

will work on behalf of the American people. And now it's up to Congress. It's up to Congress to show the American people that we have the capacity to de-fund programs which don't work and fund programs which do work.

And I'm looking forward to working with Members of both the House and the Senate. It's going to be an interesting set of negotiations. But we're firm in our belief that we can cut this deficit in half over a 5-year period of time, grow this economy,

and meet our primary objective, which is defending America.

Listen, thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:14 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on the Election of the Presidency Council of the Iraqi Transitional Government

*April 6, 2005*

Iraq's Transitional National Assembly took a momentous step forward in Iraq's transition to democracy today, voting by an overwhelming majority to elect the Presidency Council of the Iraqi Transitional Government.

I congratulate Iraq's next President, Jalal Talabani, and its next Deputy Presidents, Adil Abd al-Mahdi and Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr, on this historic occasion. These individuals will be formally sworn in tomorrow and will move quickly to name a Prime Minister who will work during the coming

days to select a Council of Ministers. The new Iraqi Government will then begin its important work of writing a new constitution, continuing to train Iraqi security forces, delivering basic services, and advancing Iraq's transformation from dictatorship to democracy.

The Iraqi people have shown their commitment to democracy, and we, in turn, are committed to Iraq. We look forward to working with this new Government, and we congratulate all Iraqis on this historic day.

## Statement on the Death of Prince Rainier III of Monaco

*April 6, 2005*

Laura and I join Americans across the country in mourning the loss of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco. He will be remembered as a respected leader who secured the prosperity of Monaco's people. Monaco and the United States have

long had a special bond of friendship. We extend our deepest condolences to His Serene Highness Prince Albert, to the Grimaldi family, and to all the people of Monaco.

## Interview With Reporters Aboard Air Force One April 8, 2005

### *Pope John Paul II's Funeral*

*The President.* Listen, were you there in person?

*Q.* Yes.

*The President.* One, I'm really glad I came. There was never any question I would come. Last night we hosted a reception at the Embassy for many of the leaders of the Catholic Church at home, and they were very grateful that I came and Laura came and Dad came and President Clinton came and Condi came as well as others. And I told them, to a person, that it's such an honor to represent our country at a ceremony honoring a truly great man who is and will always be a great historical figure.

I knew the ceremony today would be majestic, but I didn't realize how moved I would be by the service, itself, by the beautiful music. I was struck—as an aside—struck by the fact that the sound was so clear in this huge facility. It was as if we were inside the cathedral listening, and the voices were so pure. I thought the homily was really good. We were given an English version, fortunately—if you haven't read it, maybe you've seen it? Yes. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautifully done.

I was struck by the response of the crowd. And I think it's interesting to note the moments where the crowd responded. One in particular is when His Eminence spoke to His Holiness's relationship to the young of the world, and there was a great outpouring of enthusiasm for that line. And then I think the thing that struck all our delegation most intensely was the final scene of the plain-looking casket—one of three, by the way, lead, wood, and wood—being carried and held up for the seal to be seen, and then the sun pouring out. This will be one of the highlights of my Presidency, to have been at this great ceremony.

So off we go to home now.

### *Pope John Paul II's Legacy*

*Q.* Your predecessor suggested that the Pope would leave a mixed legacy, even though he was a great man. Since you differed with him on the war to such a great degree, do you also think it will be a mixed legacy?

*The President.* I think Pope John Paul II will have a clear legacy of peace, compassion, and a strong legacy of setting a clear moral tone.

### *Upcoming Meeting With Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon*

*Q.* You're going to see Prime Minister Sharon soon. There's been some talk in Israel that maybe you're not going to raise this issue of this latest settlement expansion. Are you going to do that?

*The President.* I've raised the issue of settlement expansions publicly. I mean, it was upon the prompting of your question. You bet. What I say publicly, I say privately. And that is, the roadmap has clear obligations on settlements and that we expect the Prime Minister to adhere to those roadmap obligations. And the roadmap has got obligations for the Palestinians. We have a great opportunity—"we," the world, has a great opportunity to help a democracy grow—begin and grow, starting in the Gaza.

The Prime Minister of Israel has decided to pull out of Gaza. As you know, I applauded that decision at the White House, with him standing by my side. And I think now is the time to focus the world's attention on what is possible. And we've already started that process of realizing the possible by having General Ward work with the Palestinians to streamline and coordinate Palestinian security forces so that, upon the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza,