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PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

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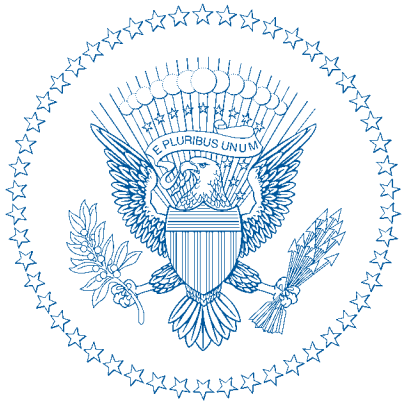
OF THE
UNITED STATES

George W. Bush



2008–2009

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1, 2008 TO JANUARY 20, 2009

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Foreword

This volume collects my speeches and papers from the second half of 2008, as well as January of 2009—the final seven months of my Presidency.

This period was dominated by dramatic developments in our Nation's economy. As autumn began, a crisis in the subprime mortgage market and a contraction of global liquidity hit the financial sector hard. Several major financial firms failed, entered into mergers, or received emergency assistance from the Federal Government. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—two government-sponsored enterprises heavily involved in the housing market—were placed into conservatorship. And Americans watched anxiously as the stock market experienced some of the most severe volatility in its history.

My team of economic advisors warned that without bold action these events could lead to a catastrophe rivaling the Great Depression in severity. So we launched an initiative known as TARP (the Troubled Assets Relief Program) to strengthen the financial sector by purchasing assets and equity from struggling financial institutions.

In September, I explained this plan to the American people in a speech delivered from the State Floor of the White House. I said, "With the situation becoming more precarious by the day, I faced a choice: To step in with dramatic Government action, or to stand back and allow the irresponsible actions of some to undermine the financial security of all. I'm a strong believer in free enterprise. So my natural instinct is to oppose Government intervention. I believe companies that make bad decisions should be allowed to go out of business. Under normal circumstances, I would have followed this course. But these are not normal circumstances. The market is not functioning properly. There's been a widespread loss of confidence. And major sectors of America's financial system are at risk of shutting down." In October, Congress passed critical legislation to help us address the financial crisis.

Throughout the remainder of my term, my Administration took action vital to restoring the health of our economy. In November, we hosted an international summit on financial markets and the world economy. At this meeting, world leaders discussed efforts to strengthen economic growth and reforms to help avoid similar financial crises in the future. They also recommitted to the importance of free trade and free markets as essential ingredients of successful economies. In December, I announced a plan to provide loans for American automakers so that they could restructure their businesses without entering into disorderly bankruptcies that could harm our entire economy.

As we faced these challenges to our prosperity, our Nation also remained vigilant against threats to our safety. In July, I signed the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, a law that allows our intelligence professionals to monitor communications of terror-

ists while respecting the liberties of our citizens. In December, the United States and Iraq signed two important agreements for the future security of our nations. We signed a Strategic Framework Agreement committing our countries to partnerships on issues like regional security, trade, and building democratic institutions. And we signed a Status of Forces Agreement that turned over increased authority to Iraqi forces and laid out a plan for withdrawing the American military presence in the country. Because the surge had helped lower violence in Iraq to levels not seen in years, we were able to embrace a drawdown scheduled to bring all American forces home by the end of 2011—a return on success.

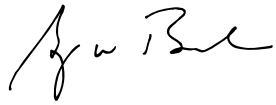
This was also a period of extensive travel. In July, Laura and I traveled to Toyako, Japan, where I attended the G8 Summit. In August, we took another trip to Asia, visiting South Korea and Thailand and taking in the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China. In November, we traveled to Lima, Peru, where I attended the Leaders' Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. And in December, I visited Iraq and Afghanistan, my final trip overseas on Air Force One.

In our final months, my Administration also continued the compassionate work of fighting disease and poverty throughout the world. In July, I signed the PEPFAR Reauthorization Act. This bill set goals of providing treatment for at least 3 million people effected by HIV/AIDS and preventing 12 million new infections worldwide. In October, we hosted the White House Summit on International Development, a conference that highlighted our revolutionary new approach to foreign assistance—linking financial support for developing nations with tangible results and good governance.

As my Administration drew to a close, America began the process of political renewal that accompanies the transition of presidential power. In November, the Nation elected Senator Barack Obama of Illinois the 44th President of the United States. This was the first time that an African-American had been elected to the presidency. I marked this historic occasion the day after the election, saying, "Many of our citizens thought they would never live to see that day. This moment is especially uplifting for a generation of Americans who witnessed the struggle for civil rights with their own eyes—and four decades later see a dream fulfilled."

As my days in office drew to a close, my Administration worked closely with the Obama team to ensure one of the smoothest transitions in presidential history. As the White House prepared for the arrival of a new President, I spoke to the American people from the East Room one final time on January 15, 2009. In my farewell address, I said "President Thomas Jefferson once wrote, 'I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.' As I leave the house he occupied two centuries ago, I share that optimism. America is a young country, full of vitality, constantly growing and renewing itself. And even in the toughest times, we lift our eyes to the broad horizon ahead."

The term of my service was eight years. But the honor of serving the American people will endure forever. I will spend the rest of my life grateful for the opportunity to have served as President of the United States of America.



Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the 43d President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1, 2008–January 20, 2009. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against a tape recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. At the request of the Office of the Press Secretary, the Bush property known as Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, is referred to simply as the Bush Ranch. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed full-text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes, and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. That coverage provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of

the Press Secretary. Also included are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed full-text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and William J. Clinton are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of Michael L. White, Managing Editor, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit. The Chief Editor of this book was Stacey A. Mulligan, assisted by Lois Davis, Michael J. Forcina, Joseph G. Frankovic, Diane Hiltabidle, Alfred Jones, Joshua H. Liberatore, Heather N. McDaniel, Amelia E. Otovo, D. Gregory Perrin, Matthew R. Regan, and Joseph K. Vetter.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Printing Office under the direction of Davita Vance-Cooks, Acting Public Printer.

Michael L. White
Acting Director of the Federal Register

David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States

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Attorney General	Michael B. Mukasey
Secretary of the Interior	Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of Agriculture	Edward T. Schafer
Secretary of Commerce	Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Labor	Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Steven C. Preston
Secretary of Transportation	Mary E. Peters
Secretary of Energy	Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary of Education	Margaret Spellings
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	James B. Peake
Secretary of Homeland Security	Michael Chertoff
Chief of Staff	Joshua B. Bolten

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Stephen L. Johnson
United States Trade Representative	Susan C. Schwab
Director of the Office of Management and Budget	James A. Nussle
Director of National Drug Control Policy	John P. Walters

Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion on Housing Counseling in North Little Rock, Arkansas
July 1, 2008

Thank you all for having us. We're here at the Family Service Agency here in Little Rock to discuss ways to help people either buy a home for the first time or stay in a home.

Before—I want to—before I say a few words about how the Government can help people stay in their home, I do want to thank Charles and your team of counselors who are here. Thank you for your briefing. I thought it was very thorough and understandable.

I do want to thank the Secretary of HUD for joining us, as well as Congressman Boozman. I really appreciate your time.

And I want to thank Caroline [Carolyn],* first-time homebuyer—or, she went to the first-time homebuyers program in Jacksonville, Arkansas—and Patty from Conway, Arkansas.

One of the problems we have when it comes to buying a home is that there's a lot of fine print, and people get worried about it. And so these counselors have helped simplify the process. And one of the great challenges now is how to help creditworthy people stay in their homes, because we got some people who are—just with some little help, some advice, and some counseling will be able to figure out a way to stay in the home. It's in our national interest we do so. That's what Patty bought—she was—had a home and was very worried about being able to stay in it; got some good advice through Sue and—now in the home.

And this has happened all across America, by the way. There's some good programs coming out of Washington, all aimed at saying to the American citizen, if you are worried about staying in your home, contact a counseling service, we'll help you—"we" being the collective group of people that are in this business. After all, this is a HUD-funded counseling program; you receive some money from HUD for your counseling.

Congress can help, when they come back, to pass a good piece of housing legislation that modernizes the FHA and reforms the—these GSEs. And we—well, I think we can get us a bill, but it's going to require less politics and more focus on keeping our minds on who we need to help, and that's the homeowner.

And so I do want to thank you very much for having us. This is an issue on people's minds. It's an issue where there is good help to be had. And so if people are looking for help here in Arkansas, it's a good place to turn to—family services. And there are other places around the country where people can get help, where there's experts that will help them refinance their mortgages or work with their mortgage companies to help you stay in their homes. It's in our interest that more people stay in their homes during this period of uncertainty.

I'm confident, in the long run, America's going to be just fine. We're a country that has overcome challenges before. And we've got some challenges—high gasoline prices; we've got some challenges in the housing industry. We know the way forward in housing: good legislation and helping people stay in their homes. And the truth of the matter is, we know the way forward

* White House correction.

when it comes to energy. We're depending too much on energy from overseas. We ought to be finding more energy here at home. If people want their gasoline prices down, let's find energy here in America. And there's plenty of energy to be had.

At any rate, thank you all for your time. I enjoyed it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. at the Family Service Agency. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Deville, Jr., executive director, Family Service Agency; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Steven C. Preston; Carolyn Pierson, homeowner, Jacksonville, AR; Patty Couch, homeowner, Conway, AR; and Sue Pearson, budget, credit, and housing counselor, Consumer Credit Counseling Service, Family Service Agency.

Statement on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
July 1, 2008

Forty years ago today, the United States joined 61 other nations in signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Today, almost all nations are party to the treaty. The NPT represents a key legal barrier to nuclear weapons proliferation and makes a critical contribution to international security. I reaffirm the strong support of the United States for the treaty and our commitment to work diligently to strengthen it further.

NPT parties must take strong action to confront noncompliance with the treaty in order to preserve and strengthen its nonproliferation undertakings. We cannot allow nations to violate their commitments and undermine the NPT's fundamental role in advancing international security. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through its safeguards system, plays a vital role in supporting the treaty by uncovering and reporting violations of nuclear safeguards. The United States is committed to ensuring the IAEA has the tools and access it needs to do its work, especially in support of universal adherence to the Additional Protocol.

The United States remains firmly committed to continued compliance with our own obligations under the NPT. Our record demonstrates this commitment, including to the disarmament goals expressed in the preamble and Article VI of the treaty. Because of the nuclear reductions I have directed and the Moscow Treaty I signed with Russia, the U.S. nuclear weapon stockpile already has been reduced by half since I entered office and is at its smallest size since the 1950s.

The United States supports the global expansion of peaceful nuclear energy as a means of meeting growing energy demand and utilizing this zero-emission source of energy to help meet the challenge of climate change. This expansion of nuclear energy must be safe, secure, and not contribute to nuclear proliferation.

It is essential in these times of great challenges to the security of the international community, particularly when terrorists and state sponsors of terrorism seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction, that NPT parties work together to confront the dangers of nuclear proliferation. I call upon all parties to act promptly and effectively to meet these challenges and ensure that the treaty remains an effective instrument of global security.

The President's News Conference
July 2, 2008

The President. Good morning. Next week, I'm going to travel to Japan for the eighth and final G–8 summit of my Presidency.

At recent summits, G–8 countries have made pledges to help developing nations address challenges, from health care to education to corruption. Now we need to show the world that the G–8 can be accountable for its promises and deliver results. As I said the other day, we need people who not only make promises, but write checks, for the sake of human rights and human dignity and for the sake of peace.

Accountability is really important when it comes to our work on the continent of Africa. In 2005, G–8 leaders promised to double development assistance to Africa by 2010. America is on track to meet our commitments. And in Japan, I'll urge other leaders to fulfill their commitments as well.

We must also fulfill our commitments in the battle against HIV/AIDS and malaria. I've asked Congress to reauthorize and expand the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, doubling our funding for this vital effort. It's very important that Congress reauthorize this plan, but in the meantime, we're fulfilling our promises that we made, not only to—at the G–8, but more importantly, to the people of—on the continent of Africa.

It's important that over the next 5 years that we support antiretroviral treatment for approximately 2.5 million people, that we prevent 12 million new AIDS infections, and that we care for 12 million people also affected by HIV/AIDS, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children. Last year, the G–8 agreed to meet those commitments; they agreed to match. They also agreed to help us reduce malaria in affected countries by half. And I just—I hope that these countries understand the great promise and hope that comes when we help alleviate this suffering. And so one of my really important agenda items is going to rally our partners to make commitments and meet commitments.

We'll also discuss additional steps to confront some other challenges, such as the need to train health care workers in G–8 partner countries in Africa. It's one thing to say we're going to help people with their—deal with disease, but a lot of these countries need workers that are capable of helping, of reaching out to people in need. We should set a goal to treat at least 75 percent of the people with neglected tropical diseases in the most affected countries. We've got to work to confront higher food prices. I'm confident we'll be talking about energy and food.

On the food issue, I've announced that the United States would make available nearly $1 billion in new resources to bolster global food security. Once again, I'll be going to the G–8 and talking about the great compassion and concern of the American people in addressing problems.

At Toyako, I'll also ask leaders of the G–8 to make other important strategic moves to alleviate hunger, such as increasing the shipments of food, fertilizers, and seeds to countries in need. It's one thing to talk about the problem; this is a practical way to help countries deal with the lack of food.

We need to help severely affected nations grow more of their own food. It's one thing to provide food; it seems like—to make sense to me to say, we're going to help you become more agriculturally self-sustaining. This has been a issue in the United States Congress, by the way. Unfortunately, we tried to get this in the farm bill. Our Members of Congress decided against this plan, this way forward. But it makes sense for the United States, if we're

going to be providing food aid, to encourage people to grow their own food so we don't have to deal with this problem on a regular basis.

I'm also going to make sure that the world understands the importance of advanced agricultural technologies, including biotechnology, to help nations grow food so they don't have to come to the world for help. We'll also be talking about export restrictions and tariffs and subsidies. We will work to tear down barriers to trade and investment around the world. It's an opportunity for those of us in the G–8 and the other nations coming to talk about a successful round of Doha. The United States is firmly committed to Doha. We're working hard to get this done by the end of the year, and it will be a good opportunity in Japan to discuss what we need to do together to open up market access and to reduce agricultural subsidies.

We'll be talking about energy security and, of course, at the same time, the climate change issue. I'll be reminding people that we can have better energy security and we can be better stewards of the environment without sacrificing economic growth.

And the principle is pretty simple. It's going to be hard to have the amount of money necessary to invest in new technologies if we don't have the money to spend, and therefore, we need to make sure our economies are vibrant.

We're now implementing new mandatory programs that will reduce billions of tons of emissions. I'll remind people at the G–8 and other nations that we're taking effective steps. We're going to make available more than $40 billion in loan guarantee authority to support private sector incentives and innovative clean energy technologies.

The 2009 budget requests more than $4 billion to support technologies that have the potential to avoid, reduce, and sequester greenhouse gases. In other words, we've got a strong agenda when it comes to providing money to encourage the advent of new technologies. And as well, when—we'll be meeting with leaders of the major economies to discuss shared strategies and practical actions for addressing greenhouse gas emissions. This is called the major economies process that we proposed and G–8 leaders endorsed.

All this is aiming, by the way, to develop a strategy in which major economies are a part of the strategy. Look, we can't have an effective agreement unless China and India are a part of it. It's as simple as that. I'm going to remind our partners that's the case. And we want the United Nations Framework Convention to be effective. And so we've got to reach common ground on how to proceed.

And we're making some progress there, including the knowledge that we've got to have a long-term emissions reduction goal, midterm goals with national plans to achieve them, and cooperation in key industrial sectors.

And also, we're going to talk about the struggle against violent extremists. The temptation is to kind of say, well, maybe this isn't really a war; maybe this is just a bunch of disgruntled folks that occasionally come and hurt us. That, you know—that's not the way I feel about it. This is an ongoing, constant struggle to defend our own security and, at the same time, help people realize the blessings of liberty. I'll, of course, talk about Afghanistan and Iraq and ask the G–8 to continue to help.

So this is an historic opportunity to meet, to exchange ideas, and to address some of the problems we all face. And I'm looking forward to going. And now I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

Afghanistan/U.S. Troop Levels

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. June was the deadliest month for U.S. troops in—since we began the war in Afghanistan. Has Afghanistan replaced Iraq as the central front of the war on terror? And is Al Qaida and the Taliban taking the upper hand?

And also, is it possible that we could send additional U.S. troops there sooner than the 2009 date that you've been talking about?

The President. First of all, any time a troop loses their life, whether it be in Afghanistan, Iraq, or elsewhere, our hearts go out to their families. And I am so appreciative that, in a time of danger, Americans are willing to step up and volunteer and sacrifice.

Secondly, it has been a tough month in Afghanistan, but it's also been a tough month for the Taliban. You know, one reason why there have been more deaths is because our troops are taking the fight to a tough enemy. You know, an enemy who doesn't like our presence there because they don't like the idea of America denying safe haven. America is pressing an ideology that's opposite of theirs, and so of course there's going to be resistance.

I am confident that the strategy is going to work, which is to confront the Taliban, confront elements of Al Qaida, and, at the same time, encourage the growth of a free society by good economic policy, good education policy, and good health policy.

We're constantly reviewing troop needs, troop levels. We're halfway through 2008; as I said, we're going to increase the troops by 2009. One thing, however, that you've got to understand is that we have doubled Afghan troops—coalition troops have doubled from 2 years ago. So there is an active presence, and there are more troops there than there were. But we're constantly reassessing and seeing whether or not we can change tactics in order to achieve our objective.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

U.S. Monetary Policy/Energy

Q. What do you realistically expect to accomplish at the G–8 to deal with soaring oil prices and the weak dollar, which are having effects on the U.S. economy? Even the Chinese now are saying that the United States needs to stabilize the dollar.

The President. Yes. Well, we're strong-dollar people in this administration, have always been for a strong dollar and believe that the relative strengths of our economy will reflect that. One thing we need to make clear when I'm with our partners is that we're not going to become protectionists; that we believe in free trade and open markets. One of the fears around the world is the United States becomes a protectionist nation.

Secondly, I'll remind people it took us a while to get into the energy situation we're in, and it's going to take us a while to get out of it. But one thing is for certain here in the United States, that we can help alleviate shortages by drilling for oil and gas in our own country. Something I've been advocating ever since I've been the President. I've been reminding our people that we can do so in environmentally friendly ways. And yet the Congress, the Democratically controlled Congress now has refused to budge. It makes no sense for—to watch these gasoline prices rise when we know we can help affect the supply of crude oil, which should affect the supply of gasoline prices.

