

and I believe it to be the threat that we have to take on and defeat. I really do.

President Bush. Good job. Thank you. I appreciate your coming. [*Inaudible*]

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:29 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to

Cherie Blair, wife of Prime Minister Blair; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. Prime Minister Blair referred to Sergio Vieira de Mello, U.N. Special Representative for Iraq. A reporter referred to John Walker Lindh, convicted American Taliban fighter.

Statement on the Death of Celia Cruz July 17, 2003

Celia Cruz was an international artist whose voice and talent entertained audiences around the world. Her success in the years following her departure from her beloved Cuba was a tribute to her perseverance, compassion, and love for life. Laura

joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to her family and friends.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this statement.

Remarks on the HealthierUS Initiative in Dallas, Texas July 18, 2003

Thanks a lot. Please be seated. Thanks. It is nice to be home.

I am honored to be here at Lakewest YMCA. I've got to tell you, the facility is overwhelming. It is a beautiful facility, and I appreciate so very much the hospitality and the dedicated staff here.

Listen, we're here to talk about a health care plan that makes a lot of sense. And it's a health care plan that says if you exercise and eat healthy food, you will live longer. I mean, there is a lot of talk about treating chronic diseases and finding treatments and research and development. And that's great, and the country is on the leading edge of all kinds of new discoveries. But we've already discovered what works. And what works is to encourage people to exercise on a regular basis and to eat good foods. It's called preventative medicine. An integral part of any health care plan is to

encourage people to adapt the habits necessary to avoid disease in the first place. And that's what we're here to talk about, and that is what the YMCA does, and I'm grateful for that.

And there's no better place to start in encouraging healthy choices and exercise than with our children. And so Lynn and I were honored to go to the—some of these exercise classes and were pleased to see little youngsters doing jumping jacks—with enthusiasm, I might add—[*laughter*]—counting out the number of stretches.

I mean, look, the YMCA is an integral part of a healthy America by encouraging our youngsters to exercise, to have fun, to get outside, to learn to eat good foods. We're really here to thank the Y, thank the Y here in west Dallas and thank the

YMCAs all across America for being an integral part of a healthy United States of America.

Ken Gladish is the president and CEO of YMCA of the entire United States. We've got the President of the United States of the Ys with us. [Laughter] Thank you for coming. I'm honored you're here. Gordon Echtenkamp is the president and CEO of YMCA Metropolitan Dallas. Thank you, Gordon, appreciate you being here. Jo Harris is the executive director of the Lakewest Family YMCA. Thank you, Jo, for being here.

I hope this entourage of mine didn't over-stress the organization. [Laughter] Turns out we don't travel lightly these days. [Laughter] But thanks a lot to you and your staff for opening up this facility for us to discuss health.

I'm honored that the Governor is here, Governor Rick Perry. I ran as Governor; he runs as Governor. He'll be running faster than I ran as Governor, soon. But he understands what I know: There's a lot of stress in certain jobs. I guess every job could have stress to it. There's nothing like exercise to relieve the stress, and I know Rick works out a lot, and I thank you for setting a good example for the State of Texas, friend. Thanks for coming.

And I want to thank Congressman Sam Johnson and Congressman Michael Burgess, both here from the State of Texas, for joining us. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here.

In the midst of some of those Ranger losing streaks, I would get all anxious, and I would go over and visit with my friend Ken Cooper, who's got a fantastic facility which promotes exercise. He'd just say, "Run until it doesn't hurt anymore." [Laughter] And I'm honored you're here, Ken. Thanks for setting such a good example for—see, he's on the leading edge of research. He's determined a lot of simple facts. One of them is, is that if you exercise, like, 20 minutes a day, the incident of heart disease drops dramatically. That doesn't

seem like much of a challenge, does it, to convince people to exercise 20 minutes a day? And that's what we're here to do.

And so I put together a group of really strong American citizens who understand the value of exercise, understand the value of health for our society, to help spread the message. And the Chairman of that, of course, is a fabulous person who happened to be a very good football player named Lynn Swann. And I appreciate you, Lynn.

