

Donald H. Rumsfeld. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary

also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement

May 6, 2003

Thank you. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. I'm honored to host Prime Minister Goh as we sign an historic free trade agreement between the United States and Singapore.

Our two countries have a proud history of friendship and cooperation. We're working together to meet the threats of a new era, and we share a belief in the power of free enterprise and free trade to improve lives. The U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement marks a crucial step forward for both our countries. And with the approval of the Congress, this agreement will help generate well-paying jobs and opportunities for people in Singapore and in the United States.

The Prime Minister is a man with whom I enjoy good conversations. He's got good advice, and I'm proud to call him friend.

I appreciate so very much our—members of my Cabinet who are here: the Secretary of State; Secretary of Commerce; Trade Minister Robert Zoellick, Ambassador Zoellick. I want to thank very much the Singaporean delegation for coming. Madame Ambassador, it's good to see you again. I appreciate our Ambassador, Frank Lavin, for being here, and I appreciate his service to our country.

I'm so grateful for the Members of Congress for being here. Thank you all for coming—strong free-traders, people who believe in the possibility of trade, in the hope of trade. I want to thank members of our business community who are here. Mr. Prime Minister, you've drawn quite a crowd. [*Laughter*]

America supports free trade because it creates new opportunities for millions of people, new wealth for entire nations, and benefits that are widely shared. NAFTA and the Uruguay Round, for example, show us what free trade can accomplish. They've created more choices and lower prices for consumers, raising living standards for a typical American family of four by at least \$2,000 a year. Free trade has a direct benefit for our citizens.

In NAFTA's first 6 years, more than half of Mexico's new manufacturing jobs were connected to trade. Trade helps people in our neighborhood. It helps people find work. A prosperous neighborhood is in the interest of the United States of America. Trade helps people emerge from poverty. Trade helps people realize their hopes and ambitions. Trade is an important part of improving the lives of people around the globe.

And that's why this administration strongly stands for free trade. From the first days of this administration, we have been working to extend the benefits of trade to every region of the world. We're a leader in the negotiations of the WTO. We've advanced bold proposals to open up global markets. We seek to build on the success of NAFTA with the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

We're also encouraging the free flow of trade and investment in the Pacific, among our partners in APEC and ASEAN. America has implemented a free trade agreement with Jordan, our first ever with an Arab nation. And we're finalizing our pact

with Chile. Similar negotiations are underway with Australia, Morocco, and five nations in the Central American region. And soon we'll begin negotiations with the Southern African Customs Union to bring new opportunities to a part of the world where the need is great.

The agreement that the Prime Minister and I sign today is the first of its kind between the United States and an Asian-Pacific country. The 4 million people of Singapore have built a strong and vibrant economy. Singapore has long set an example for its neighbors in the world of the transforming power of economic freedom and open markets. Singapore is already America's 12th-largest trading partner and buys a full range of American products, everything from machine parts and computers to agricultural products.

This free trade agreement will increase access to Singapore's dynamic markets for American exporters, service providers, and investors. The agreement contains state-of-the-art protections for Internet commerce and intellectual property that will help drive growth and innovation in our dynamic technology sectors.

The agreement also safeguards the right of workers and protections for our environment. It's a modern agreement. And it's a good agreement for both countries. By granting free trade—by granting trade promotion authority last year, Congress showed support for an agenda of free and open trade. And I want to thank them for that. I hope the Congress will act in this same spirit and quickly give final approval to this

agreement, and I'm sure they will. Singapore is a nation that is small in size but large in influence. With this agreement, Singapore becomes an even more valued economic partner of the United States.

Mr. Prime Minister, your nation has also been a vital and steadfast friend in the fight against global terror. Singapore has made determined and successful efforts to break up terror plots before they can take innocent lives.

As a member of the U.N. Security Council, Singapore worked hard to secure the passage of Resolution 1441, requiring Iraq to live up to its international obligations. And now with Iraq's liberation, Singapore will send police and health care workers to help with Iraq's reconstruction.

Mr. Prime Minister, I appreciate your nation's contribution as we overcome great dangers and defend the peace. I'm grateful as well for your commitment to a world that trades in freedom and for all the hard work on both sides that have made this agreement possible. We take great pride in the strong relationship between our countries.

Welcome to Washington, Mr. Prime Minister.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chan Heng Chee, Singapore's Ambassador to the United States. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and Singapore *May 6, 2003*

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong today signed the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and celebrated the strength and vi-

ality of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Singapore.

In the signing ceremony and in their Oval Office meeting, the two leaders