And so yes, we'll be talking about energy. Ultimately, of course, we're going to transition away from hydrocarbons. But we're now just in a transitional period, and we need more oil to be able to do so. And I'm also going to remind people that our habits are changing. If you notice in these newspapers that automobile sales have slowed down dramatically as automobile manufacturers shift from cars that are using more gasoline to cars that are more efficient, more fuel efficient?

And I'll also tell them, it's a tough period for American consumers. I mean, nobody likes high gasoline prices, and I fully understand why Americans are concerned about gasoline prices. But I want them to understand fully that we have got the opportunity to find more crude oil here at home, in environmentally friendly ways. And they ought to be writing their Congresspeople

about it. And they ought to say, "You ought to be opening up ANWR and Outer Continental Shelf and increasing oil shale exploration for the sake of our consumers, as well as become less dependent on oil."

McKinnon [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

Environment/Technology/Trade

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Can you tell me what is the outlook for getting an agreement with the emerging economies that will limit emissions in a meaningful way in the midterm? What's the outlook for that, and how are you going to get them to come around?

The President. Yes, well, the first thing, John, is to make sure we get a understanding that all of us need to agree on a long-term goal. And part of the reluctance has been—on some nations that are major economies—to participate at all, because initially, I'm confident, they thought they were going to get a free pass from any international agreement. I mean, after all, the Kyoto international agreement excluded major economies. And therefore, they probably think, well, maybe history will repeat itself.

The idea is to say, look, we want to be effective. Effectiveness comes when major economies come to the table. The first step is to agree to a long-term goal. And I've talked to our sherpa about that, and he feels pretty good that people are now coming to that clear understanding that we're going to have to come to a long-term goal. Hopefully we can do it at this meeting. If not, we'll continue to press forward to get it done.

Secondly, one of the—a lot of the developing world says, well, it's unfair; the developed world gets to develop, and we don't. Well, our attitude about that is, why don't we set up a technology fund, and that—make it easier for people to be able to afford the new technologies that nations like ours and others will bring to the marketplace.

Thirdly, if you really do want to make sure technologies move around the world, we got to reduce these trade barriers and tariffs that prohibit technologies from moving like they should.

And so I—we'll see, John. I mean, this is a tough issue. It's tough to get consensus. People—there's a consensus that it's a problem, but it's tough to get a consensus that all of us have a responsibility to do something about it—not just some, but all of us, so that whatever we do is effective.

Bret Baier [FOX News].

Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. There have been a spate of recent stories about possible military action against Iran before the end of the year, if not by the U.S. then by Israel. And that prompted Iranian officials to say, if they're attacked, they'll essentially shut down the Strait of Hormuz. One, how confident are you that Israel will not act independently as the diplomatic process moves forward? And two, what do you make of the mixed messages out of Iran: one of defiance and one of willingness to negotiate?

The President. I have always said that all options are on the table, but the first option for the United States is to solve this problem diplomatically. I've also make it clear—made it clear that you can't solve a problem diplomatically unless there are other people at the table with you. And that is why we have been pursuing multilateral diplomacy when it comes to convincing the Iranians that the free world is sincere about, you know, insisting that they not have the technologies necessary to develop a nuclear weapon.

And we're making progress along those lines. There's been the numerous Security Council resolutions. And in my recent trip to Europe, I was very encouraged to see these leaders stand up and speak out about the need to keep our coalition active and keep the pressure on.

I will talk to Martha Raddatz [ABC News].

Israel/Iran

Q. Let me follow up on that. Would you strongly discourage Israel from going after Iran militarily? And do you believe, when you leave office, Iran will be pursuing a nuclear weapon?

The President. I have made it very clear to all parties that the first option ought to be to solve this problem diplomatically. And the best way to solve it diplomatically is for the United States to work with other nations to send a focused message, and that is, that you will be isolated and you will have economic hardship if you continue trying to enrich.

As you might remember, I worked closely with Vladimir Putin on this issue. When I said that—when asked at one of these innumerable press conferences, "Did you—do you think they ought to have a civilian nuclear program?" I said, "Of course, they should, but they can't be trusted to enrich."

And therefore, I agree with Russia that Russia—when Russia said she will provide enriched uranium for a civilian nuclear power program and will collect the enriched uranium, thereby negating the need for the Iranian regime to enrich at all.

And so we will continue working diplomatically.

Listen, thank you very much. I've enjoyed being with you. I hope you've enjoyed being with me. You haven't? Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:31 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Daniel M. Price, in his capacity as personal representative (sherpa) of the President in preparation for the G–8 summit; and Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, in his former capacity as President of Russia.

Message on the Observance of Independence Day, 2008
July 2, 2008

I send greetings to all Americans on Independence Day.

More than two centuries ago, bold and courageous visionaries pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor in signing the Declaration of Independence. Guided by ancient and eternal truths, our forefathers proclaimed to the world that liberty was the natural right of all mankind and in doing so began one of the greatest chapters in human history. On the Fourth of July, our country commemorates the great achievements of these heroes and reaffirms its unwavering confidence in the power of freedom.

It was the desire for freedom that inspired our Founding Fathers, and it is the belief in the universality of freedom that guides our Nation. On this occasion, we pay special tribute to the men and women of our Armed Forces, both past and present, who have answered freedom's call and defended the values that make America the greatest country on earth.

May God bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks at a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland
July 3, 2008

Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary England, for that generous introduction. I am so honored to be here at Bethesda National Naval Medical Center. This is often called the President's hospital. The reason why is this is where the President gets medical care. But I'm relieved today not to be on the treadmill, weighing in, and getting a blood test. [*Laughter*] I also will tell you that the care that the President gets here is extraordinary.

I am so excited to be here for what is a grand occasion. This is a big deal, the breaking ground of a new joint medical facility for the men and women of our Armed Forces. Thank you all for joining us.

In a few years, the current campus at Walter Reed will close, and many of its services will be relocated to the new complex here on the grounds at Bethesda. The two hospitals will be merged into one central campus, which will be called the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. At this new center, wounds will be healed, medical knowledge will be advanced, lives will be rebuilt, and those who wear our Nation's uniform will be reminded that they have the enduring gratitude of the American people.

I thank all who serve Walter Reed and Bethesda. I love being with the healers and caregivers and incredibly compassionate people who makes our current facility successful and will make this new center a great success.

Congressman, thank you very much for joining us. I know you are proud that this new facility is in your congressional district. Thank you for working hard to see this vision become a reality.

Lieutenant Governor, proud to be with you. This man wear the uniform of the United States military, and I'm proud to be with this veteran and now public servant for the State of Maryland.

Members of the administration who are here, thank you all for coming. Chaplain York, thanks for the blessings. And all those who wear the uniform, thanks for sacrificing for the country.

This morning, we gather in a place that was chosen by another President to be the site of a world-class naval hospital. When President Franklin Roosevelt dedicated Bethesda in the early years of World War II, he placed this facility on the frontlines of what he called the "battle against disease, disability, and death." The military surgeons and nurses, scientists and technicians, he said, "are anonymous heroes of this war."

More than six decades later, our Nation is engaged in a very different battle for our freedom. Yet our success still relies on these "anonymous heroes," the healers who care for the troops, those troops who keep the American people safe. In this new war, giving our troops the care they deserve requires cutting-edge medical facilities. And that is what this new medical center will provide.

When the construction is complete, this facility will encompass 345 beds and 6.7 million square feet. It will join the resources of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and make it easier for medical professionals in all three services to collaborate and care for the patients. Our troops and their families will no longer have to travel between Bethesda and Walter Reed to see multiple specialists. The new complex will also benefit from the good work of the Dole-Shalala Wounded Warriors Commission, which has issued recommendations for modernizing and improving our military health care system. Those recommendations will provide

a strong foundation for effective, accountable care here at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

This new medical center will be a place of healing. Every day, our military doctors and nurses and medical staff demonstrate their immense skill and their caring hearts. You soothe the pain and fear of patients. You console families who keep constant vigil over their loved ones. You share the joy of a neurology patient's first recovered words and an amputee's first steps. When required, you can show tough love, but you also like to remind patients that laughter is the best medicine. And we look forward to the day when the joy of recovery echoes through the halls of the new medical facility that will be built here.

This new medical center will be a place of innovation. Major Walter Reed was the Army doctor who found that yellow fever is transmitted by mosquitoes, a discovery that has saved countless lives. The new institution bearing his name will continue his legacy of lifesaving research. Today, our Nation's military doctors are revolutionizing how we approach traumatic brain injuries, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and amputee care. In many fields, you are far ahead of civilian medicine. And when Bethesda and Walter Reed merge into one campus across from the National Institutes of Health, this will be the site of many more promising breakthroughs that will benefit not only our troops, but all mankind.

This new medical center will be a place of compassion. At Bethesda and Walter Reed, volunteers organize holiday celebration, poker nights, and field trips. They distribute care packages from thousands of Americans who want to show their gratitude for our troops. Recently, schoolchildren from New York made pillows for soldiers at Walter Reed and sent letters along with the gifts. The children wrote, "[You are] everyone's hero." "Thank you for fighting for our freedom." At this new center, the Americans who fight for our freedom will get the compassion and support they deserve.

This new medical center will be a place of courage. Our wounded warriors show that while the human body is fragile, the human spirit is strong. Anybody who has met the wounded at Walter Reed and Bethesda cannot help but be incredibly impressed by the courage and sacrifice of our troops.

Recently, I saw this strength in a young Air Force staff sergeant named Scott Lilley. Scott was serving in Iraq when an IED left him with a severe brain injury. I think it was last Fourth of July that you came to the White House. Yes, I was one who felt like this guy had no chance. And yet he—the doctors here used state-of-the-art technology and aggressive treatment to get Scott better. Their perseverance paid off, and so has his. I welcomed he and his mom and dad to the Oval Office the other day. He was more eloquent than I was, which isn't all that hard. [*Laughter*] He drives a car; he goes to baseball games; he loves to joke.

His doctor calls Scott's recovery miraculous. And thanks to the extraordinary care he received at Bethesda as well his own extraordinary resolve, he is now back on active duty in the Air Force. And we are glad you're here.

The greatest privilege of serving as President is to be the Commander in Chief of such an extraordinary group of men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. And I'm pleased to help start construction on the new hospital that will continue to provide the excellent care our troops deserve. It is fitting that this new facility be built in a place called Bethesda, which draws its name from the Biblical pool of healing. It is there that a lame man was made to walk and was dispatched with the words: "Behold, thou art made whole."

I pray that this will be the site of many miracles of healing, where the lame will walk again, where broken bodies will be made whole, and where you'll always know

that you're in our prayers and in the hearts of the American people.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. at the National Naval Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Christopher Van Hollen and Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown of Maryland; Capt. Lorenzo York, USN, command chaplain, National Naval Medical Center; former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors; and Jolene and Frank Lilley, parents of Staff Sgt. Scott Lilley, USAF.

Remarks on Departure From the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda
July 3, 2008

Rescue of Hostages in Colombia

Yesterday I had the opportunity to speak to President Uribe of Colombia. And he called to give me the good news that hostages had been rescued, including three Americans that had been held since 2003. I congratulated the President. I asked him to congratulate his military and those who had planned it. And I told him what a joyous occasion it must be to know that the plan had worked, that people who were unjustly held are now free to be with their families.

And so I'm proud of our relationship with Colombia, and I'm proud of my friend President Uribe. And I appreciate his courage and his strong leadership and the successful operations they waged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Interview With Foreign Print Journalists
July 2, 2008

The President. So here's the thing, I'm going to have a few comments, and then got time for one question apiece, so calibrate your questions. You can do like our press, ask three questions in one question.

Anyway, what are the rules for the American press corps—French and American press corps?

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino. It's embargoed until they have a chance to use it themselves.

The President. I'm talking about these people.

White House Press Secretary Perino. Yes, they hold it until after it's already published.

The President. I got you. That's presuming they read Japanese papers.

White House Press Secretary Perino. Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters] does.

The President. Okay.

First of all, I'm looking forward to this. As you know, it's my last G–8. These are

useful, important meetings, because it's a chance to forge common policy, but it's also a chance to have a lot of important bilaterals. And the first bilateral I have is with the Prime Minister. And it's very important for me to make it clear to him and the Japanese people that I value the bilateral relationship with Japan.

It has been, and will be, the cornerstone of our policy. And my view is, our relations have been very good during my Presidency. As you know, I had a close relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi. After all—but he wasn't the first Prime Minister I dealt with. The first Prime Minister I dealt with wasn't around very much—he was—he spent more time with my predecessor, obviously—and then Koizumi and then, obviously, Abe and the current Prime Minister.

I worked hard to have a good personal relationship with all the leaders so that we can discuss common problems and common issues. And we've worked through a lot of problems in the past, but more importantly, we've got a strategic relationship that is solid and well founded. And that's very important for stability and peace in Asia.

And so—and then, of course, we'll have the meetings. And there will be a variety of topics to discuss. I'm confident people will be concerned about food prices and energy prices. We'll discuss those. To the extent that we can develop a common strategy to deal with them, it will make a lot of sense. I think the world will watch carefully and see what signals come out of the meetings. My own view is, is that here in the United States, we can do more to find oil. Like Japan, however, we're dependent upon foreign sources of oil, which means we've got to transition to a different era.

One of the interesting things that's taking place in Japan—I tell this to a lot of my friends here—I happen to believe battery technologies are coming soon. And the Japanese are, of course, in the lead when it comes to new technologies relative to automobiles, such as battery technologies. And some day relatively soon, I'm confident that people will be driving the first 40 miles on electricity, and the cars won't look like tiny marbles or golf carts; they'll actually be regular-sized automobiles.

And so the question is, how do we manage the transition to a new era? Eventually, we'll be driving hydrogen automobiles. And I know the Japanese private sector is working very hard on hydrogen technology, as are we. Here at home, as you know, we're diversifying the fuel by the use of ethanol. And I've always felt it was good to have American farmers growing fuel rather than trying to purchase crude oil from parts of the world that frankly are either unstable or don't like us.

In terms of food prices, a lot of the food prices are being driven by energy costs. But we can do a better job of selling seed and fertilizer or giving seed and fertilizer to help others grow crops. I mean, it is—parts of the world should become sufficient in food, and they're not.

One of the interesting debates will be, of course, the use of bioengineered food, genetically modified crops. And it's—these genetically modified crops can grow in fairly harsh weather conditions, where there's a lack of water, and yet some countries are fearful to use it because they won't have market access for their crops when they export them.

Another great opportunity would be, of course, dealing with the environment. I know this is important for the Prime Minister, and it's important for all nations there. It turns out that energy independence and climate change can go hand in hand. In other words, the technologies that free us from dependence on hydrocarbons will be the very technologies that enable us to improve the environment. The question is, how best to expedite new technologies to the market and, frankly, get it in the hands of countries that are going to need these technologies, such as your cross-straits neighbor, China?

My own view is that there will never be an effective agreement unless China and India are at the table. And I say "effective," I mean, a results-oriented agreement where, in fact, we actually accomplish an objective, which is reducing greenhouse gases. And so we'll work to set the conditions so that people understand that in order to be effective, all of us who are creating greenhouse gases must agree to long-term goals and develop effective interim plans.

On my mind, of course, will be human rights and human dignity. And that comes particularly in the form of helping people deal with malaria and HIV/AIDS. I believe in the admonition, to whom much is given, much is required. Our nations have been given a lot, and we're comfortable nations. And we got to remember that there is suffering in the world, and that when we speak, when we make pledges, we got to mean what we say. And the last G–8, people came to the table and said, "Okay, we hear you; now we'll all pledge." And the question is, have people written checks? And I will gently remind people, to the extent I can be gentle, that it's important for people, when they hear us talk, to know that there will be results.

And I'll talk about our HIV/AIDS initiative in Africa and how it's been effective and the malaria initiative. I'll use examples such as Zanzibar, a part of Tanzania where the infection rate for young babies was 20 percent; it's down to 1 percent because of a simple plan—and that these nations can help.

And so we've got a—by the way, this all is part of this war on terror. I do want to thank the Japanese Government and Japanese people for clearly understanding the stakes. But we face an enemy that can only recruit when they find hopeless people. And there's nothing more hopeless than a mother losing her baby because of a mosquito bite. And so not only is it in our moral interest to help people, it's also in our national security interest to help people.

And so that's kind of how I see it. Now, who wants to start?

Trade

Q. Sir, since I went to high school in Texas——

The President. Where did you go?

Q. Edinburg, sir.

The President. Did you? Edinburg High School?

Q. Yes, class of '74.

The President. You've got to be kidding me. [*Laughter*] Edinburg High School. Isn't that interesting? Nobody knows where Edinburg is except for me and you. [*Laughter*] It happens to be on the Mexican border. It is—what year were you there?

Q. In '74.

The President. Oh, man. You been down there since?

Q. Yes, several times.

The President. Amazing, isn't it, how it's changed?

Q. Yes, it has.

The President. The benefits of free trade. People need to—if you could have seen Edinburg in '74 and Edinburg in 2004 and now 2008, you'd be amazed at the changes as a result of free and fair trade between the United States and Mexico. And therefore, one other point will be, of course, complete Doha successfully.

Thank you for reminding me of the importance of free trade. [*Laughter*]

Abduction of Japanese Citizens/Six-Party Talks

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to ask questions, sir. And first, let me start with a very Japan-specific question about North Korea and abductees issue.

Sir, at the press conference on June 26, you made a—said that the United States would not abandon its strong ally when it comes to resolving this abductee issue. But in spite of this very strong statement that

you made, there are still some doubts and concerns in Japan, especially among the families of abductees, that the United States might try to resolve this nuclear issue at the expense of the abductee issue.

And Mrs. Yokota, who you met in your Oval Office 2 years ago, reportedly said that she was irritated because she felt that Japan was ignored. What exactly do you plan to do to assure Japanese Government and the people that the United States will not abandon Japan in the process of rescinding North Korea's designation of a state sponsor of terror? And what will the United States do to help bring progress to this issue within 45 days of this delisting process, sir?

