does it compare to the jets you used to fly?

The President. Huh?

Q. How does that compare to the jets you used to fly?

The President. Much more sophisticated.

Q. What's it been like here on the ship?

The President. Huh?

Q. What have you been doing on the ship?

The President. I've mainly been talking to the troops.

Naval officer. Here they come, sir.

[*At this point, a squadron of Navy fighter jets flew over.*]

The President. The press conference is over.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 2:10 p.m. on the navigation deck of the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* at sea off the coast of San Diego, CA. In his remarks, the President referred to Comdr. John "Skip" Lussier, USN, pilot of the S-3B Viking aboard which the President traveled to the aircraft carrier. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.