And I appreciate so very much, Lynn, because he's a busy guy, and he's got a lot to do. And for him to volunteer, along with others on the Council, to help to make America a healthy place really speaks to the character of the person. And I'm honored to be associated with him, just like I'm honored to be associated with Dr. Dot Richardson, Olympic gold medalist, surgeon, and Vice Chairwoman. Doc, thanks for coming.

As I say, we put together a really good Council, people who are out in the communities putting the word out. One guy who is here is a guy who I know has put the word out for running. Austin, Texas, is one of the greatest running cities in the country. And one of the reasons why is because Paul Carrozza, who is an entrepreneur, a business entrepreneur, started with nothing—except a good pair of legs—[laughter]—and started what they call RunTex. I know him well, and he'd probably like me to say, if you're interested in a pair of shoes in the Austin area, drop by. [Laughter] But he has organized a lot of running clubs and really has convinced a lot of people who never would think about running or exercise to get out on Town Lake and run. And I know we've got the same type of folks here in Dallas, but Paul, thank you for your dedication to a fit America.

President of Trek Bicycle Corp. is John Burke. John is with us, been introduced now twice. But John is an entrepreneur as well who cares a lot about fitness. He

recognizes there's other ways to stay fit than running, for example, like getting on a bicycle. That also counts, by the way. And I appreciate you coming, John. Thank you for being here, as well as Dr. Ted Mitchell. He works at the Cooper Clinic. He works for the Cooper Clinic Wellness Program. They take the research at Cooper Clinic and implement it into programs to get people to stay fit. And I want to thank all of you all for joining this Council, and thanks for coming. Good to see you, Doc. How's the fastball?

I appreciate Dennis Roberson, who is here with us today. Dennis is a active volunteer. The reason I like to talk about volunteers, this country of ours has got a lot of muscle, and we're strong. And we, by the way, stay strong in order to keep the peace. We will stay strong in order to promote freedom. But the truth of the matter is, the great strength of America is the heart and soul of the American citizen, people who are willing to dedicate time to make somebody else's life better, people who are willing to volunteer. And this guy, Dennis Roberson, comes here and volunteers to help teach children healthy lifestyles, to teach children how to use the computer, to teach children how to access the Internet, to teach children that a healthy body and a healthy mind will lead to a strong future.

And I want to thank you, Dennis, for setting a good example for volunteers all across the Metroplex, all across our State, and all across our Nation. One of the things—my job is to call people to a higher calling. And there's nothing higher than to loving a neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself and volunteering your time to help somebody in need. Thank you, sir.

We have a problem when people don't exercise and eat bad food. Obesity can cause serious health problems, like heart disease and diabetes. And it adds to the cost of health care in America; that is a fact. In 2000 alone, obesity costs totaled

the country an estimated cost of \$117 billion. Since 1980, rates of obesity have doubled among children, tripled among adolescents. Now, that is a problem, and the Nation must do something about it for the sake of our future.

We must reverse the trend, and we know how to do it. It's exercise and good dieting. Good foods and regular exercise will reverse the trend and save our country a lot of money but, more importantly, save lives.

The local Ys is a great place to start, and that's why we're here. There are other programs across the country, by the way, that encourage exercise, no doubt about it. The YMCA is on the forefront. I remember being a loyal Y member in Midland, Texas, playing basketball with a bunch of 45-year-olds. [Laughter] It was like full-court karate. [Laughter]

But here at this Y, they hook youngsters on exercise. And Andrew Simpson just gave us a tour, gave Lynn Swann and me a tour. He's a good guide. He tells me exercise not only gives him energy but, as importantly, confidence. He's a more confident person as a result of the program. He said he was always tired of being the little guy, and so he decided to work out. He's not a little guy anymore. [Laughter] He's a man who understands that when you make right choices in life, you'll have a healthier future.