The President. Yes. Well, first of all, I can understand the mom's concerns. I got to see firsthand in the Oval Office how—her sense of anguish and hurt that her sweet daughter had been abducted. So I understand the emotions of the issue. As a matter of fact, I invited her to come because I wanted to—I wanted her and others to see firsthand my personal concern. The truth of the matter is, if I wasn't concerned about the issue and didn't think it was a priority, I wouldn't have invited her to the Oval Office.

Secondly, I believe that the six-party talks is the best way to effect change in the North Korean regime, positive change. One such change, of course, is to head toward a common objective, which is a nuclear free—a nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula, which is in our interest, and it's in Japanese interests.

Secondly, there are other issues, of course, to be dealt with in this framework. And one such issue is the abductee issue. The question is, can Japan solve this issue alone better, or does it make sense to have the United States and other countries expressing the same concerns? I happen to believe that it is in your country's interest to have the United States and other countries helping you on this issue. And therefore, I view the six-party talks as a framework to convince the North Korean Government to deal with these serious issues.

And you know, people—I can understand people saying, well, I guess this is the beginning of the end of U.S. concern. But I will say it again, like I have said it time and time again, this is the beginning of our concern, and it's a framework to help solve the concerns of the parents, the people of Japan, and the Japanese Government.

In terms of the recent declaration, this was agreed to by the Japanese Government. This was an understanding that this is how we're going to move the process forward. But this is only one step. I think some of your listeners or readers probably think that, well, this is the end of the process. No, this is the beginning of the process. And there's a lot more work to be done. And our policy is action for action. And what's changed is, it used to be, okay, we'll give the North Koreans a concession and hope they respond. Now it's, when they act, we respond. And part of the agenda is the abductee issue.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Sato.

Six-Party Talks/Japan-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes.

The President. They call you Mr. Sato?

Q. Hi. Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'd like to just follow up on the North Korea issue. There is in Japan—there is concern in Japan that the golden era of the U.S.-Japan alliance has passed, the historical—[*inaudible*]—of alliance is now degrading. So how do you think that, in this context, the removal of North Korea from the list affects the U.S.-Japan alliance?

The President. It's interesting. Somebody told me that beginning to creep into the dialogue there is—the six-party talks really is—you know, will undermine the bilateral relations between Japan and the United States. I fully reject that. It's like saying, okay, we're all part of the United Nations, therefore, bilateral relations don't matter.

Multilateral forums to address an issue strengthens relations; they don't weaken relations.

And the fundamental question is, how do you solve the problem of North Korea? That's the question. That's what the six-party talks were aimed to address. The history of this issue was, at one point in time, it was really only the United States that was dealing with the issue; others were kind of there, but they weren't that—they basically said, here, go solve it.

And it's an effective way to deal with a problem way diplomatically. In order to solve a problem diplomatically, there has to be other voices who say, here's what we expect, and if not, here are the consequences. And that's why it was so important to convince the Chinese, for example, to become a party to the six-party talks.

In the meantime, however, we have been working very closely with Japan on a variety of issues. You notice we're no longer talking about basing issues. Why? Because our bilateral relations were such that we're able to deal with them. We were able to work together in Afghanistan and Iraq. We were able to work together on humanitarian issues in places like Afghanistan. In other words, our bilateral relations have thrived during this period when the six-party talks were constructed.

The only thing I can do is just tell people how I view it—when I go to Japan or through objective agents such as yourself—and it is: Our relations have been important; they are important, and they will be important. And as I said in my opening statement, this really is a cornerstone to our policies in Northeast Asia.

Hiro.

North Korea

Q. Thank you, President. Again, on North Korea——

The President. Sure, yes. Is this going to be six North Korea questions? [*Laughter*] I can handle all six, trust me.

Q. Well, last week, you said you don't have any—you have no illusions about the North Korean regime, Kim Jong Il. So the question might be hypothetical, but if North Korea——

The President. No, it is hypothetical, I can tell you—when you start with an "if." [*Laughter*] You can try a hypothetical. [*Laughter*]

Q. In the case North Korea does not fulfill its obligation, such as disclosing a number of the weapons that they have or nondisclosing of the enrichment——

The President. Or dealing fairly on abductees.

Q. ——yes, abductees or proliferation issue, activities to Syria, what kind of message do you think you'd——

The President. Well, we'll of course work with our partners. Now, for example, these won't be unilateral sanctions. These will be multiparty sanctions. But first of all, this regime is highly sanctioned. They have been isolated. And if they choose not to move forward on an agreed-upon way forward, action for action, there will be further isolation and further deprivation for the people of North Korea.

The regime had made a conscious decision to at least make a declaration within the six-party talks to move forward. I would only surmise that perhaps the leader of North Korea is tired of being isolated in the world and would try to advance his country in a way that makes it easier for the people to have a better life.

And therefore, if you read the statements that started the six-party—that confirm the six-party talks, about what the pledges are, there are very concrete—it's a concrete action plan. But keep in mind, at this point in time, this is still a regime that is highly sanctioned. So step one is, if he chooses not to move forward, then the status quo is for certain, and he'll remain highly sanctioned. And then, of course, there will be great disappointment with the other parties involved in the six-party talks.

Expectations are that he will move forward, action for action. But if he doesn't, we now have partners at the table who will be wondering how best to send yet another message to him. And the good news: It won't be just Japan and the United States; there will be other countries there. This is how multilateral diplomacy works.

And I repeat to you: The six-party talks have been aimed to set a framework in place that will serve as an inducement to go forward, but also that can be consequential. And we, of course, will consult with our partners to deal about—I mean, step one is no change in the current status, which means highly sanctioned—probably the most sanctioned nation in the world. And step two is, of course, we'll consult and figure out a way forward.

My hope is, is that the North Koreans continue to move forward. And you mentioned what we expect. We expect there to be full declaration of manufactured plutonium, we expect there to be a full disclosure of any enrichment activities and proliferation activities, and we expect the abductee issue to be solved.

Kenji.

Environment/Technology/Energy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask a climate change issue.

The President. Climate change, yes.

Q. In the upcoming summit, Prime Minister Fukuda hopes to set a long-term goal for curbing greenhouse gas emission, and I think you share the idea. What goals do you have going into the summit, and do you expect to strike an agreement on that?

The President. I'm hopeful we can strike an agreement. But I caution everybody that such an agreement must have all of us who create greenhouse gases, not just those of us around the table at the G–8. And that's why we worked with the Prime Minister to have this major economies meeting; it was to strengthen the G–8, is to make it relevant.

You know, it's an interesting notion that—I said today in my press availability in the Rose Garden—I don't know if you were there or not—you know, I wonder whether or not some of these nations who are creating greenhouse gases, but considered still developing nations, are used to the period of Kyoto, when they weren't held to account about what they were producing. I wonder if that's their mindset. Because if it is, it'll make any international agreement ineffective if they're not a part to it, because, you know, it is estimated that—well, China is creating a lot of greenhouse gases and will continue to do so. And therefore, Japan and the United States can maybe make decisions that affect our own production, but it will be ineffective at solving the problem unless China is with us.

And so my hope there is to move the process along so that we, at a very minimum, send a clear message to developing countries that are producing greenhouse gases that we expect you to be a part of an agreement. And step one is a long-term goal. In other words, if you can get nations to commit to a goal, you've got them committed to a process. If, however, the process doesn't matter whether you're a part or not, or you may be a part at some point in time, in my mind that won't produce the results that are necessary to deal with the global climate change issue. And so we'll see how that goes. We're working it very hard, as is the Prime Minister and other nations.

The other thing we can do is we can talk about some just practical things we can do, such as insisting that we reduce tariffs and trade barriers on pollution equipment. It makes no sense to make such equipment prohibitively expensive when it is—when there are some basic technologies that could move and can help. And I will be talking about technologies there as well. And I told you about some of the technologies dealing with automobiles and, you know, the interesting thing is, is that the

world is now beginning to waken up to the beauty of nuclear power.

And I mean, if one is really concerned about global warming and greenhouse gases, they ought to be carrying signs insisting upon the development of nuclear power plants. This is renewable energy with zero greenhouse gas emissions. And yet the world—parts of the world are very reluctant about—even in our country, it's very difficult to build a plant. We've been able to get some regulatory relief through Government action. I think four new plants have been permitted, or four expansions have been permitted. But we ought to be—about 25 percent of our electricity comes from nuclear power, and it ought to be a lot higher.

And you know, one of the things that interesting is, Japan and the United States are working on technologies to deal with the waste. And that will—if that—when that technology comes to fruition, it will ease some people's concerns. There will be some who just simply will never buy into nuclear power. I fully understand that. But this will be a great opportunity to discuss about other things we can do while we're trying to work—you know, by the way, everything we're going to do is meant to strengthen the United Nations process and not weaken it.

And so anyway, that's kind of what's on my mind going into the meetings.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. Oishi.

U.S. Monetary Policy

Q. Hello.

The President. Yes.

Q. Nikkei is economic newspaper, so let's talk about economy.

The President. You're an economic newspaper?

Q. Yes.

The President. You're the Wall Street Journal. [*Laughter*]

Q. More famous than the Wall Street Journal.

The President. More famous. [*Laughter*] Well, that's good.

Q. So, Mr. President, I know your strong U.S. dollar policy——

The President. Yes, that's true.

Q. ——but do you know how to make it stronger? Or do you expect the possibility of the U.S. intervention in the fiscal—financial market?

The President. We believe that the relative worth of economies should set respective currencies. And therefore, the best way to reinforce our strong dollar policy is to keep taxes low in the United States, ease regulatory burdens, become less dependent on foreign sources of oil, and make it clear that we're for free and fair trade. That not only means the trading of goods and services, but also the investment—that the United States is open to investment. And to me, those are the best ways to deal with the fundamental aspects of an economy, that assures the world that the United States will be a vibrant, strong economy, and that eventually will be reflected in our currency.

Would you like another economic question?

Q. Well, does Europe share the same view?

The President. Does who?

Q. Does Europe——

The President. Share the same view of the U.S. dollar? I think they want there to be—it's an interesting question. I heard concern about our dollar, and I believe they support the U.S. strong dollar policy.

Yes, sir.

North Korea/Iraq/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My question is on North Korea and Iran.

The President. North Korea.

Q. North Korea and Iran.

The President. Okay, good.

Q. So you have looked at multilateral diplomacy in dealing with North Korea and made a decision to move it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism in return for

actually a far from perfect declaration on its nuclear activities. Some people say that this is kind of appeasement or a double standard compared to the way you dealt with Iraq.

So do you think the way you dealt with Iraq—with North Korea, namely, action for action principle, through multilateral diplomacy, rather than military option, would be an effective and realistic motive for preventing an Iran with nuclear weapons? And if so, what exact action do you want from Iran? And what action is the United States ready to offer to Iran?

The President. Yes, sure, thank you. First of all, if I might, I'd like to reject some of the premises in your question. One, you said that—incomplete declaration. Well, we're in the process of determining whether or not North Korea did make an incomplete declaration. And if they did, they will remain the most highly sanctioned nation.

One thing is for certain, is they did collapse their cooling tower on the plant that had been used to manufacture plutonium. I mean, that is a complete declaration, at least of that aspect of what they said—when they said they would dismantle—or disable and then dismantle. And so we've got—you know, there's a process. Things are going on. I guess we live in a world where everything is supposed to be instant, but I repeat to you: This is a first step of a multiple step process, just so everybody understands.

Secondly, we conducted multilateral diplomacy in Iraq—oh, yes—1441 at the United Nations Security Council—the world came together and said, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences, in a unanimous vote. Now, my speech to the United Nations took place in September, early September of 2002. I don't know if you remember the debate during that summer. It was, "Will Bush go to the U.N. Security Council, or will this be a unilateral move without it?"—going to this world body. I think some might have been old enough to have covered that story here.

And the answer was, I did go to the U.N. Security Council. We did conduct multilateral diplomacy, and the world was supportive of saying to Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious—and he made the choice. He was the one who got to make the choice because he—you know, he defied the world.

And so I have always said that diplomacy has got to be the first choice of solving any of these problems. But military options remain on the table, and they remain on the table for these three issues you discussed. I happen to believe multilateral diplomacy is the most effective way to solve some of these very difficult problems, because there needs to be more than one voice in saying the same thing. Because in the past, if you're there alone and you say something and then the leader basically rattles people's cages or makes them nervous, guess who the world rushes to? Not to the person rattling the cage; it rushes to, in this case, the United States: "Fix it, get him what he wants." And it didn't solve the problem.

Now, I understand sometimes people love process, so everybody feels good, you know. But that's not what I—this administration is trying to solve problems. And the best way to solve the problem in North Korea was to have others at the table along with us. And same with the Iranians. Now, this has been difficult to get there to be a focused message because some are worried about market share. You know, the message to the Iranians is, verifiably suspend your enrichment program, and there's a better way forward.

And by the way, in 2003, it looked like we were in the process of convincing the Iranians to verifiably suspend their enrichment program. And the United States was working with our partners in Europe, sending a message that you can end your isolation. And then Ahmadi-nejad came along and changed the tone and changed the—evidently, changed the policy of the Government. And so now Iran is much more

confrontational. But our message hasn't changed: Verifiably suspend your enrichment program, and there is a better way forward.

So there are carrots, and there are sticks. We're working hard to make sure that the sticks mean something. And I've been pleased by the U.N. Security Council resolutions that have been issued by our friends in the United Nations Security Council in a way that says to the Iranians, we're serious about your change of policy. The choice is theirs. We've made our choice.

Now, one thing that's interesting—I think I'll—you find this interesting, at least you'll play like it's interesting—is this: Should the Iranian regime—so I'm the guy who just talked about nuclear power, right? Should the Iranian regime—do they have the sovereign right to have civilian nuclear power? So, like, if I were you, that's what I'd ask me. And the answer is, yes, they do. And I have said so publicly time and time again. But they don't have the right, as far as the U.N. Security Council, for example, goes, to enrich, because they haven't told the truth about their program; therefore, they can't be trusted with enrichment. After all, enriching uranium is a step toward having a nuclear weapon.

So we worked with the Russians. Vladimir Putin and I worked on—and he took the lead on this issue, for which I am grateful. So he goes to the Iranians and says, we'll provide enriched uranium for you. You have a sovereign right—Bush has said you have a sovereign right to have nuclear power. But because you have defied the IAEA in the past, we'll provide enriched uranium for you, and we'll collect the enriched uranium; therefore, you don't need to enrich. And if you insist on enriching, it must mean you want a weapon.

And so multilateral forums enable people to come up with those kinds of tactics that are effective. And so you bet, the multilateral forum is the best way to solve this peacefully.

Okay, guys. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as—oh, you want to ask more questions? I'm sure you do. Well, that's generally what happens with one of these things.

Okay, you better hurry——

Press Secretary Perino. Lightning round.

The President. Lightning. Quickly.

Japan's Antiterrorism Law/Japanese Role in Afghanistan

Q. Quick, move to Afghanistan. Japan has been providing the support—support to multilateral force, including United States, in Indian Ocean, to support Afghanistan. But the law that enables maritime Japanese force to do that will expire in July.

The President. Next July.

Q. Next July.

The President. A year from now.

Q. Yes, next July.

The President. Right. And so——

Q. And U.S. has been——

The President. We were very pleased that they renewed the law.

Q. And Secretary Gates has been asking to either extend or even enhance, like sending helicopters, CH–47s to Afghanistan. And I was wondering whether you can explain to the Japanese why such upgraded participation in the war in Afghanistan serves the interests of Japan, apart from simply meeting the expectation of the United States?

The President. Because when Al Qaida—forces like Al Qaida have a safe haven to attack friends and allies, or Japan itself, it's a danger to peace. And as for the Japanese contribution, we are very grateful for what we have, and we appreciate the Government getting the current extension through the Parliament. And we, of course, will work with our allies to determine whether or not an enhanced presence could be useful. And if the Government can support that, fine. But I just want you to know how grateful I am for the contribution, as well as the humanitarian contributions.

It also ought to make the Japanese people feel good to know that they're helping young girls go to school, or they're helping people get their food to market. Does it matter? Yes, it matters, if you care about the human condition. So the contribution has been great.

Sato. Got another question? If not, I will applaud you.

Japan-U.S. Relations/Nippon Professional Baseball

Q. Yes, I have a very personal question, so——

The President. A very what kind?

Q. On the history, for——

The President. Personal, yes.

Q. During your Presidency, the Japan-U.S. relationship was very strong. But there are still unresolved issues on—regarding Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. And some historians propose that the Prime Minister should visit Pearl Harbor and U.S. President should visit Hiroshima.

The President. That's interesting.

Q. What do you think about this?

The President. My attitude is, is that I—look, this was a painful period in our respective histories. After all, my father, for example, was a young Navy fighter pilot at war with Japan. But my experience has been very different, because one of my best friends was Prime Minister Koizumi. Isn't that interesting? And one reason why is because we put the past behind us and focused on the future.

And symbolic gestures like that may make sense. I don't know. I haven't really thought about it. It's an interesting idea. You're the first person that's ever brought it up to me, I want you to know. But whoever the next President is must, one, understand the importance of the relationship, and two, be thinking about the future, because we share values; we've got a lot of work to do. We've had interesting economic relationships throughout our history. As you know, I believe in open markets, free and fair trader. That, to me, if I were somebody living in Japan, I'd say, well, there's a fellow who has put the past behind him and is focusing on what's in the best interests of both countries.

So it's an interesting suggestion. This will be—it won't work for me; this is my last trip to Japan as President. Supposed to never say never, but I—let me just—I predict this is my last trip to Japan. And I'm not saying I'm happy about it.

So is anybody going to ask me about Bobby Valentine? [*Laughter*] You don't even know who Bobby Valentine is. He was the old coach of the Rangers who's a manager of one of the Japanese baseball teams, and he's done very well in Japan. People like Bobby, don't they?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes, he's—last time I was in Japan, Bobby was there at the airport with Mr. Oh. [*Laughter*]

Q. Oh. [*Laughter*]

The President. The Babe Ruth of Japanese baseball.

Q. Oh, yes, that's right.

The President. Okay? Got anything, Hiroki?

China/Japan

Q. Yes, please.

The President. You're the guy who thought of it.

Q. On China?

The President. China, yes. See how generous I am to give you all these questions?

Press Secretary Perino. You're ruining the lighting round aspect of it.

