

contracts, to allow people to express their opinion without fear. And it's very important for leaders throughout the hemisphere, whether they agree with America or not, to honor the tenets of democracy. And to the extent he doesn't do that, then I believe he should be subject to criticism.

### *Iraq*

*Q.* President—Iraq. You've been telling people the U.S. is going the right way. But the polls—and you've said you don't follow the polls—the polls say people don't agree with you. Could it be that they're right and you're wrong?

*The President.* History will prove whether I'm right. I think I'll be right because I do believe freedom is universal. I remember it wasn't all that long ago that 11 million Iraqis went to the polls in the face of terrorist threats, in the face of potential assassination, and said, we want to be free. That was last December.

That sentiment still exists in Iraq. The enemy has got—those who want to stop democracy have got one weapon, and that is the ability to kill innocent life to get

on the TV, to shake our will. And my will is not going to be shaken. You cannot have a President make decisions based upon yesterday's polls. You must have a President who believes in certain principles and is willing to lead based upon a vision for a better future.

And I believe my vision for a better future entails having a democratic Iraq as a friend and an ally and to prevent the stated goals of the enemy from taking place. They want us to leave Iraq so they can establish a safe haven from which to launch attacks on our people again. And I take their goal seriously, and I will use all resources at my disposal in order to protect the American people.

*Q.* *Muchas gracias, Senor Presidente.*

*The President.* *Si, por nada.*

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:08 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico; and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Statement on the Death of Caspar Weinberger

*March 28, 2006*

Caspar Weinberger was an American statesman and a dedicated public servant. He wore the uniform in World War II, held elected office, and served in the Cabinets of three Presidents. As Secretary of Defense for President Reagan, he worked to strengthen our military and win the cold

war. In all his years, this good man made many contributions to our Nation. America is grateful for Caspar Weinberger's lifetime of service. Laura and I send our condolences and prayers to the entire Weinberger family.

## Interview With CTV March 28, 2006

### *Canada-U.S. Relations*

Q. Well, first of all, Mr. President, thank you very much for inviting us into your home. We certainly appreciate that.

Before we get on to talking about Canada-U.S. relations, I want to deal a little bit with your personal relations with Canadians. They haven't exactly been a roaring success. Does that matter? Does that matter to you? Does it matter to the relationship?

*The President.* I think I've had very good relations with the Canadians with whom I've dealt. I mean, Prime Minister Chretien and his successor, Paul Martin, and I got along just fine. We didn't always agree, but I can understand people not agreeing with some of the decisions I made. But that doesn't necessarily mean there's any problems with the relationship.

I guess much has been made about some of the name-calling that went on. That's just part of politics, and it doesn't bother me in the least. If I was bothered about name-calling from Canada, I'd certainly be bothered about name-calling from the United States as well. [Laughter]

The relationship between Canada and the United States is really a relationship not necessarily by government only but by the peoples, by the interchange, by the exchanges we have, by the relatives on both sides of the border. And that's what really makes the relationship unique and very strong.

### *Trade With Canada/Softwood Lumber*

Q. In that regard, Prime Minister Harper, the new—I think this is now the third Prime Minister you've gone through—

*The President.* It is. [Laughter]

Q. —in Canada. He said that of the top priorities that he's got, softwood lumber has to be number one; says it's, in his words, putting a very serious strain on the

relationship between the two countries. You've often said that this is something that you want to take care of. I'm giving you an opportunity to make some news here. [Laughter]

*The President.* I may not see that. [Laughter]

Q. Okay. [Laughter] What would be—is there any one thing that you can do to unblock this issue?

*The President.* Well, I can tell our people to try to find common ground. I thought we were pretty close to a deal a couple of years ago—I can't remember the exact timing of it, but I know we've been working on softwood lumber for quite a while.

I fully understand how difficult an issue this is, particularly from Canada's perspective, since there's been some rulings. And we want to get it solved. I told that to Stephen Harper, that I understand its importance. I understand its priority. And I'd like to get the issue resolved once and for all myself. The best thing I can do is tell our negotiators that—see if you can find common ground. Again, we were close to an agreement before—maybe that's a place for people to look for common ground.

I know it's not going to get solved if it's done—if these negotiations are public. It's going to require some very quiet consultations to see if we can do what I'd like to see done.

Q. Can it be solved on your watch?

*The President.* I certainly hope so. This is a difficult issue. I know it creates anxieties in Canada. I really don't want to create anxieties. On the other hand, I do want to be fair to our folks here as well, and I think we can find ground.

### *Canada-U.S. Border/Homeland Security*

Q. Talking about common ground, it seems to me that there's so much that we