

I congratulate Members of Congress for coming together in a bipartisan fashion and providing the necessary funding for our troops and support for the Iraqi people.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 2206, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–28.

The President's Radio Address *May 26, 2007*

Good morning. This Memorial Day weekend, Americans honor those who have given their lives in service to our Nation. As we pay tribute to the brave men and women who died for our freedom, we also honor those who are defending our liberties around the world today.

On Wednesday, I met with some of the courageous young men and women who will soon take their place in the defense of our Nation, the graduating class of the United States Coast Guard Academy. Since its inception, the Coast Guard has patrolled and protected America's shores. And in this time of war, the Coast Guard has assumed new responsibilities to defend our Nation against terrorist infiltration and help stop new attacks. I was proud to stand with the class of 2007 and thank them for their bold decision to wear the uniform.

The men and women of the Coast Guard are fighting alongside soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have also volunteered to protect America. We live in freedom because patriots such as these are willing to serve, and many have given their lives in defense of our Nation. On Monday, I will lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in their country's cause.

One of those who gave his life was Sergeant David Christoff, Jr., of Rossford, Ohio. The day after the attacks of September the 11th, David walked into a recruiting station to become a United States marine. Asked why he made the decision to serve, David said, "I don't want my

brother and sister to live in fear." David eventually deployed to Iraq, where he fought street by street in the battle of Fallujah and earned a Purple Heart for wounds suffered in action.

While on leave back home, David learned his company was headed for combat in Afghanistan. But he knew there was also a job to finish in Iraq. So he asked to be reassigned to a unit headed for Iraq, and last May, he died in Anbar Province, where the marines are taking the fight to Al Qaida. When his family received his belongings, his mother and his father each found a letter from David. He asked that they pray for his fellow marines and all those still serving overseas.

On Memorial Day, our Nation honors Sergeant Christoff's final request. We pray for our men and women serving in harm's way. We pray for their safe return. And we pray for their families and loved ones, who also serve our country with their support and sacrifice.

On Memorial Day, we rededicate ourselves to freedom's cause. In Iraq and Afghanistan, millions have shown their desire to be free. We are determined to help them secure their liberty. Our troops are helping them build democracies that respect the rights of their people, uphold the rule of law, and fight extremists alongside America in the war on terror. With the valor and determination of our men and women in uniform, I am confident that we will succeed and leave a world that is safer and more peaceful for our children and grandchildren.

On Memorial Day, we also pay tribute to Americans from every generation who have given their lives for our freedom. From Valley Forge to Vietnam, from Kuwait to Kandahar, from Berlin to Baghdad, brave men and women have given up their own futures so that others might have a future of freedom. Because of their sacrifice, millions here and around the world enjoy the blessings of liberty. And wherever these patriots rest, we offer them the respect and gratitude of our Nation.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 25 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 25, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia May 28, 2007

Thank you all. Secretary England, members of the Cabinet, General Pace, Members of Congress, members of the United States military, veterans, families of the fallen, my fellow citizens: Welcome.

Today we honor the warriors who fought our Nation's enemies, defended the cause of liberty, and gave their lives in the cause of freedom. We offer our love and our heartfelt compassion to the families who mourn them. We pray that our country may always prove worthy of the sacrifices they made.

For seven generations, we have carried our fallen to these fields. Here rest some 360,000 Americans who died fighting to preserve the Union and end slavery. Here rest some 500,000 Americans who perished in two World Wars to conquer tyrannies and build free nations from their ruins. Here rest some 90,000 Americans who gave their lives to confront Communist aggression in places such as Korea and Vietnam.

Many names here are known: the 18-year-old Union soldier named Arthur MacArthur who grabbed a falling flag and carried it up Missionary Ridge; the Tuskegee Airmen who defended America abroad and challenged prejudice at home; the slain war hero and President who asked that we "as-

sure the survival and success of liberty" and found his rest beneath an eternal flame. Still others here are remembered only by loving families. Some are known only to God.

Now this hallowed ground receives a new generation of heroes: men and women who gave their lives in places such as Kabul and Kandahar, Baghdad and Ramadi. Like those who came before them, they did not want war, but they answered the call when it came. They believed in something larger than themselves. They fought for our country, and our country unites to mourn them as one.

We remember Army Specialist Ross Andrew McGinnis. Ross was born on Flag Day in 1987. When he was in kindergarten, he said he wanted to grow up to be "an Army man." He enlisted at 17, the first day he was eligible. He deployed to Iraq. Last December, a grenade was thrown into his Humvee as Ross was patrolling the streets of Baghdad. The soldiers inside could not escape in time, so Ross leapt into the vehicle and covered the grenade with his own body. By sacrificing himself to save four other men, he earned a Silver Star and the eternal gratitude of the American people.