The President. Okay, keep moving. [*Laughter*]

Q. Actually, I would like to ask you what's your view on current relations between U.S. and China? Because 7 years ago, U.S. military plane was forced to land on Hainan Island.

The President. That's right, yes.

Q. And then I would like to ask you, then, how you see the evolution of the China-U.S. relationship since then? And also, there is some concern in Japan that

future of Asian—[*inaudible*]—U.S. and China will jointly manage the stability and prosperity. How do you see——

The President. First of all, the cornerstone of U.S. policy is good, strong relations with Japan. So, as far as the Bush administration goes, that has been our policy, and we've acted on it. That's not to say we can't have good relations with China, nor Japan can have good relations—I mean, Japan should have good relations with China. And we expect Japan to work hard to have good relations with Japan, just like Japan ought to hope that we have good relations with China, which we do. Our relations are strong, and some say, have never been better. I'll let the experts judge that.

And one reason why is, we've managed some difficult issues together. The Taiwan Straits issue is a difficult issue, and it looks like it's in a much better spot. I have worked hard to have a good personal relationship with Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin, his predecessor, so I can speak frankly to them.

And my big concerns about China are religious freedoms and individual rights and political freedoms. Every time I've met with the Chinese leader, which has been a lot, I've had a very frank and open dialogue, and yet been able to maintain a good, cordial relationship so we can work through problems. One such problem is no nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. We've got big economic relations with China, as does Japan.

And so I don't view the world as zero-sum. In other words, if you got a good relationship, strong relationship, you can't have a good relationship with China. Quite the contrary, in good foreign policy and good diplomacy, a good relations with one makes it easier to have a better relations with another country. And that's how we've conducted our policy.

China is a very interesting issue for all of us. Right now they're dealing with trying to get their economy such that people in the rural parts of their country are able to benefit. And it's a challenge. And they're using a lot of raw materials, and one reason why it's important for Japan and the United States to help them develop the technologies that make them less dependent upon some of these raw materials—that have affected worldwide price of raw materials.

And so it's a—it will be a very interesting issue for future Presidents, but we've been able to manage it very well.

Kenji.

2008 Presidential Elections

Q. Thank you.

The President. Yell your name. [*Laughter*]

Q. I'd like to ask about the Presidential election.

The President. Yes, I don't talk about it, Kenji. [*Laughter*] The American people are going to get to pick. I'm for McCain, if that's what you want to know. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——Presidential election and U.S. foreign policy.

The President. I like a persistent guy. Keep going.

Q. Yes, thank you very much. [*Laughter*] So with one candidate who supports your foreign policy and another who sharply criticizes it, so how do you think this election will affect the rest of the world?

The President. The rest of the world?

Q. Yes.

The President. You know, I'm—that's a good question. I'm for John McCain because I think he'll do a better job on foreign policy and domestic policy. But, Kenji, you know, I really am not going to spend a lot of time opining about the current election. The American people will filter it out. It's very early in the election cycle. This fall is really when the campaign begins in earnest, the debates, and people start to really focus on it. Right now it's a lot of the pundits and a lot of the pros and experts, some of whom are sitting right behind you, that are——

North Korea

Q. So do you believe that the next U.S. administration will continue your policy on North Korea?

The President. I think whoever gets in the White House will take a look and say, gosh, it makes sense to have other people at the table other than the United States in order to effect good diplomacy. Diplomacy—in order for diplomacy to be effective, it has to be consequential. In other words, when five people say, here's the way forward, and if you choose not to do so, there will be consequences—or if you choose to do so, there will be consequences, it is much more effective than one nation sitting there saying, please change your habits.

And so I—you know, I'm going to leave it to the candidates. They'll have to make up their own mind. But at least there's a multilateral forum in which to deal with this problem. Hopefully, it's progressed a long way down the road by the time whoever comes in the Oval Office. We're pushing forward on an action for action, verifiable—and by the way, the next stage of this, just so everybody is comfortable, there will be a verifiable—a verification regime in place, so that, to answer your question, Michiro, it will be less speculation and more transparency.

Thank you, sir.

Oishi. Another economic question?

Energy/Technology

Q. You must be the most excellent expert on oil business.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] Look where our price is. [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, actually, I'm suffering high gas prices.

The President. You are?

Q. Every day.

The President. Yes, you are.

Q. So what can you do to curb energy inflation?

The President. Yes, a couple of things: One is you either just—this is pure economics. You'll understand this better than anybody here. You either increase the supply of something or decrease the demand of something in order to affect price—down. The habits of the United States consumer is beginning to change because people are now—they don't like four-dollar gasoline. I can understand why they don't like four-dollar gasoline. People are now looking for smaller cars.

That takes a while, however, to change. I fully understand that. But demand is beginning to shift in our country. And in order to affect worldwide demand, it seems like all of us—Japan, the United States, and others at the G–8—need to convince some of the people coming to the G–8 to stop subsidizing their consumers or at least reduce the subsidies somewhat so that there is some effect on demand. Price cannot affect demand if people's habits are subsidized by state enterprise or the state.

Secondly, the strategy on energy has got to be twofold, at least from the United States perspective: One, spend money and come up with technologies. That will mean we have to use less gasoline, therefore—in automobiles, for example—less gasoline and, therefore, take the demand off of crude oil.

And I mentioned one such technology that I thought was interesting for me to mention it, recognizing the ascendancy of the Japanese technology in the battery market. I've spent a lot of time on this issue, and I think people would say that the Japanese autos and the Japanese R&D is very advanced on battery technologies, which is good. People say, well, doesn't that upset you? And my answer is, absolutely not. I'm interested in technology and technological breakthroughs, and I'm pleased that our friends—the investment that this Government and the private sector has made is hopefully going to pay off soon. It's beneficial to the world.

And the high price is going to spur a lot of investment. That's what I've explained to the main suppliers of crude oil.

So when I went to Saudi Arabia, I said, this high price is hurting your consumers, your customers, and it's going to cause a lot of research and development to diversify away as fast as possible, which is what's happening.

In the meantime, we better transition to this period. In other words, evidently our Congress must have thought that there will be instant technology on the market because they prevented us, since 2001, from exploring for known oil and gas reserves that we can do in environmentally friendly ways. And now all of a sudden the price got high enough where the American people are now beginning to hear that message, and I hope the Democrat leaders in Congress hear it, which is, you know, allow this new technology be deployed to find new reserves. And the sooner we do this the better. And it will certainly affect—at the very minimum, affect the psychology of the world, to see that new supplies of crude oil could be coming on the market in the United States.

So that's our strategy: technologies and, in the meantime, find more oil here at home. And there's more oil to be found. And I can assure you, Japan wishes they had these reserves, you know, and you'd be finding them. And you wouldn't be hamstrung by politicians refusing to allow this to go forward.

Michiro.

Iraq/War on Terror

Q. Last question, on Iraq. What is your evaluation about where Iraq is now? Do you think now if the U.S. can afford to withdraw more troops from Iraq, or will you leave that decision to the next administration? What is your assessment on war on terror in general, during your two terms?

The President. Well, thank you. Let me make sure I get—this is the old three-part question, and I'm about to be 62 years old, so—[*laughter*]. By the way, I will be celebrating my birthday on Japanese soil. That's interesting.

Q. Congratulations.

The President. Yes, come to the party. It's not going to be much of a party, it's only 62.

Let's see, Iraq and troops. Okay. First of all, there was—the people have—okay, you got to have benchmarks. I think there was 15 benchmarks—18 benchmarks. And one way to evaluate progress is to measure what's actually happened to what was expected. And the progress is undeniable. What happened was security was such that the politics and the economics could move forward. And for a period of time, that was not the case. That's why we sent more troops in. The combat brigades of the surge will finally come home. The last one will be home in July. So we are in a policy of return on success.

I will listen to General Petraeus when he returns in September as to whether or not we can achieve our objective with fewer troops. That's up to our commanders. In other words, I'm not going to run a poll during the political season, or any time, to determine what's the best policy. The policy is determined by the considered judgment of our commanders. And my hope is the next President will have that same standard. That's going to be up to that person to make the right judgments.

In terms of the war on terror, step one is to recognize we're at war. Some in our country don't believe we're at war. If you don't believe we're at war, that this is a simple law enforcement matter, then what you do is you wait until something happens and then react. You know, law enforcement is, there is an action, there's a crime, and then there—law enforcement acts.

In war, what you do is you prevent the enemy from hitting in the first place. That's why Iraq and Afghanistan are very important theaters in the war on terror. People—some think these are separate wars. It's the same war against ideologues who murder

the innocent to achieve their political objectives. These are just different fronts in the same war.

And you know, I am not surprised that a lethal enemy pushes back through the use of their indiscriminate violence to stop the advance of free societies, because this is an ideological war. When they see freedom on the march, it frightens them and it worries them to the point where they kill innocent people to try to shake the will of the people in that country and to shake the will of those trying to help them.

And so, one, we've taken on the enemy, and two, we've had good success against Al Qaida. The first and second person is still alive, but the number-three person in Al Qaida has had a dangerous existence—Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, al-Libi, a series of leaders. And we are pressuring them today, and we'll keep pressuring them. And my hope is, whoever the next President—understands this is a war, and that we can't relax. And that there's an enemy that wants to do free people harm, and that we have an obligation as free societies to keep the pressure, not only for our own security, but for the security of others.

This is back to this man's question down here about, why should we care about Afghanistan? The answer is, is because safe haven is a risk. But there's also another answer. That's one of the great lessons of our relationship. You know, I marvel at the fact, and I talk about it a lot to the American people, of the irony about Prime Minister Koizumi and my relationship. It's a great testament to our respective countries and the transformative power of liberty that my dad fought the Japanese, and his son sits at the peace table with the Japanese leaders in a spirit of respect and friendship and common values.

Anyway, thank you. Enjoyed it.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. Very good questions.

Q. Thank you very much, sir.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:46 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and former Prime Ministers Yoshiro Mori, Junichiro Koizumi, and Shinzo Abe of Japan; Sakie Yokota, mother of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by North Korean authorities; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, in his former capacity as President of Russia; Bobby Valentine, manager, Nippon Professional Baseball's Chiba Lotte Marines; Sadaharu Oh, manager, Nippon Professional Baseball's Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks; President Hu Jintao and former President Jiang Zemin of China; Republican Presidential candidate John McCain; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, Multi-National Forces—Iraq; and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Faraj al-Libi, former senior leaders of the Al Qaida terrorist organization currently in U.S. military custody. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 4. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration and Naturalization Ceremony in Charlottesville, Virginia
July 4, 2008

The President. Thank you, and happy Fourth of July. I am thrilled to be here at Monticello. I've never been here before.

[*At this point, there was an interruption in the audience.*]

The President. To my fellow citizens-to-be, we believe in free speech in the United States of America.

And this is a fitting place to celebrate our Nation's independence. Thomas Jefferson once said he'd rather celebrate the Fourth of July than his own birthday. For me, it's pretty simple, the Fourth of July weekend is my birthday weekend.

For some of you, today will be your first Fourth of July as American citizens. A few moments, you will take part in the 46th annual Monticello Independence Day celebration and naturalization ceremony. When you raise your hands and take the oath, you will complete an incredible journey. That journey has taken you from many different countries; it's now made you one people. From this day forward, the history of the United States will be part of your heritage, the Fourth of July will be part of your Independence Day, and I will be honored to call you a fellow American.

I appreciate Alice Handies [Handy],* the chairman of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, and Dan Jordan, president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. I'm honored that the Governor of the great Commonwealth of Virginia would join us, and Anne Horton [Holton].* Appreciate you being here; Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Virginia; the Attorney General Bob McDonnell of the State of Virginia is with us; and all local officials. I appreciate Jim Jones of the U.S. District Court and other distinguished jurists who are with us today. Thank you for coming.

[*The interruption in the audience continued.*]

The President. Seems like I brought a little action with me.

[*The interruption in the audience continued.*]

The President. Most of all, I'm glad you're here. And we welcome you and your families, and we're honored to be celebrating with you this joyous occasion.

You know, long before anyone had ever heard of Crawford, Texas, Charlottesville, Virginia, was the home to the first western White House. The majesty of this home is a monument to the genius of Thomas Jefferson. Every hundreds of years—every year, thousands of visitors come here. And I think today it's fitting to thank the men and women of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation for preserving this historic treasure.

You just can't help but marvel at Thomas Jefferson's many accomplishments. As a scholar, few were better read. He was known to have read five books at a time on a revolving book stand. Later in life, he founded a public university that has become one of the Nation's finest, the University of Virginia.

As a statesman, Thomas Jefferson held all three top posts in the executive branch. He served as the first Secretary of State, the second Vice President, and the third President. Not bad for a man who hated public speaking. [*Laughter*] It seems Jefferson got away with only delivering two public speeches during his Presidency. I'm sure a lot of Americans wish that were the case today. [*Laughter*]

In a life full of accomplishments, Thomas Jefferson was especially proud of the Declaration of Independence. Looking back 232 years later, it's easy to forget how revolutionary Jefferson's draft was.

At the time, some dismissed it as empty rhetoric. They believed the British Empire would crush the Thirteen Colonies in the field of battle. And they believed a nation dedicated to liberty could never survive the world ruled by kings.

Today, we know history had other plans. After many years of war, the United States won its independence. The principles that Thomas Jefferson enshrined in the Declaration became the guiding principles of the

* White House correction.

new nation. And in every generation, Americans have rededicated themselves to the belief that all men are created equal, with a God-given right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Thomas Jefferson understood that these rights do not belong to Americans alone; they belong to all mankind. And he looked to the day when all people could secure them. On the 50th anniversary of America's independence, Thomas Jefferson passed away. But before leaving this world, he explained that the principles of the Declaration of Independence were universal. In one of the final letters of his life, he wrote, "May it be to the world, what I believe it will be—to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all—the signal of arousing men to burst the chains and to assume the blessings and security of self-government."

We honor Jefferson's legacy by aiding the rise of liberty in lands that do not know the blessings of freedom. And on this Fourth of July, we pay tribute to the brave men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

We also honor Jefferson's legacy by welcoming newcomers to our land. And that is what we're here to celebrate today.

Throughout our history, the words of the Declaration have inspired immigrants from around the world to set sail to our shores. These immigrants have helped transform 13 small Colonies into a great and growing nation of more than 300 [million]* people. They've made America a melting pot of cultures from all across the world. They've made diversity one of the great strengths of our democracy. And all of us here today are here to honor and pay tribute to that great notion of America.

Those of you taking the oath of citizenship at this ceremony hail from 30 different nations. You represent many different ethnicities and races and religions. But you all have one thing in common, and that is a shared love of freedom. This love of liberty is what binds our Nation together, and this is the love that makes us all Americans.

One man with special appreciation for liberty is Mya Soe from Burma. As a member of the Shan ethnic group, Mya faced discrimination and oppression at the hands of Burma's military junta. When he tried to reach local villagers—when he tried to teach local villagers how to read and write the Shan language, the regime interrogated him and harassed him. In 2000, he left a life of fear for a life of freedom. He now works as a painter in the Charlottesville community. Today we welcome this brave immigrant as a citizen-to-be of the United States of America.

I'm sure there are other stories like Mya's among you. But we must remember that the desire for freedom burns inside every man and woman and child. More than two centuries ago, this desire of freedom was—had inspired the subjects of a mighty empire to declare themselves free and independent citizens of a new nation. Today that same desire for freedom has inspired 72 immigrants from around the world to become citizens of the greatest nation on Earth, the United States of America.

I congratulate you. I welcome you. I wish you all a happy Fourth of July. Thanks for inviting me. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. at Monticello. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia and his wife Anne Holton.

* White House correction.

Statement on the Death of Senator Jesse Helms
July 4, 2008

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the passing of our good friend and a great American, Senator Jesse Helms. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Dot and all the members of the Helms family.

Throughout his long public career, Senator Jesse Helms was a tireless advocate for the people of North Carolina, a stalwart defender of limited government and free enterprise, a fearless defender of a culture of life, and an unwavering champion of those struggling for liberty. Under his leadership, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was a powerful force for freedom. And today, from Central America to Central Europe and beyond, people remember, in the dark days when the forces of tyranny seemed on the rise, Jesse Helms took their side.

Jesse Helms was a kind, decent, and humble man and a passionate defender of what he called "the miracle of America." So it is fitting that this great patriot left us on the Fourth of July. He was once asked if he had any ambitions beyond the United States Senate. He replied, "The only thing I am running for is the Kingdom of Heaven." Today Jesse Helms has finished the race, and we pray he finds comfort in the arms of the loving God he strove to serve throughout his life.

The President's Radio Address
July 5, 2008

Good morning. This weekend, Americans are celebrating the anniversary of our Nation's independence. Two hundred and thirty-two years ago, our Founding Fathers came together in Philadelphia to proclaim that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The man who wrote those immortal words was Thomas Jefferson. Yesterday I celebrated the Fourth of July at Monticello, Jefferson's home in Virginia. While there, I witnessed an event that would have made the author of the Declaration of Independence proud. On Monticello's lawn, more than 70 men and women from dozens of countries raised their right hands to take the oath of American citizenship. They swore their allegiance to the Constitution. They promised that they would defend the laws of the United States. And they reminded everyone in attendance that the promise of America is open to all.

These new citizens come from countries as diverse as Burma, Afghanistan, Norway, and Iraq. These new citizens are proof that there is no American race, just an American creed. In the United States, we believe in the rights and dignity of every person, we believe in equal justice, limited government, and the rule of law, and we believe in personal responsibility and tolerance towards others. This creed of freedom and equality has lifted the lives of millions of Americans, whether citizens by birth or citizens by choice.

This creed of freedom has required brave defenders, and every generation of Americans has produced them. From the soldiers who fought for independence at Bunker Hill and Yorktown to the Americans who broke the chains of slavery, liberated Europe and Asia from tyranny, and brought

down an evil empire, the people of this great land have always risen to freedom's defense.

Today, the men and women of America's Armed Forces continue this proud tradition of defending liberty. In places like Afghanistan and Iraq, many risk their lives every day to protect America and uphold the principle that human freedom is the birthright of all people and a gift from the Almighty. These brave Americans make it possible for America to endure as a free society. So on this Fourth of July, we owe all those who wear the uniform of the United States a special debt of gratitude. And we thank their families for supporting them in this crucial time for our Nation.