The thing that I like to see, and the Y is good at this, and other programs need to understand, exercise doesn't need to be drudgery. It can be fun. It can be a fun way for people to spend their day. I love the idea of a day camp. I asked how long the day camp is. I think it's, like, 10 weeks. It's a really good idea. It's a good idea to help build up the spirit of the community. It's a good idea to give the kids something smart to do. It's a good idea to instill the habits necessary for a healthy future.

And so we saw the problem in this administration, and we decided to do something about it and started what I call the HealthierUS Initiative. Washington has got

to have initiatives, and so this is a HealthierUS Initiative. [Laughter] And here's the—we came up with four basic guidelines which make a lot of sense. And so our job of the Council and me and others, the Governors, the mayors, hopefully, is to focus on these four guidelines.

First, be physically active every day, not just once a week or a couple times a week and say, "Gosh, I've met the goal." It's every day, try to get some physical activity. And moms and dads, by the way, need to stay physically active as well, just not the sons or daughters.

Secondly, develop good eating habits. It's been estimated that dietary changes can reduce cancer deaths in the United States by a third. Well, that's—given that potential, it seems like to make a lot of sense for all of us to figure out what we're going to eat. Listen, I'd be the first to admit to the kids here, I didn't like vegetables when I was young. I've learned to like them because I understand that they're good for you. That means not only vegetables but fruits, wise choices, not grease—[laughter]—but fruits and vegetables.

Third, take advantage of preventative screenings. This is more, obviously, applicable to older Americans. Ken Cooper insists that I have preventative screenings on an annual basis. And it is important for us to do this, I mean, for example, like check your blood pressure. It can be an indicator that something might go wrong. I hope the Y—I don't know if you do or not, it would make sense if you did, a neighborhood screening—you do; that's good—to help provide screening for citizens in each community, so people can be able to detect early whether or not they may have a potential problem. A lot of disease can be picked up through a simple test.

And fourth, make healthy choices. That not only means food, but no cigarettes, no excessive drinking, no drugs, no underage drinking. Those are the kind of healthy—you hear people say "healthy choices," that is what we're talking about. And if our

country, old and young alike, followed the four steps and measures, we'd be a much healthier nation. It would be, really, one of the best health care plans we could possibly implement in America.

To promote this program, as I mentioned, I talked Lynn into doing this job. It's called—and we're setting a fitness challenge today. And he and I are going to spend a lot of time working on the fitness challenge. I probably will spend most time by trying to set the example. It turns out, when a President shows up, cameras show up. And I like to exercise, and I want people to see their President exercising. Today I knocked off about 30 minutes' worth of exercise and feel better for it.

But our goal is to get 20 million additional Americans to exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. That is a noble goal, and it's an important goal. Americans will feel better if they accept the challenge. America will be better off when Americans accept the challenge. It's easy to get started in this, and so we've set up a web page, as Lynn mentioned, and John is responsible for the web page. It's presidentschallenge.org.

And it's an interesting opportunity for people. If you need a little discipline in your life—in other words, if you need—so you can check on yourself, a self-policing mechanism, call up the web page and follow the instructions, and there's a go-by to help you get involved with an exercise program. And I can assure you, and Lynn can assure you, the Governor assure you, once you get hooked on exercise, it is hard to get off. Once you get started, once you realize the benefits, once you understand how great you feel, once you understand that it's easier to go to sleep at night after a good day of exercise, you're not going to quit.

And so our job as a country, at the Federal level, the State level, and the local level is to get people started and realize the great benefits of exercise. And so we've

set up this web page, trying to take advantage of the new technologies. So if people are interested, please go to presidentschallenge.org.

Now, the other thing is, I do think there is a role for the Federal Government to help. I proposed \$125 million for community monies to help different organizations like the Y to start promoting awareness. It's to facilitate an awareness campaign, to make people aware of what it's like to exercise, to make people aware of opportunities available in the communities, and to make people aware that—what good nutrition and good exercise will do for their long-term health.

The funds would be available to target obesity and diabetes and asthma. It also could be used to encourage preventative screenings. In other words, it's a part of a larger process throughout our society to get this initiative going. And I hope Congress takes a good, solid look at it.

