

All right, guess what? You got to get to work. [Laughter] And so do I. Thank you all for giving me a chance to come and visit with you. I found this to be an interesting exchange. I appreciate your questions. I hope you have a better sense for why and how I have made decisions that have affected the individual lives of our citizens, as well as the life of our Nation. I'm an optimistic person. I believe that those decisions were not only necessary, but I firmly believe they will yield the peace that we all want; peace of mind and peace of heart. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to

Darrell Freeman, Sr., executive committee chairman, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; Cordia Harrington, chief executive officer, the Bun Companies; Al McCree, owner and chief executive officer, Altissimo! Recordings; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John C. Danforth; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and Johnny Sutton, U.S. District Attorney for the Western District of Texas. A participant referred to Azzam Alwash, director, Eden Again Project. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor

July 19, 2007

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency and related measures dealing with the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor are to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2007.

The actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources, their trafficking of illegal arms, and their formation of irregular militia, continue to undermine Libe-

ria's transition to democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

July 19, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 20. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Military Support Organizations *July 20, 2007*

Good morning. Thank you all for coming. I'm joined by veterans and military families who are here to express support for our troops and their mission in Iraq, and I want to thank you all for being here today.

We've just finished a really good meeting. In our discussions, these folks had a message that all of us in Washington need to hear: It is time to rise above partisanship, stand behind our troops in the field, and give them everything they need to succeed.

In February, I submitted to Congress a Defense Department spending bill for the upcoming fiscal year that will provide funds to upgrade our equipment for our troops in Iraq and provides a pay raise for our military. It's a comprehensive spending request that Congress has failed to act on. Instead, the Democratic leaders chose to have a political debate on a precipitous withdrawal of our troops from Iraq. The House and Senate are now scheduled to leave for their August recess before passing a bill to support our troops and their missions. Even Members of Congress who no longer support our effort in Iraq should at least be able to provide an increase in pay for our troops fighting there.

When Congress returns after Labor Day, there will be less than 1 month before the fiscal year ends and current funds for Defense Department operations run out. Congress still has an opportunity to do right by our men and women in uniform and our national security. So today I call on Congress to take action, get this vital piece of legislation to me to sign, on budget and on time.

I also ask Congress to give our troops time to carry out our new strategy in Iraq. Like all wars, the fight in Iraq has had frustrating setbacks. It's also had important successes. We've seen dramatic turnarounds

in places such as Anbar Province, which was once thought lost to the enemy. Just this week, our military forces announced the capture of one of Al Qaida's top Iraqi leaders. He helped to form what Al Qaida calls the "Islamic State in Iraq," in an attempt to replicate what the Taliban had created in Afghanistan. Today that leader is under arrest and his followers are under siege.

These successes demonstrate the gains our troops are making in Iraq and the importance of giving our military the time they need to give their new strategy a chance to work.

Earlier this year, the Senate seemed to share that view. They confirmed General David Petraeus as commander of our forces without a single dissenting vote. And now, barely a month after his strategy became fully operational, many of those same Senators are saying that that strategy has failed.

Our Nation deserves a serious debate about Iraq, because the outcome of this conflict will have enormous consequences for our country. Failure in Iraq would allow terrorists to operate from a safe haven with access to the world's third largest oil reserves. Failure in Iraq would increase the probability that at some later date, American troops would have to return to Iraq to confront an enemy more dangerous and more entrenched. Failure in Iraq would send an unmistakable signal to America's enemies that our country can be bullied into retreat.

America's involvement in Iraq does not have to end this way. A free and stable Iraq is still in reach. It has the potential to transform the Middle East and bring us closer to the day when radical regimes are replaced by peaceful allies, when terrorists have fewer places to train and operate, and when moms and dads in the Arab