The Fourth of July is a day when all Americans take a moment to share a collective sense of pride in our country. We live in a nation founded on the power of an idea, a nation where opportunity is limited only by imagination, and a nation that has done more than any other to spread the light of liberty throughout the world. Today, that light shines as brightly as it did in 1776. And with "the protection of Divine Providence," it will continue to shine brightly for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:55 a.m. on July 3 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 3, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan in Toyako, Japan
July 6, 2008

Prime Minister Fukuda. We had a very substantive meeting with President Bush for about an hour. In the meeting, we first shared the view that the peace and stability in this region, in the past decades, have been maintained thanks to the Japan-U.S. alliance. We then reaffirmed that in the 7½ years or so since the inauguration of the Bush administration in January of 2001, the alliance has deepened by leaps and bounds in security, economic, people-to-people exchanges, and other areas. And we agreed to further strengthen this alliance.

In the security area, cooperation between Japan and the United States grew more concrete, substantive, and broader in nature, as exemplified by the cooperation in the fight against terrorism and assistance for Iraqi reconstruction following 9/11, the agreement on and steady implementation of a roadmap for U.S. forces realignment, and the joint development of ballistic missile defense and successful intercept tests.

On North Korean issues, I told President Bush that the verification of their declaration is extremely important to realize complete nuclear abandonment by North Korea, that simultaneous settlement of denuclearization and the abduction issue will be important, and that to that end, Japan wishes to continue to cooperate closely with the United States. And President Bush concurred with me and told me that he will never forget the abduction issue.

I was encouraged to hear from him that the U.S. position on the abduction issue—that is to say a clear-cut support for Japanese position—remains unchanged, and that the United States will remain in close coordination with Japan on the issue. As

agreed between us on the nuclear and abduction issues, we shall continue to deal with the issue, maintaining close coordination between our two countries.

On the economic aspects, the interdependence between Japan and the United States has grown closer than before. Since 2000, Japanese direct investment to the United States has increased approximately 30 percent. Japanese businesses in the United States have about 610,000 people on their payrolls, and U.S. direct investment in Japan also has increased approximately 60 percent.

I wish to also point out that mutual understanding between our countries has reached a high level at the grassroots level. I shall make sure to follow up the initiative I announced during my visit to the United States last year to step up in Japan-U.S. exchanges so that the foundation for our alliance will become unshakeable.

In order to further deepen this alliance, I explained to President Bush my belief that it will be important to further step up in policy coordination in Asia and bilateral cooperation in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, African development, and disaster reduction. And President Bush expressed his agreement on this.

On African development, we agreed that we should further step up our bilateral cooperation to increase the production of major crops in Africa, including doubling of rice production, and promote their trade and distribution.

On disaster reduction, following the recent spate of several natural—severe natural disasters in Asia in recent years, I wish to step up cooperation between our two countries to build up cooperation in Asia on disaster prevention.

On climate change, we also had discussions, and we have a common understanding that it is our common responsibility to leave the beautiful Earth to our posterity since this—climate change is one of the most severe challenges that humankind faces today, and that we shall continue to cooperate with the G–8.

And with regard to soaring food and oil prices, which are having negative impact on the world economy, we agreed there's a need for expeditious efforts on these fronts.

President Bush, please.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality, and thank you for inviting us to this beautiful place. Laura and I are really looking forward to dinner with you and Mrs. Fukuda tonight. And I agree with your assessment that we had very important and fruitful discussions.

We discussed a variety of subjects, starting with the—our work together to make sure the Korean Peninsula, all the Korean Peninsula, is free of nuclear weapons. I am fully aware of the sensitivity of the issue here in your country. I am aware that people want to make sure that the abduction issue is not ignored, and that there are suspicions about whether or not the North Koreans will be fully forthcoming. I view this process as a multistep process that requires strong verification.

One thing is for certain, is that North Korea did provide a declaration of its plutonium-related activities and did blow up the cooling tower of its reactor at Yongbyon. That's been verified, and that also is a positive step. But there are more steps to be taken. We are concerned about enriched uranium and proliferation and human rights abuses, ballistic missile programs. I view this process as a multistep process where there will be action for action.

The Prime Minister gave me the book of Ms. Yokota. I had the privilege of meeting her in the Oval Office. I was deeply touched by her story about the abduction of her little girl. As a father of little girls, I can't imagine what it would be like to have my daughter just disappear. So, Mr. Prime Minister, as I told you on the phone when I talked to you and in the past, the United States will not abandon you on this issue.

We worked—we talked about Japan's contributions in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I thank your Government and I thank the people of Japan for helping others realize the blessings of liberty. We talked about Iran and the importance of Iran to listen to the demands, the just demands of the world to verifiably suspend its enrichment programs.

We haven't had a chance to talk about Burma yet, but I intend to bring it up with the Prime Minister. I'm deeply concerned about that country. Their response to the recent natural disaster was unwarranted at best. And we urge the regime to free Aung Suu—Aung San Suu Kyi.

We talked about the G–8. And I believe this is going to be a successful G–8, Mr. Prime Minister. This is my eighth one. I've got a pretty good sense about whether or not a G–8 is going to be a success or maybe not such a success. This one is going to be a success.

We've got a lot to talk about. I appreciate very much your strong belief in the accountability aspect of this meeting. In other words, when people say they're—make a pledge to feed the hungry or provide for the ill, that we ought to honor that pledge. And I thank you for understanding that. And I also thank you for your concern about neglected tropical diseases as well as helping train health workers in Africa so that they can be compassionate citizens of their respective countries.

We'll talk about food and energy, of course. And then I've got two other subjects that I want to make sure we spend a fair amount of time on. One is the Doha round. It's an opportunity for us, Mr. Prime Minister, to promote free and fair trade, and it's going to be an essential part of the development agenda. And the truth of the matter is, we can give grants and—but the best way to help the impoverished around the world is through trade. It's a proven fact. And this is an opportunity to set up a successful ministerial in July—I think it's July 21st—for the Doha round.

And then I'm going to spend some time, of course, sharing my views about the environment and how we can advance our common agenda, and that—remind people that the United States and Japan really do lead the world in research when it comes to clean technologies.

I think I was sharing my views with some of the Japanese press when they were in the United States, Mr. Prime Minister, about how Japan is going to lead the world when it comes to battery technologies, and that I anticipate our country will be able to be using battery technologies in automobiles that look like cars, not golf carts, and which will save us a lot of, you know, reliance upon oil. And this will be a great opportunity to discuss that as well as our common desire to move our common agenda.

And so I want to thank you very much for your hospitality. And I appreciate very much your candid discussion that we had.

Environment

Q. I'm with NHK. Both of you have commented on global warming, and so I'd like to ask about that to both of you. First, Prime Minister Fukuda, were you successful in getting President Bush's agreement to cooperate—to get a G–8 agreement on long-term target to have a global—greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 globally?

So first that question, and second question for President Bush. Mr. President, you've been saying that participation of China and India, among others, will be essential for a long-term target. Do you think that—are going to cooperate on getting a G–8 agreement on long-term target this time? And also, as for assistance for African countries that are suffering from negative impact of global warming, I wonder what thoughts you have, President Bush.

Prime Minister Fukuda. Allow me to first respond. As I said earlier on the global

warming issue, including long-term targets, I agreed with President Bush to continue to cooperate in the runup to the G–8. On whether G–8 will agree on long-term target or not, that is something that G–8 is continuing consultations. So at this stage what I wish to say is that we leaders will get down to in-depth discussions on this day after tomorrow.

President Bush. I'll be constructive. I've always advocated that there needs to be a common understanding, and that starts with a goal. And I also am realistic enough to tell you that if China and India don't share that same aspiration, that we're not going to solve the problem.

And so I appreciate the Prime Minister's leadership on this issue. And the United States will—we're working, working to see if we can come up with a constructive statement.

I didn't get your question on Africa. What was the question on Africa? Ask it again, please.

Africa

Q. Well, I wanted to ask for your thoughts, your views on support for Africa, which will be negatively affected by global warming. Do you have any plans for supporting Africa?

President Bush. ——starts with understanding that babies are needlessly dying because of mosquito bites, and therefore, wealthy nations ought to step up and provide mosquito nets, DDT, as well as medicine. My concern for Africa starts with knowing that too many people are dying of HIV/AIDS. And that's why the United States Congress joined the administration in supporting a $15 billion effort to help people get antiretroviral drugs, help orphans get help, and help put a—effective prevention program in place. The amount—number of people who have gone on antiretrovirals today has grown from 50,000 to 1.7 million people.

I'm concerned about people going hungry. And so we'll be very constructive in the dialogue when it comes to the environment. I care about the environment. But today, there's too much suffering on the continent of Africa, and now is the time for the comfortable nations to step up and do something about it.

U.S. Economy and Monetary Policy/Energy/Environment

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, oil prices are up. The economy is in a serious downturn. What can world leaders do? And would you approve of intervention to strengthen the U.S. dollar, which many people say is contributing to the rise in oil prices?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, do you believe that the U.S. is holding up moving forward on climate change?

President Bush. First of all, our economy is not growing as robustly as we'd like. We had positive growth in the first quarter; we'll see what happens here in the second quarter. But nevertheless, it's—we're not as strong as we have been during a lot of my Presidency. And so, as you well know, Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters], we passed a stimulus bill that is now in the process of passing money back to consumers, which had a positive effect and, hopefully, will continue to have a positive effect.

We're working with the Congress to get a housing bill out. We're—we passed uninsurance benefits—unemployment benefits—excuse me. And yet we got a problem when it comes to reliance upon foreign sources of oil. For 7 years, I've been trying to get the Congress to explore for oil domestically. Now is the time, when they come back from their Fourth of July vacations, to open up ANWR and open up the Outer Continental Shelf so that we can say to the world that we will do our part in increasing supply, so that we can transition from this period of reliance upon hydrocarbons to a new period of advanced technologies.

In terms of the dollar, the United States strongly believes in a strong dollar policy and believes that our—the strength of our economy will be reflected in the dollar.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Bush. No, I just said the relative strength of our economy will be reflected in currencies.

Prime Minister Fukuda. With regard to global warming or climate change, the question was, what—how do I see U.S. response? Is that a correct understanding of your question? Well, between Japan and the United States, discussions are—been going on at various levels. The U.S., I believe, has not really lost a sense of direction, generally, and that between our two countries, we have consultations going on. And through these consultations, I think our views are gradually converging.

At the G–8 this time, well, I'll be chairing the meeting, so I've asked the President for his cooperation to this chair, and he has shown his kind understanding. What the results will be, well, we have to wait until the conclusion comes out at the meeting the day after tomorrow.

North Korea/Abduction of Japanese Citizens

Q. Aso, with the Kyoto News Service. On North Korea, I'd like to ask questions of the two leaders. First, President Bush, North Korea recently submitted their declaration on nuclear development programs, but that declaration did not include a declaration regarding nuclear weapons. Are you satisfied with that sort of declaration, Mr. President?

And also in connection with this—or in connection with the declaration, Mr. President, you expressed—no, you decided to notify Congress about removing North Korea from the status of state sponsors of terrorism list. There is rising concern about abduction in Japan. You said you will not forget about abduction, but would there be—after the removal of North Korea from the list, what sort of means will there remain for the United States to press North Korea to resolve the abduction issue?

Now, Mr. Fukuda, I wonder in your discussions you asked the President to rethink the President's decision to remove North Korea from the list. If not, why didn't you ask? Now, following the removal of North Korea from the list, what sort of specific cooperation would you seek from the United States to advance the abduction issue?

President Bush. North Korea is the most sanctioned nation in the world and will remain the most sanctioned nation in the world. And the way for them to get off their sanctions is to honor their commitments in a verifiable fashion.

Somehow there's this notion—inherent in your question is the delisting therefore took away their sanctions. That's just not an accurate statement on your part if you think that. I'm not assuming you do think that, but it's—they're a highly sanctioned regime. And they will—as I said, they've got a lot of obligations that they must fulfill in order for these sanctions to leave.

And that's why I said it is action for action. And the first step was taken. Now, one thing is for certain, I repeat—I don't know if you saw it on your—on the TVs here, but the destruction of the cooling tower was verifiable action. And that's a positive step. But as I mentioned in my opening statement, we have other concerns, and one such concern, of course, is the abduction issue.

Prime Minister Fukuda. Well, the North Korean declaration on their nuclear programs—well, when you think about the abduction issue, I think the suggestion of your question—what you were suggesting is that we should seek U.S. to rescind that decision. Well, as far as nuclear issue is concerned, well, we have moved on to a new phase. And I think we need to make sure this will be successful because it will be in the interest of Japan as well. At the same time, in parallel, we need to bring

the abduction issue to successful conclusion as well.

So against this backdrop of progress in the nuclear front, we need to also strive for progress on the abduction front as well. And to that end, we need to have good-faith discussions with North Korea. And so far, we have not seen any progress, but we need to engage in negotiations so that progress will be produced. Because abduction is not progressing, on the nuclear front we should not make progress—that is something we should not—we should avoid. And I believe we need to make progress on both fronts, because that will be important for Japan, and I think that will be necessary for North Korea as well.

2008 Beijing Olympics

Q. Good afternoon. Mr. President, I'd like to ask you a question about China. I was wondering if you could, first of all, explain a little bit about your thinking behind your decision to attend the opening ceremonies of the Olympics next month. And more generally, I'm wondering what you would say to the—your friends and allies in the United States who are very concerned about religious freedom and human rights in China, the situation in Sudan and Burma. What would you say to them of what has come from your approach to dealing with President Hu over the last 7 years?

And I'd also like to ask the Japanese Prime Minister whether you're paying close attention to the American election? And in particular, I'm curious if you can discern any differences right now between the two candidates as it relates to Japan, in particular, and more broadly, in terms of how they would approach Asia.

President Bush. I view the Olympics as a opportunity for me to cheer on our athletes. It's an athletic event. I've had the honor of dealing with the Chinese—two Chinese Presidents during my term, and every time I have visited with them, I have talked about religious freedom and human rights. And so therefore, my decision to go was—I guess I don't need the Olympics to express my concerns. I've been doing so.

I also believe that the Chinese people are watching very carefully about the decisions by world leaders, and that this—I happen to believe not going to the opening games would be—the opening ceremony for the games would be an affront to the Chinese people, which may make it more difficult to have a—to be able to speak frankly with the Chinese leadership. That's why I'm doing what I'm doing. And I'm looking forward to cheering the athletes. I think it will be—I think it would be good for these athletes who have worked hard to see their President waving that flag.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Bush. You know, in some areas, we've made progress on a common agenda; other areas, we haven't. But nevertheless, I have been very clear in my view that, for example, a whole society is one that honors religion, and that people shouldn't fear religious people. After all, truly religious people love their neighbor—and that China benefits from people being able to worship freely.

It looks like there's some progress, at least in the talks with the Dalai Lama. And by the way, as you know, I'm the first President ever to have stood up publicly with the Dalai Lama and told President Hu Jintao I was going to. And he wasn't that pleased about it, but nevertheless, I said, "I believe in a religious freedom, Mr. President."

And so it's—and I hope I have a bilateral—I might have a bilateral with him here, and I bet I do when I'm in Beijing as well, and of course, the subject will come up.

Prime Minister Fukuda. Well, your question for me, was it along the same line as well? Well—and if that is the case—well, I—whether I'll attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games or not, I have not made any official announcement on this because the day after the opening

ceremony of the Olympics, there is an important event in Japan, and I have to attend that important ceremony. And therefore—or event—therefore, I really have to make sure I would have time to get back for that. Now I know that I'll able to get back in time, so here for the first time, I will announce that I—announce officially that I will attend the opening ceremony of the Olympics.

Now—and in fact, the President said something to the same effect, that Olympics are a sport events, and we want people to really live up to the spirit of the sports, sportsmanship. And I certainly encourage that. And there are many aspiring athletes that will be going to Beijing, and I would like to cheer them on too, which I think is only natural. I don't think you really have to link Olympics to politics.

Now, there certainly may be problems with China, but even so, they are striving to improve things. They're on the way to improve things, and we'd like to closely watch how they do. In the past, Japan has come through various experiences, and the U.S. and others criticized Japan for certain behaviors. So we have had experience in that reality, and we are now here today. So we really have to be—have humility in asking ourselves, do we have the right to make those points to China and others?

Now, I would not hope that there will be a chaos in China. I would not want Chinese to become unhappy. We are neighbors, after all, and it will good for Japan if our neighbors are in a sound state as well. So with that in mind as well, I shall attend the opening ceremony.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:13 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. In his remarks, the President referred to Kiyoko Fukuda, wife of Prime Minister Fukuda; Sakie Yokota, mother of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by North Korean authorities; Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma; President Hu Jintao and former President Jiang Zemin of China; and Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama. Prime Minister Fukuda and some reporters spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in Toyako
July 7, 2008

President Bush. I want to thank the President for a good, meaningful discussion. It's the first time Dmitry and I met since he has become President of his big country, and we had a good discussion. We talked about Iran; we talked about a variety of issues. And while there's some areas of disagreement, there are also areas where I know we can work together for the common good.

I found him to be a smart guy who understood the issues very well. But I'm not surprised; after all, he has been very close to foreign policy issues up until his ascendancy to the Presidency. And he reminded me of our visit to the White House in 2005, where we discussed foreign policy then. And now it's my honor to discuss it face to face as Presidents of our respective countries.

Thank you, sir.

President Medvedev. Well, indeed, we had this exchange today with George concerning various issues at the agenda of our relationship, including those of domestic importance, trade and investments, and internationally related matters, including those conflicts and crisis tendencies in the

world. And true that on certain matters, we do have differences originating from the previous background and differences are there. And on the others, we have absolutely similar positions. But what is really important, the dialogue is there, and there is a commonality of the overview on various things between us.

And the other thing which is also important is that I congratulated George on his birthday, which is also a very important thing; irrespective of summits out there, irrespective of our will, these dates occur in our life.

President Bush. Everybody has a birthday. Anyway, we'll answer one question apiece.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

Russia-U.S. Relations/Russia's Leadership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You're leaving; he's coming. There's not much time left. Were you able to make any movement? Was there anything that you could accomplish in this thing—on issues like missile defense? And also, besides his intellect, what else did you see in the new President?

President Bush. Yes. I reminded him that, yes, I'm leaving, but not until 6 months, and I'm sprinting to the finish. So we can get a lot done together. And, you know, it's a lot of important issues. There is—you know, like Iran is an area where Russia and the United States have worked closely in the past and will continue to work closely to convince the regime to give up its desire to enrich uranium.

