

The adoption of this law marks a historic milestone in the Iraqi people's long journey from tyranny and violence to liberty and

peace. While difficult work remains to establish democracy in Iraq, today's signing is a critical step in that direction.

Statement on International Women's Day March 8, 2004

Today, in observance of International Women's Day, the United States reaffirms the principle that freedom is the right of every woman and man and the future of every nation. The United States continues to work to advance and support the dignity of all people, regardless of gender, race, religion, or ethnic origin.

The best guarantor of the rights of women is freedom and democracy. Free societies allow for free elections, free markets, free press, and free labor unions. They guarantee religious liberty, protect property rights, and educate their people. They protect their freedoms with the consistent and impartial rule of law.

Over the past 2 years, the advent of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan has freed millions of people from brutal tyranny. We celebrate that they are now assuming the basic human rights too long denied them.

Much remains to be done to consolidate and protect these new rights, but the United States and our international partners are determined to continue this progress.

On this day, women like Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest for her efforts to bring democracy to Burma, and Shirin Ebadi, who has spent a lifetime championing human rights, receive recognition. The United States pledges to promote democracy and human rights around the globe and to help those who struggle to see the same light of liberty now dawning on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

NOTE: The statement referred to Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma; and 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Notice of Intention To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Morocco March 8, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-210; the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intent to enter into a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Kingdom of Morocco.

This agreement will create new opportunities for America's workers, farmers, businesses, and consumers by eliminating bar-

riers in trade with Morocco. Morocco is one of the United States strongest friends in the Middle East. Increased trade will benefit Americans and help strengthen a tolerant, open, and more prosperous Morocco. Entering into an FTA with Morocco will not only strengthen our bilateral ties with this important ally, it will also advance my goal of a Middle East free trade area (MEFTA) within a decade.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the United States-Morocco FTA. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to ap-

prove and implement this free trade agreement.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
March 8, 2004.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Implementation of the Debt Reduction Authority
March 8, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 1321 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–228), I transmit herewith a report prepared by my Administration on implementation of the debt re-

duction authority conferred by title XIII, subtitle B of Public Law 107–228.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
March 8, 2004.

Remarks at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in Houston
March 8, 2004

It's really good to be here. I thought there's a lot of bull in Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] But I'm really glad to be here at the livestock show. It's—somebody said, "What's it like when you come here?" It's like being in a place with people who are willing to stand up to values that are important in this country.

So it's great to be here. I want to congratulate the winners, congratulate the—congratulate the young who are here who are working outdoors with the animals and practicing important—important values that will take them through the rest of their life.

I worked the ropeline, worked the fenceline coming out. I can't tell you how many people said, "Mr. President, we're praying for you in Iraq." On behalf of a grateful world, I want to thank you for that very much. And I want to thank you for your hospitality. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. at Reliant Arena. The Office of the Press Secretary released the transcript of these remarks on March 9. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.