

the highest possible use, and that is to protect the American people and to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

The Navy and Marine Corps are on the frontline of fighting and winning the war against the extremists, radicals who would do this country harm. Every day we're on the offense against an enemy. My attitude is, I would rather defeat them over there so we do not have to face them here. And the Marine Corps and the Navy are helping to lead that charge. The sailors and marines on the high sea are sending a clear message to the world that we stand for strength, and we stand for peace.

Former Navy football players have distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Marine First Lieutenant Brian Stann comes to mind, the class of '03. He won the Silver Star. We also have some of the former Navy football players lose their lives: Ron Winchester of '01, J.P. Blecksmith of the class of '03. Another gave his life in flight

over the Pacific, Navy Lieutenant Commander Scott Zellem, the class of '91. The United States of America will not forget their sacrifices. We will complete our missions so that their sacrifices will not have gone in vain.

It is such an honor to welcome such fine men to the Rose Garden. I'm proud to be standing with you. I thank you for your service to our country. I appreciate the fact that you're good football players, but, more importantly, I appreciate the fact that you're good Americans.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Adm. Rodney P. Rempt, USN, superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy; and Kaiponoa Keheaku-Enhada, quarterback, Keenan O. Little, strong safety, and Eddie Martin, running back, U.S. Naval Academy football team.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 5767 April 2, 2007

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

EXODUS 12:14

I send greetings to those celebrating Passover, beginning at sundown on April 2.

During Passover, Jews around the world gather with family and friends to remember God's deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage more than 3,000 years ago. To celebrate their Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people commemorate the Passover each year by reading the Haggadah, singing

traditional songs, and sharing the Seder meal. Through these traditions, the Jewish people express their gratitude for God's redemption and the blessings of freedom, and they ensure that their heritage is passed on to future generations. Passover is a time of hope and faith and a time to reflect on God's boundless love and endless mercy.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed Passover.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's News Conference April 3, 2007

The President. Good morning. I've just had a good meeting with Secretary of Defense Bob Gates and General Pete Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary Gates and General Pace updated me on the deployment of American reinforcements to Iraq.

At this moment, two of the five additional U.S. Army brigades we are sending for this mission are operating in Baghdad. A third brigade is now moving from Kuwait and will be fully operational in Baghdad in the coming weeks. And the remaining two brigades will deploy in April and May. It will be early June before all U.S. forces dedicated to the operation are in place, so this operation is still in its beginning stages.

The reinforcements we've sent to Baghdad are having a impact. They're making a difference. And as more of those reinforcements arrive in the months ahead, their impact will continue to grow. But to succeed in their mission, our troops need Congress to provide the resources, funds, and equipment they need to fight our enemies.

It has now been 57 days since I requested that Congress pass emergency funds for our troops. Instead of passing clean bills that fund our troops on the frontlines, the House and Senate have spent this time debating bills that undercut the troops by substituting the judgment of politicians in Washington for the judgment of our commanders on the ground, setting an arbitrary deadline for withdrawal from Iraq, and spending billions of dollars on porkbarrel projects completely unrelated to the war.

I made it clear for weeks that if either the House or Senate version of this bill comes to my desk, I will veto it. And it is also clear from the strong support for this position in both Houses that the veto would be sustained. The only way the

Democrats were able to pass their bill in the first place was to load the bill with pork and other spending that has nothing to do with the war.

Here's what one leading Democrat in the House said, quote, "A lot of things had to go into that bill that certainly those of us who respect great legislation did not want there." That's an honest appraisal of the process that we just witnessed. Still, the Democrats in Congress continue to pursue their bills, and now they have left Washington for spring recess without finishing the work.

Democrat leaders in Congress seem more interested in fighting political battles in Washington than in providing our troops what they need to fight the battles in Iraq. If Democrat leaders in Congress are bent on making a political statement, then they need to send me this unacceptable bill as quickly as possible when they come back. I'll veto it, and then Congress can get down to the business of funding our troops without strings and without delay.

If Congress fails to act in the next few weeks, it will have significant consequences for our men and women in the Armed Forces. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace recently stated during his testimony before a House subcommittee, if Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-April, the Army will be forced to consider cutting back on equipment, equipment repair, and quality of life initiatives for our Guard and Reserve forces. These cuts would be necessary because the money will have to be shifted to support the troops on the frontlines.

The Army also would be forced to consider curtailing some training for Guard and Reserve units here at home. This would reduce their readiness and could delay their availability to mobilize for missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. If Congress