You know, I'm not going to sit here and psychoanalyze the man, but I will tell you that he's very comfortable, he's confident, and that I believe that when he tells me something, he means it. Sometimes in politics people tell you one thing and mean another. My judgment is that when he tells you something, he means it, and that's going to be good for the world leaders to have somebody that you may not agree with what he tells you, but at least you know it's what he believes.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. What is your perspective of the further development of U.S.-Russia relationship?

President Medvedev. Well, yes, we have discussed these matters on the further development of a relationship between our two countries with George, and we are positive that they will develop further on. And we will build on the relationship with the new American administration. But we still have 6 months with the effective administration, and we'll try to intensify our dialogue with this administration.

The other thing is that, yes, there are certain questions on our agenda where we agree, and these are the matters pertaining to Iran, North Korea. But then, certainly, there are others with respect to European affairs and this missile defense where we have differences. We would like to agree on these matters as well, and we also feel very comfortable in our dealings with George.

President Bush. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

President Medvedev. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. President Medvedev and a reporter spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With G–8 Africa Outreach Representatives in Toyako
July 7, 2008

President Bush. I'm really pleased to be standing with a really good friend of the American people and a great leader in Africa, President Kikwete of Tanzania. I just—first of all, I'd like to announce that he's coming to visit in late August. I'm really looking forward to having you to the White House; looking forward to giving you a good dinner. And we'll have a good visit.

President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania. Looking forward.

President Bush. Yes. I am—you know, one of the things that's so impressive about his leadership in Tanzania is that the help of the American people is effective help, measurable in the number of people whose lives are being saved; babies are being helped with malaria. I mean, it's just unbelievable the job you've done there. And we're excited to welcome you to the country. I really want the American people to hear firsthand how successful their generosity has been, whether it be on HIV/AIDS or malaria. And Tanzania is a good example. But this success would not have taken place without your leadership—really important.

The other thing we discussed in the—we discussed a lot of issues with the African leaders here in the G–8, but one, of course, was Zimbabwe. You know, I care deeply about the people of Zimbabwe. I am extremely disappointed in the elections, which I labeled a sham election. And we, of course, listened very carefully. And, President Kikwete, as the head of the AU, has been very involved in this issue. I'm not going to put words in his mouth—he can express his own self—but it was—this issue of Zimbabwe took a fair amount of time——

President Kikwete. It did, it did.

President Bush. ——and rightly so. Anyway, thank you for agreeing to come to the States. And I'm really looking forward to having you.

President Kikwete. President, let me thank you for the invitation. I'm really looking forward too. We enjoyed your visit there. I think I've been around for some time. I think one—that was one of Tanzania's biggest visits.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kikwete. You saw how people came out into the streets to receive you. It's a measure of our appreciation of what the United—the people of the United States have done to us in Tanzania in many things. Many lives have been saved through that—those programs in support of malaria, for—to HIV/AIDS, but there are so many other programs that are building our—capacity of our people to measure—to marry their own development, which we highly appreciate.

Well, of course, we see eye to eye on many international issues. Of course, we have discussed the issue of Zimbabwe, where we understand your concerns. But I want to assure you that the concerns that you have expressed are indeed the concerns of many of us in the African Continent. At the last summit of the African Union, many leaders expressed their dissatisfaction at the way things happened, but also, we agreed on the way forward.

The only area that we may differ is on the way forward. You see differently, but for us in Africa, we see differently. But I think, again, there is still room for us for discussions. We are saying no party can govern alone in Zimbabwe, and therefore, the parties have to work together to come out, work together in a government, and then look at the future of their country together.

So this is what we—the way we see it. I don't think that there is much divergence

there. You would have liked to see us do a bit—some things; we would also like to see you do some things. But we'll continue to discuss all these issues, and as friends at the end of the day, we'll come to an understanding.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Looking forward to having you in Washington.

President Kikwete. Thank you.

President Bush. Some of these very same people will be there yelling questions at you. Let's go. Thank you. Nice to see you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
July 7, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for advice and consent of the Senate to ratification the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on November 3, 2001, and signed by the United States on November 1, 2002 (the "Treaty"). The Treaty entered into force in June 2004.

The centerpiece of the Treaty is the establishment of a multilateral system under which a party provides access to other parties, upon request, to listed plant genetic resources held in national genebanks. These resources are to be used solely for purposes of research, breeding, and training in agriculture. A recipient of such a resource must then share the benefits from its use, e.g., a recipient who commercializes a product containing an accessed plant genetic resource must generally pay a percentage of any gross sales into a trust account.

Transfers under the multilateral system are to be accompanied by a standard material transfer agreement, the current version of which was concluded in June 2006.

Provision of plant genetic resources from U.S. genebanks is fully consistent with the Department of Agriculture's long-standing general practice of providing access to such plant genetic resources upon request. Ratification of the Treaty will provide U.S. agricultural interests with similar access to other parties' genebanks, thus helping U.S. farmers and researchers sustain and improve their crops and promote food security.

The Treaty may be implemented under existing U.S. authorities.

I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning the Treaty, which contains an understanding regarding Article 12.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 7, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 8.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany in Toyako
July 8, 2008

President Bush. Madam Chancellor, thank you for yet another visit. I value your friendship; I value your advice. We talked about a lot of common problems and a lot of common opportunities. We talked about the G–8. We talked about the need to work—to continue to work together on Iran. Angela Merkel is a constructive force for good. And I appreciate your time. Thank you.

Chancellor Merkel. Well, thank you very much. As always, we had a very interesting exchange of view, a very intensive exchange of view. And let me tell you that I'm very satisfied with the work that has gone on, on the G–8 documents, as regards progress on the issue of climate change, cooperation in the area of food and oil. We discussed here a number of other foreign policy—foreign political issues—sorry. We also discussed WTO and the possible conclusion to that negotiating process. And let me say that we are hopeful that such a successful conclusion may be possible over the next few weeks to come.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 a.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. Chancellor Merkel spoke in German, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India in Toyako
July 9, 2008

President Bush. Prime Minister Singh and I just had a typical conversation amongst friends. We talked about common opportunities and world problems, and we did it in a spirit of respect. And it was easy for me to do because I respect the Prime Minister a lot. I also respect India a lot. And I think it's very important that the United States continues to work with our friends to develop not only a new strategic relationship, but a relationship that addresses some of the world's problems.

We talked about the India-U.S. nuclear deal and how important that is for our respective countries. We talked about the environment and how we can work together to grow our economies and, at the same time, be responsible stewards of the environment. We talked about free trade, the Doha round, and how important it is that nations such as India and the United States find common ground to make sure protectionist sentiments don't wall us off from the rest of the world.

We talked about educational exchanges. I reminded the Prime Minister that the Indian American population is very proud of this relationship and proud of their heritage and proud of the leadership of the Prime Minister.

All in all, it was a really good meeting amongst two friends. And so, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for joining us today, and congratulations on your leadership at home.

Prime Minister Singh. Mr. President, it has been a great privilege for me to once again meet you and to review with you the state of Indo-American relations. And I'm very happy to report to the President

that our relations have moved forward handsomely since our first meeting in July 2005. We have made progress in all areas. We have progressed in nuclear cooperation, space cooperation, defense cooperation, educational exchanges, our working together in multilateral institutions for the success of Doha round. And I am very pleased with the state of our relationship, which has truly acquired the characteristic of a genuine strategic partnership.

I thank the President for his personal, magnificent contribution to the evolution of our relationship. And all I can say is, our relationship with the United States has never been in such good shape as it is today. And it is the intention of my Government, as I believe it is also the will of the Indian people, particularly the thinking segments of our population, that in this increasingly interdependent world that we live in, whether it is a question of climate change, whether it is a question of managing the global economy, India and United States must stand tall, stand shoulder to shoulder. And that's what is going to happen.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. We're standing shoulder to shoulder right here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:23 a.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Hu Jintao of China in Toyako
July 9, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you very much for your time. We—you and I have had a lot of meetings together, and I always appreciate the candid discussions on a variety of issues.

The President and I discussed Taiwan; we discussed Sudan; we discussed trade. We discussed a variety of issues. I told the President I was looking forward to coming to the Olympics. I reminded him that not only am I coming, but my wife, my mother, and dad will be there, and we're looking forward to your hospitality.

And of course, in this context, I—the President and I have constantly had discussions about human rights and political freedom. He knows my position. And as I told our people, Mr. President, I don't need the Olympics to talk candidly with somebody who I've got good relations with.

So I'm looking forward to your hospitality, and I'm really looking forward to watching the American Olympic team compete, particularly with the mighty Chinese team. And I'm hoping to get tickets for the U.S.-Chinese basketball game. If you could help me get a ticket, I'd appreciate it. [*Laughter*]

But thank you very much.

President Hu. Just now, President Bush and I had a sincere and friendly meeting, and we had an in-depth exchange of views on China-U.S. relations and issues of mutual interest. We both believe that a new progress has been made in China-U.S. relationship in recent years. Our two countries not only have close interactions between high-level leaders, but also between people at various other levels. Not long ago, China and United States successfully held the fourth Strategic Economic Dialogue, which produced positive results.

In addition, our two countries have also had fruitful cooperation in economic, trade, counterterrorism, energy, environmental protection, and other areas. We also have had close communication and coordination on such major regional and international issues as the Korean nuclear issue and Iranian nuclear issue.

To further consolidate and grow, China-U.S. relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of our two countries and our two peoples, but also will have a major impact on peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world at large. Both President Bush and I said that we will continue to keep the larger direction of growing this constructive and cooperative relationship between us, and we will try to make efforts to ensure that this relationship will continue to grow on a sound and steady course.

I also briefed President Bush about the Chinese position on the Taiwan issue and informed President Bush about the current situation in the Taiwan Strait. We hope that the U.S. side will continue to follow the "one China" policy.

I welcome President Bush to Beijing to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. And I highly appreciated that President Bush has on various occasions expressed his opposition to politicizing the Olympic Games.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:33 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in Toyako
July 9, 2008

G–8 Summit and Major Economies Leaders Meeting

Thank you all very much. We've just finished our meetings here in Japan. I would call them very productive.

Our goal was to make progress in five key areas: confronting climate change, reinforcing our commitment to a successful Doha agreement, fighting disease in Africa, ensuring that the G–8 nations are accountable for their commitments, and addressing the challenges of high food and energy prices. I'm pleased to report that we've had significant success in all of them.

On climate change, I want to thank the Prime Minister for hosting today's meeting of leaders from the world's major economies. In order to address climate change, all major economies must be at the table. And that's what took place today. The G–8 expressed our desire to have a significant reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050. We made it clear and the other nations agreed that they must also participate in an ambitious goal, with interim goals and interim plans, to enable the world to successfully address climate change. And we made progress, significant progress, toward a comprehensive approach.

One way to meet objectives is to invest in technology, both at the national and international levels, both through the private and public sectors. And the United States, Japan, and United Kingdom launched what's called a clean technology fund, and we hope Congress funds that effort. It's a way to help developing nations afford the technologies so that they can become good stewards of the environment.

We're also taking steps to promote clean technologies by cooperating on research and development. You know, I firmly believe that we can become less dependent on oil through new technology, and obviously, we're going to have to spend some money on research and development to be able to achieve that objective.

On other matters, the G–8 leaders emphasized the critical importance of concluding a Doha round. We want the world to trade freely. We want to make sure markets are open for agricultural goods and

manufacturing goods and services. We also recognize that the best way to help alleviate poverty is through trade. And so we had good discussions over the past couple of days about successfully completing the Doha round by the end of this year.

We also made some progress on alleviating sickness in Africa. The G–8 committed $60 billion over 5 years to fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases. I'm also pleased to report the G–8 leaders pledged to provide 100 million long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets by 2010 to help deal with malaria. As you know, the United States has been in the forefront of trying to help nations eradicate malaria, and the G–8 nations stepped forward to support our efforts. And I appreciate that very much.

We also committed to—with partner nations in Africa to train new health care workers—can't solve health care problems unless there's health care workers on the ground. And the United States is involved with that. And finally, we are working to expand our efforts to treat key neglected tropical diseases, with the goal of reaching 75 percent of victims in the most affected countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America within 5 years. In other words, we had a comprehensive agenda on helping those who are being affected by disease live healthy lives.

I've always believed, to whom much is given, much is required. The nations sitting around the table have got much, and I think we're required to help those who don't. Pledges are important. Those have been—you know, oftentimes in the political process people talk big, but they never follow up. And so one of the key ingredients of these recent meetings was all of us need to be reminded that when we say we're going to do something, we got to do it. And so accountability is an important part of fulfilling our obligations.

We agreed to release detailed reports on our progress in meeting the commitments, breaking down our efforts, country by country, disease by disease. This, of course, will help ensure the G–8 initiatives are measurable and transparent so that we're held accountable for the promises we make.

And finally, we agreed on steps to deal with hunger and high energy prices. We agreed to meet short-term food needs by providing emergency food shipments and increasing access to fertilizer and seeds and encouraging other nations to eliminate their export restrictions. We also agreed on steps to relieve hunger in the longer term, including working to double production of key food staples in several African countries, accelerating access to new agricultural technology such as new seed varieties developed through biotechnology. We're also seeking to increase the amount of food aid supplied by local producers. In other words, instead of the United States just simply giving food, we ought to be buying food from local producers so that they can develop their own agricultural industries, so to help deal with food—world hunger.

We also agreed that on high energy prices—look, we got to deal with both on the supply and demand. On the supply side, oil and production refining capacity need to be increased. And the United States needs to do its part. The Democratic leaders in Congress will not allow us to explore for oil and gas in parts of Alaska, offshore America, and now is the time for them to change their mind. We also—I'm firmly—believe that we can do this kind of exploration in environmentally friendly ways.

On the demand side, we agreed to take new steps to increase energy efficiency, and we agreed that fuel subsidies that artificially inflate demand should be eliminated or reduced.

In other words, this was a—you know, a lot of meetings on important subjects, and we accomplished a lot. By protecting our environment and resisting protectionism and fighting disease and promoting development and improving the daily life for millions around the world, we serve

both our interests as Americans, and we serve the interests of the world.

We've enjoyed our stay here in Japan. I want to thank the Prime Minister once again for his grand hospitality. And I appreciate you all covering this summit. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. at the Windsor Hotel Toya Resort and Spa. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan.

Remarks on Intelligence Reform Legislation
July 9, 2008

Today the United States Congress passed a vital piece of legislation that will make it easier for this administration and future administrations to protect the American people. This vital intelligence bill will allow our national security professionals to quickly and effectively monitor the plans of terrorists outside the United States, while respecting the liberties of the American people.

This legislation is critical to America's safety; it is long overdue. Months ago, my administration set out key criteria that this intelligence legislation would have to have before I would sign it into law. The Attorney General and Director of National Intelligence report that the bill Congress passed today meets these criteria, and therefore, I will soon sign the bill into law.

This bill will help our intelligence professionals learn who the terrorists are talking to, what they're saying, and what they're planning. It will ensure that those companies whose assistance is necessary to protect the country will themselves be protected from lawsuits for past or future cooperation with the Government. It will uphold our most solemn obligation as officials of the Federal Government to protect the American people.

I want to thank the members of my administration who worked hard to get this legislation passed. I thank the Democratic and Republican leadership in the Congress for their efforts, particularly House Majority Leader Hoyer, House Republican Whip Blunt, Senators Bond and Rockefeller, Congressmen Hoekstra, Reyes, and Smith.

This legislation shows that even in an election year, we can come together and get important pieces of legislation passed.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey. Due to the 13-hour time difference, these remarks were made after those to the White House press pool in Toyako, Japan.

Remarks on Signing the FISA Amendments Act of 2008
July 10, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome to the Rose Garden. Today I'm pleased to sign landmark legislation that is vital to the security of our people. The bill will allow our intelligence professionals to quickly and effectively monitor

the communications of terrorists abroad, while respecting the liberties of Americans here at home. The bill I sign today will help us meet our most solemn responsibility: to stop new attacks and to protect our people.

Members of my administration have made a vigorous case for this important law. I want to thank them, and I also want to thank the Members of the House and the Senate who've worked incredibly hard to get this legislation done. Mr. Vice President, welcome.

Respect the Members of the Senate and the House who've joined us: Senate Republican Whip Jon Kyl; John Boehner, House Republican leader; Roy Blunt, House Republican whip. I do want to pay special tribute to Congressman Steny Hoyer, House majority leader, for his hard work on this bill. I thank so very much Senator Jay Rockefeller, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Senator Kit Bond, vice chairman, for joining us. I appreciate the hard work of Congressman Silvestre Reyes, chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Congressman Pete Hoekstra, ranking member. I also welcome Congressman Lamar Smith, ranking member of the House Judiciary. I thank all the other Members of the House and Senate who've joined us; appreciate your very good work.

I welcome Attorney General Michael Mukasey, as well as Admiral Mike McConnell, Director of National Intelligence. Appreciate other members of the administration who have joined us. I want to thank the congressional staff who are here and all the supporters of this piece of legislation.

Almost 7 years have passed since that September morning when nearly 3,000 men, women, and children were murdered in our midst. The attack changed our country forever. We realized America was at—a nation at war against a ruthless and persistent enemy. We realized that these violent extremists would spare no effort to kill again. And in the aftermath of 9/11, few would have imagined that we would be standing here 7 years later without another attack on American soil.

The fact that the terrorists have failed to strike our shores again does not mean that our enemies have given up. To the contrary, since 9/11, they've plotted a number of attacks on our homeland. Like Members standing up here, I receive briefings on the very real and very dangerous threats that America continues to face.

One of the important lessons learned after 9/11 was that America's intelligence professionals lacked some of the tools they needed to monitor the communications of terrorists abroad. It's essential that our intelligence community know who our enemies are talking to, what they're saying, and what they're planning. Last year, Congress passed temporary legislation that helped our intelligence community monitor these communications.

The legislation I am signing today will ensure that our intelligence community professionals have the tools they need to protect our country in the years to come. The DNI and the Attorney General both report that, once enacted, this law will provide vital assistance to our intelligence officials in their work to thwart terrorist plots. This law will ensure that those companies whose assistance is necessary to protect the country will themselves be protected from lawsuits from past or future cooperation with the government. This law will protect the liberties of our citizens while maintaining the vital flow of intelligence. This law will play a critical role in helping to prevent another attack on our soil.

