

responsible homeowners with wise policies, we'll help them weather a difficult period, we will help get our economy back on track, and we will ensure America remains the most prosperous nation in the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:05 a.m. on March 28 in the Cabinet Room at the

White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 29. In the address, the President referred to Penny Meredith, mortgage counselor, Novadebt. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 28, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Departure for Kiev, Ukraine *March 31, 2008*

Good morning. Laura and I are on our way to a very important NATO summit, and Members of the United States Congress are on their way back to Washington. And they have a lot of work to do.

Congress needs to pass FISA reform. Our intelligence professionals are waiting on the Congress to give them the tools they need to monitor terrorist communications. Congress also needs to provide liability protection to companies that may have helped save lives after September the 11th, 2001.

Congress needs to pass legislation to modernize the Federal Housing Administration. Struggling homeowners are waiting on Congress to act, so that the FHA can

help more Americans refinance their mortgages and stay in their homes.

Congress needs to act urgently to approve the Colombian free trade agreement. A courageous ally in South America is waiting on Congress to approve an agreement that will strengthen our national security. American businesses, workers, and farmers are waiting on Congress to level the playing field.

These are all vital priorities. And I ask members of both parties to get these important pieces of legislation to my desk as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Statement on the Resignation of Alphonso R. Jackson as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development *March 31, 2008*

Today Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso Jackson announced his decision to leave the Department after 7 years of dedicated service. I have known Alphonso Jackson for many years, and I have known him to be a strong leader and

a good man. I have accepted his resignation with regret.

Secretary Jackson is a great American success story. The youngest of 12 children—his father was a foundry worker, and his mother was a nurse midwife—Alphonso has always understood the value of hard

work and equal opportunity for all Americans.

For more than three decades, he has worked to help more Americans become homeowners and strengthen communities throughout our Nation. While leading the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Alphonso made significant progress in transforming public housing, revitalizing and modernizing the Federal

Housing Administration, increasing affordable housing, rebuilding the Gulf Coast, decreasing homelessness, and increasing minority homeownership.

Laura and I treasure our strong friendship with Secretary Jackson, his wife Marcia, their daughters Annette and Lesley, and their granddaughter Lauren. We wish them all the best.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on North Atlantic Treaty Organization Enlargement

March 28, 2008

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 3(2)(E)(i) of the Resolution of Ratification to the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic adopted on April 30, 1998, I am pleased to submit the enclosed report on the Future Enlargement of NATO.

In doing so, I note with appreciation the continued and strong bipartisan support that the Congress has shown on the issue of NATO's next round of enlargement.

The report provides the following information for each of the three current NATO aspirants:

- (I) An evaluation of how each country will further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area;
- (II) An evaluation of the eligibility of each country for membership based on the principles and criteria identified by NATO and the United States, including the military readiness of each country;
- (III) An explanation of how an invitation to each country would affect the national security interests of the United States;

- (IV) An up-to-date United States Government analysis of the common-funded military requirements and costs associated with integrating each country into NATO and an analysis of the shares of those costs to be borne by NATO members, including the United States; and
- (V) A preliminary analysis of the implications for the United States defense budget and other United States budgets of integrating each country into NATO.

The report is classified due to the nature of the information it contains assessing aspirants' capabilities and contributions.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Robert C. Byrd, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; David R. Obey, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Isaac N. Skelton, IV, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; and Howard L. Berman,