The other thing we're going to try to do at the Federal—not “try to do”—will do at the Federal level, is provide incentives for local schools to focus on better nutrition and eating habits. As you know, the Federal Government is involved with the school programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is integrally involved, and it makes sense to me, since we've got a lot of kids eating food around the country once the schools are in, that we have better nutrition. And the Federal Government must encourage better nutrition at the local school level, which we will do.

One of the things I talk a lot about is the need to really work on cultural change in America to encourage a culture of personal responsibility, to encourage people to be responsible for the decisions they make in life. I like to talk about, if you're a mother or a dad, reminding people you're responsible for loving your child and really making sure your child understands the difference between right and wrong and what it means to make right choices in life. If you're involved, if you're worried about

your public school system, you're responsible for getting involved with it, as opposed to hoping somebody far away gets involved. You're responsible for getting involved with your schools.

You're responsible if you're a CEO, by the way, in America, for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. You're responsible for loving a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. The Initiative, the HealthierUS Initiative, really speaks to personal responsibility, doesn't it? It says that we are responsible for our own health. By making the right choices, we can make the right choice for our future. By making healthy choices, we can do the right things for our future.

Moms and dads, by working on healthy choices not only for themselves but their kids, are doing their job as a parent. By exercising every day, by finding time, by carving out time, no matter how busy you may seem or how boring exercise may seem initially, it's a part of a responsibility culture. And I appreciate giving it—being given the chance to come and talk about this.

We'll work on health care matters. We're working on Medicare reform. That's—we need to work on Medicare reform. And we're working on how to make sure the working uninsured get insurance. But the truth of the matter is, one of the best reforms in America for health care is a strong, preventative health care program that starts with each American being responsible for what he or she eats, what he or she drinks, what he or she doesn't smoke, and is responsible for whether or not they get out and exercise on a regular basis. I encourage my fellow citizens to exercise.

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the gymnasium at the Lakewest Family

YMCA. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Lynn C. Swann, Vice Chairman Dorothy G. "Dot" Richardson, and Council Members Paul R. Carozza, John P. Burke, and Dr. Teddy L. Mitchell, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; Kenneth L. Gladish, national executive director and chief

executive officer, YMCA of the USA; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; Kenneth H. Cooper, the President's personal physician; and Andrew Simpson, youth volunteer, Lakewest Family YMCA. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Inauguration of the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo July 18, 2003

I congratulate President Joseph Kabila and the Congolese people on the installation of the new transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also extend congratulations to Vice Presidents Jean-Pierre Bemba, Abdoulaye Yerodia, Azarias Ruberwa, and Z'Ahidi Ngoma. The arrival of former rebel leaders in Kinshasa and their participation with former opposition parties in the new Government is a major achievement that sets the country on a course toward peace and

democratic elections. I am confident that the Congolese people will be well served by the experience and vision these five leaders bring to these important posts.

The United States will work closely with President Kabila and the transitional Government to promote peace, prosperity, and democracy for all Congolese. I call upon neighboring countries to join us in supporting Congo's new Government during this crucial time.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Dallas July 18, 2003

Thank you all very much. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. It is great to be home. It's really fun for us to see a lot of our old buddies—some of our young buddies too. *[Laughter]* This is our first trip back to Texas since I got back from Africa. You may remember we were over there, and we went to a park in Botswana. That's where we learned a lot about our party's mascot. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you all for your help. Thanks a lot. It means a lot to Laura and me. We love Texas, and we love our friends, and we want to thank our friends for helping us. You're laying the foundation

for what is going to be a great victory in November of 2004.

I'm getting ready, loosening up. *[Laughter]* But I'm going to have to count on you to energize the grassroots and to make the phone calls and to put up the signs and to address the envelopes and remind everybody that our message is so positive and hopeful for every citizen of this State and this country.

The political season will come in its own time. But right now, I'm focused on the people's business in our Nation's Capital. I have a job to do, and we have a lot on our agenda. And I will continue to work