Protecting America from another attack is the most important responsibility of the Federal Government, the most solemn obligation that a President undertakes. When I first addressed the Congress after 9/11, I carried a badge by the mother of a police officer who died in the World Trade Center. I pledged to her, to the families of the victims, and to the American people

that I would never forget the wound that was inflicted on our country. I vowed to do everything in my power to prevent another attack on our Nation. I believe this legislation is going to help keep that promise. And I thank the Members who have joined us. And now it's my honor to sign the bill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. H.R. 6304, approved July 10, was assigned Public Law No. 110–261.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Economic Advisers
July 11, 2008

I want to thank the members of my economic team for assembling here at the Department of Energy. Secretary Bodman, thank you for hosting us. First of all, Secretary Paulson came by this morning to brief me on the financial markets. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are very important institutions. You spent a fair amount of time discussing these institutions. He assured me that he and Ben Bernanke will be working this issue very hard.

Secondly, he did inform us that 112 million stimulus payments have gone out, and I congratulate you and your Department for doing your job. We've so far spent about $91 billion in tax relief, which has had a positive effect on retail sales. The problem, of course, is that gasoline prices are up, which has affected the people here in our country. And one of the main reasons why gasoline prices are up is because crude oil prices are up. And one reason crude oil prices are up is because demand is outstripping supply.

And therefore, what can we do about it? And that ought to be the question the United States Congress asks. And one way to deal with supply problems is to increase supply here in America. And one of the things we just went through at the briefing from Secretary Bodman and Secretary Kempthorne about the vast potential of crude oil reserves on offshore lands, as well as in Alaska, as well as in the oil shale in the western part of our country. And yet the Democratic leaders of Congress have consistently blocked opening up these lands for exploration.

The other part of our briefing was how we could explore in environmentally friendly ways. Technology has changed dramatically to enable the exploitation of oil in a way that protects the environment. You know, these Members of Congress, particularly the Democratic leadership, must address this issue before they go home for this upcoming August break. They have a responsibility to explain to their constituents why we should not be drilling for more oil here in America to take the pressure off of gasoline prices.

I want to thank you all very much for your briefing. These are tough economic times for the American citizens. There is a way forward to help relieve some of their—some of the pressure on their pocketbooks. And I'm looking forward to seeing—watching this Congress respond in a positive way.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. at the Department of Energy.

The President's Radio Address
July 12, 2008

Good morning. This week, Members of Congress returned to Washington after their Fourth of July recess. While they were at home, they heard a clear message from their constituents: Americans are concerned about high gas prices. Everyone who commutes to work, grows food, books a plane ticket, or runs a small business feels the squeeze of rising energy prices. And Americans are increasingly frustrated with Congress's failure to take action.

One of the factors driving up high gas prices is that many of our oil deposits here in the United States have been put off-limits for exploration and production. Past efforts to meet the demand for oil by expanding domestic resources have been repeatedly rejected by Democrats in Congress.

This week, however, we are seeing signs that the recent rise in gasoline prices has caused some to rethink their long-held opposition to opening up more areas for domestic production. If this change of heart is real, we can work together on four steps that will expand American oil and gas production and eventually relieve the pressure of rising prices.

First, we should expand American oil production by increasing access to offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf or OCS. Experts believe that the OCS—that is currently off-limits—could produce enough oil to match America's current production for almost 10 years. The problem is that Congress has restricted access to key parts of the OCS since the early 1980s. Since that time, technological advances have allowed us to explore oil offshore in ways that protect the environment.

Last month, I called on the House and the Senate to lift this legislative ban, so we can allow States to have the option of opening up OCS resources off their coasts. I also offered to lift an executive restriction on this exploration if Congress did so. Unfortunately, Congress has failed to act. Time is running out before Congress leaves for its summer recess. For the sake of our economy and American consumers, Congress must move quickly to expand exploration of the OCS, so we can tap into these vast oil resources as soon as possible.

Second, we should expand oil production by tapping into the extraordinary potential of oil shale. Oil shale is a type of rock that can produce oil when exposed to heat or other processes. One major deposit in the Rocky Mountain West alone could, if fully recovered, equal more than a century's worth of imports at current levels. Last year, however, Democratic leaders inserted a provision blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands into an omnibus spending bill. That provision can be taken out as easily as it was slipped in, and Congress should do so immediately.

Third, we should expand American oil production by permitting exploration in northern Alaska. Scientists have developed innovative techniques to reach this oil with virtually no impact on the land or local wildlife. With a drilling footprint that covers just a tiny fraction of this vast terrain, America could produce an estimated 10 billion barrels of oil. That is roughly the equivalent of two decades of imported oil from Saudi Arabia. I urge Members of Congress to allow this remote region to bring enormous benefits to the American people.

Finally, we need to expand and enhance our refining capacity. It has been 30 years since a new refinery was built in our Nation, and lawsuits and redtape have made it extremely costly to expand or modify existing refineries. The result is that America now imports millions of barrels of fully refined gasoline from abroad. This imposes needless costs on American families and

drivers, it deprives American workers of good jobs, and it is now time for Congress to change it.

It's time for Members of Congress to address the pain that high gas prices are causing our citizens. Every extra dollar that American families spend because of high gas prices is one less dollar they can use to put food on the table or send a child to college. The American people deserve better, so I urge Congress to come together with my administration now to ensure that our economy remains the strongest, most vibrant, and most hopeful in the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:10 a.m. on July 11 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 11, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Death of Former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow
July 12, 2008

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of our dear friend Tony Snow. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jill and their children Kendall, Robbie, and Kristi. The Snow family has lost a beloved husband and father, and America has lost a devoted public servant and a man of character.

Tony was one of our Nation's finest writers and commentators. He earned a loyal following with incisive radio and television broadcasts. He was a gifted speechwriter who served in my father's administration. And I was thrilled when he agreed to return to the White House to serve as my Press Secretary. It was a joy to watch Tony at the podium each day. He brought wit, grace, and a great love of country to his work. His colleagues will cherish memories of his energetic personality and relentless good humor.

All of us here at the White House will miss Tony, as will the millions of Americans he inspired with his brave struggle against cancer. One of the things that sustained Tony Snow was his faith. And Laura and I join people across our country in praying that this good man has now found comfort in the arms of his Creator.

Remarks on the Death of Former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow
July 13, 2008

Well, we had some bad news this weekend. Our good friend Tony Snow passed away. Tony, you know, worked with us and made a lot of friends here in the White House. And Laura and I are—we're really saddened by his death.

I came to know Tony as a very smart and capable man. He had good values. He was an honest guy. You know, he had a wonderful sense of humor. He loved to laugh, he loved his country, and he loved his family.

And our thoughts are with Jill and the three children now as they deal with their grief. We went to church this morning at Camp David, and I prayed for Jill and the family, that they would have—find comfort and strength during this tough time for them. And I just hope they understand that Tony was loved here in the White House, and a lot of those who, you know, got to know him really do care about Jill and the kids.

So anyway, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks on the 10th Anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act

July 14, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome. I want to welcome Congressman Wolf, Congressman Smith, Congressman Franks, former Senator Nickles. Thank you all for coming. I'm so honored that you've come to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act.

This legislation that we commemorate today builds on a tradition that defined our Nation. After all, when the Founding Fathers adopted the Bill of Rights, the very first liberty they enshrined was the freedom of religion. They recognized that the most basic freedom a man can have is the right to worship his own God as he sees fit. Today, we are blessed to live in a country where that freedom is respected.

In too many countries, expressions of freedom were silenced by tyranny, intolerance, and oppression. So a decade ago, Members of Congress—I suspect some of the Members here—and religious leaders and human rights activists came together to advance religious freedom around the globe. The result of their work was the International Religious Freedom Act. The bill created vital diplomatic tools to help our Government to promote religious liberty abroad. The act established an Ambassador at Large position to ensure that religious liberty remains a priority of every administration. And I want to thank our current Ambassador, John Hanford, for joining us today. And thank you for taking on this important job.

The act established the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to monitor the state of religious liberty worldwide. The act requires annual reporting on the state of religious freedom in every nation to help identify the most egregious offenders. The act authorizes sanctions against regimes. In all these ways, the act has placed religious liberty where it belongs, at the center of U.S. foreign policy.

We've seen some hopeful progress during the last couple of years. We've seen it in Turkmenistan, where the nation's chief mufti had been ousted and imprisoned for refusing to teach state propaganda as a sacred religious text. Through efforts authorized by the International Religious Freedom Act, the United States pressed for the mufti's release. In 2007, Mufti Ibadullah was pardoned and freed. He has since become an adviser to Turkmenistan's Council on Religious Affairs.

We've seen some progress in Vietnam. The United States used the tools of this act to press for the release of dozens of religious prisoners, all of whom had been freed. Vietnam's Government has reopened many of the churches it had shut down. And most religious groups report a decrease in the Government's oppression of believers. This act has encouraged Vietnam

to take some promising first steps toward religious liberty, and we're going to continue to work toward the day when all Vietnamese are free to worship as they so desire.

The 10-year anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act is also an occasion to remember the many people who have yet to secure this precious liberty. Our thoughts turn especially to those living in the countries where religious freedom is of particular concern. Some of these nations have taken steps toward reform; others haven't. Today we urge the leaders of all these countries to immediately end their abuses of religious freedom. We urge these leaders to respect the rights of those who seek only to worship their God as they see fit.

Today we remember those seeking religious freedom in Iran, where the regime's anti-Semitism has provoked global outrage. We remember those seeking religious freedom in Eritrea, where approximately 3,000 religious prisoners languish in the nation's jails. We remember those seeking religious freedom in Sudan, where police have used tear gas to attack a Christian church, and where Christian leaders who met with a Muslim woman wanting to convert were beaten and detained.

We remember those seeking religious freedom in North Korea, where those caught practicing faiths other than the state ideology are imprisoned and people found with Bibles can be executed. We remember those seeking religious freedom in Burma, especially the nation's Buddhist monks who have endured brutal raids on their monasteries and suffered tear gas attacks and gunfire during peaceful protests.

We remember those seeking religious freedom in Uzbekistan, where, in the past, members of religious minorities have been beaten and jailed, yet where recent agreements give us hope that these abuses will not be repeated in the future.

We remember those seeking religious freedom in Saudi Arabia, where the religious police continue to harass non-Muslims, yet where we also believe reforms pledged by King Abdallah can bring real change. We remember those seeking religious freedom in China, where we honor those who press for their liberties, people like Uighur Muslims. I had the honor of meeting Rebiya Kadeer. I've also had the honor of meeting those who attend underground churches in China. And we also honor the courage of the Dalai Lama and the Buddhists in Tibet.

And you know, last month here at the White House, I met with a Chinese dissident named Li Baiguang. He's a lawyer who worked on human rights cases; he's a house church Protestant. For his work, he's been repeatedly jailed and attacked. A few months ago, he was scheduled to meet with Members of Congress. State authorities blocked the meeting and detained Li on the outskirts of Beijing. This determined man has pledged: "I'll continue to seek justice for victims of rights abuses and promote the rule of law in China." And my message to President Hu Jintao, when I last met him, was this: So long as there are those who want to fight for their liberty, the United States stands with them.

Whenever and wherever I meet leaders, I'm going to constantly remind them that they ought to welcome religion in their society, not fear it. I'll remind them, someone pledged to love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves is someone who will add to their society in constructive and peaceful ways.

I'm met by men and women who are working for religious freedom around the globe, people like Li. And when I do, I'm always impressed by their courage. I've attended worship services from Hanoi to Beijing. And when I speak to world leaders, I remind them—the leaders in those countries—that the worship services are a necessary part of developing a society for which they can be proud.

And so as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom

Act, we pray that all those who seek their God will be able to do so free of oppression and fear.

I want to thank you all for your good work, and I ask for the good Lord to continue to bless our country. Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. Donald L. Nickles; Nasrullah ibn Ibadullah, adviser, Turkmenistan's Council on Religious Affairs; Chinese Uighur dissident Rebiya Kadeer; and Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Energy
July 14, 2008

Good afternoon. Across the country, Americans are concerned about the high price of gasoline. Every one of our citizens who drives to work or takes a family vacation or runs a small business is feeling the squeeze of rising prices at the pump.

To reduce pressure on prices, we must continue to implement good conservation policies, and we need to increase the supply of oil, especially here at home. For years, my administration has been calling on Congress to expand domestic oil production. Unfortunately, Democrats on Capitol Hill have rejected virtually every proposal, and now Americans are paying at the pump. When Members of Congress were home over the Fourth of July recess, they heard a clear message from their constituents: We need to take action now to expand domestic oil production.

One of the most important steps we can take to expand American oil production is to increase access to offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf or what's called the OCS. But Congress has restricted access to key parts of the OCS since the early 1980s. Experts believe that these restricted areas of the OCS could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. And advances in technology have made it possible to conduct oil exploration in the OCS that is out of sight, protects coral reefs and habitats, and protects against oil spills.

Last month, I asked Congress to lift this legislative ban and allow the exploration and development of offshore oil resources. I committed to lift an executive prohibition on this exploration if Congress did so, tailoring my executive action to match what Congress passed. It's been almost a month since I urged Congress to act, and they've done nothing; they've not moved any legislation. And as the Democratically controlled Congress has sat idle, gas prices have continued to increase.

The failure to act is unacceptable. It's unacceptable to me, and it's unacceptable to the American people. So today I've issued a memorandum to lift the executive prohibition on oil exploration in the OCS. With this action, the executive branch's restrictions on this exploration have been cleared away. This means that the only thing standing between the American people and these vast oil resources is action from the U.S. Congress.

Now the ball is squarely in Congress's court. Democratic leaders can show that they have finally heard the frustrations of

the American people by matching the action I've taken today, repealing the congressional ban, and passing legislation to facilitate responsible offshore exploration. This legislation must allow States to have a say in what happens off their shores, provides a way for the Federal Government and States to share new leasing revenues, and ensure the environment is protected.

This legislation should also take other essential steps to expand domestic production. Congress should clear the way for our Nation to tap into the extraordinary potential of oil shale, which could provide Americans with domestic oil supplies that are equal to more than a century's worth of current oil product—of oil imports. Congress should permit exploration in currently restricted areas of northern Alaska, which could produce roughly the equivalent of two decades of imported oil from Saudi Arabia. Congress should expand and enhance our domestic refining capacity so that America will no longer have to import millions of barrels of fully refined gasoline from abroad.

The time for action is now. This is a difficult period for millions of American families. Every extra dollar they have to spend because of high gas prices is one dollar less they can use to put food on the table or send a child to school. And they are rightly angered by Congress's failure to enact commonsense solutions. Today I've taken every step within my power to allow offshore exploration of the OCS. All that remains is for the Democratic leaders in Congress to allow a vote. The American people are watching the numbers climb higher and higher at the pump, and they're waiting to see what the Congress will do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Memorandum on Modification of the Withdrawal of Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf From Leasing Disposition
July 14, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior

Subject: Modification of the Withdrawal of Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition

Under the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby modify the prior memoranda of withdrawals from disposition by leasing of the United States Outer Continental Shelf issued on August 4, 1992, and June 12, 1998, as modified on January 9, 2007, to read only as follows:

Under the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing, for a time period without specific expiration, those areas of the Outer Continental Shelf designated as of July 14, 2008, as Marine Sanctuaries under the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1431–1434, 33 U.S.C. 1401 *et seq.*

Nothing in this withdrawal affects the rights under existing leases in these areas.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The President's News Conference
July 15, 2008

The President. Good morning. It's been a difficult time for many American families who are coping with declining housing values and high gasoline prices. This week, my administration took steps to help address both these challenges.

To help address challenges in the housing and financial markets, we announced temporary steps to help stabilize them and increase confidence in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These two enterprises play a central role in our housing finance system, so Treasury Paulson has worked with the Federal Reserve Chairman, Bernanke, so that the companies and the Government regulators—put the companies and the Government regulators on a plan to strengthen these enterprises. We must ensure they can continue providing access to mortgage credit during this time of financial stress.

I appreciate the positive reaction this plan has received from many Members of Congress. I urge Members to move quickly to enact the plan in its entirety, along with the good oversight legislation that we have recommended for both Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. This is a part of a—should be part of the housing package that is moving its way through the Congress. And I hope they move quickly. The newly proposed authorities will be temporary and used only if needed. And as we work to maintain the health of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, we'll work to ensure that they remain shareholder-owned companies.

To help address the pressure on gasoline prices, my administration took action this week to clear the way for offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. It's what's called OCS. Congress has restricted access to key parts of the OCS since the early 1980s. I've called on Congress to remove the ban. There was also an executive prohibition on exploration—offshore exploration. So yesterday I issued a memorandum to lift this executive prohibition. With this action, the executive branch's restrictions have been removed, and this means that the only thing standing between the American people and these vast oil resources is action from the U.S. Congress. Bringing OCS resources on line is going to take time, which means that the need for congressional action is urgent. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get these resources from the ocean floor to the refineries to the gas pump.

Democratic leaders have been delaying action on offshore exploration, and now they have an opportunity to show that they finally heard the frustrations of the American people. They should match the action I have taken, repeal the congressional ban, and pass legislation to facilitate responsible offshore exploration.

Congress needs also to pass bills to fund our Government in a fiscally responsible way. I was disappointed to learn the Democratic leaders in the House postponed committee consideration of the defense appropriations bill, and they did so yesterday. They failed to get a single one of the 12 annual appropriation bills to my desk. In fact, this is the latest that both the House and the Senate have failed to pass any of their annual spending bills in more than two decades.

There are just 26 legislative days left before the end of the fiscal year. This means that to get their fundamental job done, Congress would have to pass a spending bill nearly every other day. This is not a record to be proud of, and I think the American people deserve better.

Our citizens are rightly concerned about the difficulties in the housing markets and high gasoline prices and the failure of the Democratic Congress to address these and

other pressing issues. Yet despite the challenges we face, our economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience. While the unemployment rate has risen, it remains at 5.5 percent, which is still low by historical standards. And the economy continued to grow in the first quarter of this year. The growth is slower than we would have liked, but it was growth nonetheless.

