

rough patch. I know many Americans are worried about meeting their mortgages. My administration is working to address this problem. Last fall, for example, we brought together the HOPE NOW Alliance to help struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure. Yesterday Secretaries Paulson and Jackson joined HOPE NOW in announcing what is called Project Lifeline. It's a targeted outreach effort to help more at-risk homeowners.

Congress can also help by passing legislation to reform the regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, to modernize the Federal Housing Administration, and to allow State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages. I hope that Congress can act on these matters quickly.

Helping our economy requires us to take action. It is equally important that we not overreact. Our economic success is not the result of the wisdom of politicians in Washington, DC, but of the collective wisdom

of the American people. Shopkeepers, farmers, laborers, entrepreneurs in the private sector have given us the most—the strongest and most resilient economic system in the world.

Over the past 7 years, this system has absorbed shocks: recession, corporate scandals, terrorist attacks, global war. Yet the genius of our system is that it can absorb such shocks and emerge even stronger. In a dynamic market economy, there will always be times when we experience uncertainties and fluctuations. But so long as we pursue progrowth policies that put faith in the American people, our economy will prosper, and it will continue to be the marvel of the world.

Now I'm honored to sign the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:59 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. H.R. 5140, approved February 13, was assigned Public Law No. 110–185.

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Executive Order Blocking Property of Additional Persons in Connection With the National Emergency With Respect to Syria *February 13, 2008*

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*)(IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order taking additional steps with respect to the Government of Syria's continued engagement in certain conduct that formed the basis for the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, including but not limited to its efforts to undermine the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq.

This order will block the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after con-

sultation with the Secretary of State, to be responsible for, to have engaged in, to have facilitated, or to have secured improper advantage as a result of, public corruption by senior officials within the Government of Syria. The order also revises a provision in Executive Order 13338 to block the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to be responsible for or otherwise significantly contributing to actions or decisions of the Government of Syria that have the purpose or effect of undermining efforts to stabilize Iraq or of

allowing the use of Syrian territory or facilities to undermine efforts to stabilize Iraq.

I delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to take such actions, after consultation with the Secretary of State, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of my order.

I wish to emphasize, as well, my ongoing concern over the destabilizing role Syria

continues to play in Lebanon, including its efforts to obstruct, through intimidation and violence, Lebanon's democratic processes.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
February 13, 2008.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on African Development and Upcoming Visit to Africa *February 14, 2008*

I've been looking forward to coming to the museum, and there's an added benefit, and that is, I get to be introduced by my wife on Valentine's Day. [*Laughter*] Happy Valentine's.

This morning Laura and I join all Americans in honoring the life of Congressman Tom Lantos. In his remarkable 80 years, Tom Lantos survived the Nazi camps of Hungary to reach the Halls of Congress. As a Representative from California, he was a fearless defender of democracy, a powerful advocate of human rights, and a strong supporter of the fight against HIV/AIDS. Our prayers are with Annette and the Lantos family. We thank God for his service.

Five years ago, Laura and I made our first visit to Africa. Since then, as she mentioned, she's taken three more trips. And every time, she came back with fascinating stories, some of which she just shared with you. And tomorrow, as she mentioned, we're going back, and I'm really looking forward to it.

We're going to Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, and Liberia. Each of these countries is blessed with natural beauty, vibrant culture, and an unmistakable spirit of energy and optimism. Africa in the 21st century is a continent of potential. That's how

we view it. I hope that's how our fellow citizens view Africa. It's a place where democracy is advancing, where economies are growing, and leaders are meeting challenges with purpose and determination.

Our visit will give me a chance to meet with people who are making the transformation on the continent possible. I'm going to witness the generosity of the American people firsthand. It will give me a chance to remind our fellow citizens about what a compassionate people we are. And I will assure our partners in Africa that the United States is committed to them today, tomorrow, and long into their continent's bright future.

And so I thank you for giving us a chance to come and visit with you. You could call this the sendoff speech.

I really want to thank Mark Dybul. I love to support people who are making history. I can't think of any more noble history than to be leading the compassionate effort of the American people to help save lives. And, Ambassador, you're doing a fabulous job.

I also want to welcome Admiral Tim Ziemer. Admiral, good to see you. He's in charge of making sure that we meet our goals in reducing the scourge of malaria.