We saw the signs of a slowdown early and enacted a bipartisan economic stimulus package. We've now delivered more than $91 billion in tax relief to more than 112 million American households this year. It's going to take some time before we feel the full benefit of the stimulus package, but the early signs are encouraging. Retail sales were up in May and June and should contribute—and will contribute—to economic growth. In the months ahead, we expect more Americans to take advantage of these stimulus payments and inject new energy into our economy.

The bottom line is this: We're going through a tough time, but our economy has continued growing, consumers are spending, businesses are investing, exports continue increasing, and American productivity remains strong. We can have confidence in the long-term foundation of our economy, and I believe we will come through this challenge stronger than ever before.

And now I'll be glad to take some questions from you.

Mr. Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Corporations/ U.S. Financial Institutions

Q. Mr. President, are America's banks in trouble? And does the rescue of Freddie Mae and Fannie Mac make more bailouts inevitable by sending the message that there are some institutions that are too big to fail and that it's okay to take risks?

The President. First, let me talk about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. A lot of people in the country probably don't understand how important they are to the mortgage markets. And it's really important for people to have confidence in the mortgage markets and that there be stability in the mortgage markets. And that's why Secretary Paulson announced the plan this weekend, which says that he needs authorities from the Congress to come up with a line of credit for these institutions, if needed, and that he ought to have the authority to invest capital, if needed.

And so the purpose was to send a clear signal that, one, we understand how important these institutions are to the mortgage markets, and two, to kind of calm nerves. The truth of the matter is, by laying this out, it is—makes it less likely we'll need to use this kind of authority to begin with, which, by the way, is temporary authority.

As you—talked about banks. Now, if you're a commercial bank in America and your deposit—and you have a deposit in a commercial bank in America, your deposit is insured by the Federal Government up to $100,000. And so therefore, when you hear nervousness about your bank, you know, people start talking about how nervous they are about your bank's condition, the depositor must understand that the Federal Government, through the FDIC, stands behind the deposit up to $100,000. And therefore—which leads me to say that if you're a depositor, you're in—you're protected by the Federal Government.

I happened to have witnessed a bank run in Midland, Texas, one time. I'll never forget the guy standing in the bank lobby saying, "Your deposits are good. We got you insured. You don't have to worry about it if you got less than $100,000 in the bank." The problem was, people didn't hear. And there's a—became a nervousness. My hope is, is that people take a deep breath and realize that their deposits are protected by our Government.

So these are two different instances, mortgage markets on the one hand, banking on the other.

Q. And banking, do you think the system is in trouble?

The President. I think the system basically is sound, I truly do. And I understand there's a lot of nervousness. And—but the economy's growing, productivity is high, trade's up, people are working. It's not as good as we'd like, but—and to the extent that we find weakness, we'll move. That's one thing about this administration, we're not afraid of making tough decisions. And I thought the decision that Secretary Paulson recommended on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was the right decision.

Matt [Matt Spetalnick, Reuters].

National Economy/Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned the latest retail sales, but they actually show a smaller boost than economists had expected from the Government rebate checks. Given the latest economic data, are you still insisting that the United States is not headed for a recession? And are you willing to consider a second stimulus package if needed?

The President. Matt, I—all I can tell you is we grew in the first quarter. I can remember holding a press conference here and that same question came about, assuming that we weren't going to grow. But we showed growth. It's not the growth we'd like; we'd like stronger growth. And there are some things we can do. One is wait for the stimulus package to fully kick in and not raise taxes. If the Democratic leaders had their way in Congress, they would raise taxes, which would be the absolute wrong thing to do.

Secondly, they can pass housing legislation that reforms FHA as well as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And by the way, a part of that—as I mentioned in my opening statement, a part of that reform will be a strong regulator to help these institutions stay focused on the core mission, which is mortgages.

They can pass energy legislation. I readily concede that, you know, it's not going to produce a barrel of oil tomorrow, but it is going to change the psychology that demand will constantly outstrip supply. As I said in my remarks, it's going to take a while to get these reserves on line. But it won't take a while to send a signal to the world that we're willing to use new technologies to find oil reserves here at home.

And the other thing Congress can do is work on trade legislation. One of the positives in the economy right now is the fact that we're selling more goods overseas. And they need to open up markets to Colombia and South Korea and Panama.

John [John Yang, NBC News].

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, just to follow up with Terry's question a little bit. You talked about the mortgage markets and banks. Are there other entities in the economy that are so crucial to the stability and confidence in the economy—I'm thinking particularly of General Motors, which today is cutting jobs, announcing they're going into the credit market to raise billions of dollars—are there other entities that are so crucial to stability that require Government action to show support for them?

The President. Government action—if you're talking about bailing out—if your question is, should the Government bail out private enterprise? The answer is, no, it shouldn't. And by the way, the decisions on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—I hear some say bailout—I don't think it's a bailout. The shareholders still own the company. That's why I said we want this to continue to be a shareholder-owned company.

In this case, there is a feeling that the Government will stand behind mortgages through these two entities. And therefore, we felt a special need to step up and say that we are going to provide, if needed, temporary assistance through either debt or capital.

In terms of private enterprises, no, I don't think the Government ought to be

involved with bailing out companies. I think the Government ought to create the conditions so that companies can survive. And I've listed four. And one of the things I'm deeply troubled about is people who feel like it's okay to raise taxes during these times. And it would be a huge mistake to raise taxes right now.

Plante [Bill Plante, CBS News].

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Corporations

Q. Mr. President, you just said twice that the—Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should remain shareholder-owned companies. If that's the case, because of the implicit Government guarantee that they have, or that is understood—has been understood by the markets—their exposure is higher and their reserves are lower than any normal business's—should they be privatized altogether and be subject to normal business rules?

The President. Well, the first step is to make sure that there's confidence and stability in the mortgage markets through the actions that we have taken. Secondly, we strongly believe there ought to be a regulator. That's something—this is the position I have been advocating for a long time. And the reason why is, it's going to be very important for these institutions to focus on their core mission, which is to provide refinancing for the mortgage industry. And hopefully, these measures will instill the confidence in the people. And we'll see how things go.

Q. But they should still have that public guarantee then?

The President. You know, there is an implicit guarantee, as you said. They ought to be focusing on the missions they're expected to do. We have advocated reform for a long period of time. But these need to remain private enterprises, and that's what our message is.

Price of Gasoline/Oil Supply

Q. Mr. President, in February, you were asked about Americans facing the prospect of four-dollar-a-gallon gasoline, and you said you hadn't heard of that at the time. Gas prices——

The President. Heard of it now.

Q. Gas prices are now approaching $5 a gallon in some parts of the country. Offshore oil exploration is obviously a long-term approach. What is the short-term advice for Americans? What can you do now to help them?

The President. First of all, there is a psychology in the oil market that basically says, supplies are going to stay stagnant while demand rises. And that's reflected, somewhat, in the price of crude oil. Gasoline prices are reflected—the amount of a gasoline price at the pump is reflected in the price of crude oil. And therefore, it seems like it makes sense to me to say to the world that we're going to use new technologies to explore for oil and gas in the United States—offshore oil, ANWR, oil shale projects—to help change this psychology, to send a clear message that the supplies of oil will increase.

Secondly, obviously, good conservation measures matter. I've been reading a lot about how the automobile companies are beginning to adjust—people, consumers are beginning to say, "Wait a minute, I don't want a gas guzzler anymore; I want a smaller car." So the two need to go hand in hand. There is no immediate fix. This took us a while to get in this problem; there is no short-term solution. I think it was in the Rose Garden where I issued this brilliant statement: If I had a magic wand. But the President doesn't have a magic wand. You just can't say, low gas. It took us a while to get here, and we need to have a good strategy to get out of it.

Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Q. But you do have the strategic oil petroleum reserve. What about opening that?

The President. The strategic oil petroleum reserve is for, you know, emergencies. But that doesn't address the fundamental

issue. And we need to address the fundamental issue—which I, frankly, have been talking about since I first became President—which was a combination of using technology to have alternative sources of energy, but at the same time, finding oil and gas here at home. And now is the time to get it done. I heard somebody say, "Well, it's going to take 7 years." Well, if we'd have done it 7 years ago, we'd have—be having a different conversation today. I'm not suggesting we'd have completely created—you know, changed the dynamics in the world, but it certainly would have been—we'd have been using more of our own oil and sending less money overseas.

Yes, Ed [Ed Henry, Cable News Network].

Former White House Press Secretary Scott B. McClellan/Military Operations in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning.

The President. Thank you. It is a good morning.

Q. It is.

The President. Every day is a good morning when you get to serve the country.

Q. Absolutely. And we know you prize loyalty, so I wonder whether you felt betrayed by Scott McClellan's assessment of the war in Iraq? And moving forward, since there have been positive signs on the ground in Iraq, Senator Obama is about to take a trip there. What would be your advice to him as he tries to assess the situation on the ground?

The President. I have had no comment on—no comment now on Scott's book.

Secondly, I would ask him to listen carefully to Ryan Crocker and General Petraeus. It's—there's a temptation to kind of get—let the politics at home get in the way with the considered judgment of the commanders. That's why I strongly rejected an artificial timetable of withdrawal. It's kind of like an arbitrary thing, you know—"We will decide in the Halls of Congress how to conduct our affairs in Iraq based upon polls and politics, and we're going to impose this on people"—as opposed to listening to our commanders and our diplomats, and listening to the Iraqis, for that matter. The Iraqis have invited us to be there. But they share a goal with us, which is to get our combat troops out, as conditions permit. Matter of fact, that's what we're doing. Return on success has been the strategy of this administration, and our troops are coming home, but based upon success.

And so I would ask whoever goes there—whatever elected official goes there, to listen carefully to what is taking place and understand that the best way to go forward is to listen to the parties who are actually on the ground. And that's hard to do. I understand for some in Washington there's a lot of pressure. You got these groups out there—MoveOn.org, you know—banging away on these candidates, and it's hard to kind of divorce yourself from the politics.

And so I'm glad all the—a lot of these elected officials are going over there, because they'll get an interesting insight, something that you don't get from just reading your wonderful newspapers or listening to your TV shows.

John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Don't you call them TV shows? Newscasts, yes.

Price of Gasoline/Oil Supply/Alternative Fuel Sources

Q. ——following up on the question about oil, in the past, when oil prices have gone up a lot, they've wound up going down a lot afterward. But I wonder if you're able to say that oil prices in the future are going to come down a lot.

The President. I can't predict it, John. I mean, look, my attitude is, is that unless there is a focused effort—in the short term—unless there's a focused effort to

bring more supplies to market, there's going to be a lot of upward pressure on price. We got 85 million barrels a day and—of demand and 86 million barrels of production. And it's just—it's too narrow a spread, it seems like to me.

Now, I'm encouraged by, you know, the Caspian Basin exploration. I'm encouraged that the Saudis are reinvesting a lot into their older fields. And remember, some of these oil fields get on the decline rate, which requires a lot of investment to keep their production up to previous levels. So one thing we look at is how much money is being reinvested in some of those fields. I'm encouraged by that.

I am discouraged by the fact that some nations subsidize the purchases of product, like gasoline, which, therefore, means that demand may not be causing the market to adjust as rapidly as we'd like. I was heartened by the fact that the Chinese the other day announced that they're going to start reducing some of their subsidies—which all of a sudden, you may have some, you know, demand-driven changes in the overall balance.

But, look, if we conserve and find more energy, we will done—have done our part to address, you know, the global market right now. And the other thing is that this is just a transition period. I mean, all of us want to get away from reliance upon hydrocarbons, but it's not going to happen overnight. One of these days, people are going to be using battery technologies in their cars. You've heard me say this a lot. And I'm confident it's going to happen. And the throwaway line, of course, is that your car won't have to look like a golf cart.

But the question then becomes, where are we going to get electricity? And that's why I'm a big believer in nuclear power to be able to make us less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment. But there is a transition period during the hydrocarbon era, and it hasn't ended yet, as our people now know. Gasoline prices are high.

I don't—again, I don't want to be a told-you-so, but if you go back and look at the strategy we put out early on in this administration, we understood what was coming. We knew the markets were going to be tight. And therefore, we called for additional exploration at home, plus what has been happening, which is an acceleration of new technologies, including ethanol technologies, to get us less dependent on crude oil from overseas.

Let's see here, Steven Lee. Steven Lee [Steven Lee Myers, New York Times].

Guantanamo Bay Detainees

Q. Mr. President, thank you. I wonder in light of the Supreme Court's decision if you could tell us what you plan to do with Guantanamo?

The President. Steven Lee, we're still analyzing—"we" being the Justice Department—are still analyzing the effects of the decision, which, as you know, I disagreed with. And secondly, we're working with Members of Congress on a way forward. This is a very complicated case; it complicated the situation in Guantanamo.

My view all along has been, either send them back home or give them a chance to have a day in court. I still believe that makes sense. We're just trying to figure out how to do so in light of the Supreme Court ruling.

Eggen [Dan Eggen, Washington Post].

Zimbabwe

Q. Mr. President, last week, China joined Russia in blocking the sanctions—Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. I can't imagine this pleased you very much. Do you have any reaction to, particularly, the Chinese move? And also, where do you go from here to try to make sure that the regime doesn't——

The President. Yes. No, you read my reaction right; I was displeased. We spent a lot of time on this subject at the G–8, and there was great concern by most of the nations there—well, the G–8 nations

that were there—about what was taking place in Zimbabwe. And it's frankly unacceptable, and it should be unacceptable to a lot of folks.

And so we discussed the need for, you know, U.N. Security Council resolutions. And I was disappointed that the Russians vetoed. I didn't—I hadn't spent any time with the Chinese leader talking about—specifically talking about any Security Council resolutions; I'd had with President Medvedev.

And so I think the thing we need to do now is for us to analyze whether or not we can have some more bilateral sanctions on regime leaders. After all, these sanctions were not against the Zimbabwe people; these were against the people that—in the Mugabe regime that made the decisions it made. We got the Treasury Department and State Department—are now working on a potential U.S. action.

Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

Military Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I have a two-part question on the war, in light of increasing violence in Afghanistan. Do you believe current U.S. troop levels in Iraq are hindering efforts to put more U.S. troops into Afghanistan?

And secondly, this morning in his prepared remarks, Senator Obama will say this: "By any measure, our single-minded, open-ended focus on Iraq is not a sound strategy for keeping America safe. In fact, as should have been apparent to President Bush and Senator McCain, the central front in the war on terror is not Iraq, and it never was."

The President. Well, as you know, I'm loath to respond to a particular Presidential candidate, and so I will try not to. My view is, is that the war on terror is being fought out on two simultaneous fronts that are noted—noticeable to the American people and on other fronts that aren't. And so the first question that anybody running for President gets: Is this a war? Or is this like law enforcement? Is it a—does this require full use of U.S. assets in order to protect the American people? As you know, I made the decision that it does require those assets.

Secondly, that these are two very important fronts, both of which are important to the future of the country. And therefore, we got to succeed in both.

Thirdly, one front right now is going better than the other, and that's Iraq, where we're succeeding, and our troops are coming home based upon success. And Afghanistan is a tough fight. It's a tough fight because, one, this is a state that had been just ravaged by previous wars, and there wasn't a lot of central Government outreach to the people.

Secondly, there is a tough enemy, and they're brutal. And they kill at the drop of a hat in order to affect behavior. It's a little bit reminiscent of what was taking place in Iraq a couple of years ago, where the enemy knows that they can affect the mentality of the American people if they just continue to kill innocent folks. And they have no disregard [regard] * for human life.

And it's really important we succeed there as well as in Iraq. We do not want the enemy to have safe haven. Of course—unless, of course, your attitude is, this isn't a war. So then if that's the case, it wouldn't matter whether we succeed or not.

But it is a two-front war. And I say there's other fronts, but there's other fronts where we're taking covert actions, for example.

Go ahead.

Troop Levels in Afghanistan/War on Terror

Q. Should Americans expect a troop surge in Afghanistan?

The President. We are surging troops in Afghanistan this way and committed——

Q. Even more?

* White House correction.

The President. Well, we'll analyze the situation, of course, make a determination based upon the conditions on the ground. But we did surge troops. We surged troops; France surged troops. I said in Bucharest, we'll add more troops. And then, of course, we got to make sure the strategy works—you know, have a counterinsurgency strategy that not only provides security, but also provides economic followup after the security has been enhanced.

The question really facing the country is, will we have the patience and the determination to succeed in these very difficult theaters? And I understand exhaustion, and I understand people getting tired. And—but I would hope that whoever follows me understands that we're at war, and now is not the time to give up in the struggle against this enemy. And that while there hasn't been an attack on the homeland, that's not to say people don't want to attack us. And safe havens become very dangerous for the American people. And we've got to deny safe haven and, at the same time, win the struggle by advancing democracy.

This is an ideological struggle we're involved in. These people kill for a reason. They want us to leave. They want us to, you know, not push back. They don't want democracy to succeed. And yet, if given a chance, democracy will succeed. And so these two theaters are the big challenge of the time, and the war itself is the challenge.

Yes, Roger [Roger Runningen, Bloomberg News].

National Economy/Legislative Agenda

Q. Thank you, sir. I want to follow up on Matt's question about a second economic stimulus——

The President. On whose question?

Q. Matt's question about a second economic stimulus package.

The President. Brilliant question, Matt. Now they're going to start quoting you, you know. Congratulations. [*Laughter*]

Q. Maybe I missed it, but did you rule out one or——

The President. I said we ought to see how this one—first one works. Let it run its course.

Q. Is it too late to consider a second one in your administration?

The President. You know, we—we're always openminded to things, but I—let's see how this stimulus package works, and let us deal with the housing market with good piece of housing legislation and the energy issue with good energy legislation and the trade issue with good trade legislation.

People say, "Aww, man, you're running out of time; nothing is going to happen." I'll remind people what did happen: We got a good troop funding bill with no strings; got a GI bill; we got FISA. What can we get done? We can get good housing legislation done. We can get good energy legislation done. We can get trade bills done. I mean, there's plenty of time to get action with the United States Congress, and they need to move quickly. We can get judges approved.

And so I'm—we'll see what happens up there. I'm confident that if they put their mind to it, we can get good legislation.

Let's see here, yes, Mark [Mark Smith, Associated Press].

Price of Gasoline/Energy Consumption

Q. Mr. President, understanding what you say about energy supplies being tight and the debate over energy, which has gone on for years and will continue long through the campaign and into the next administration, one thing nobody debates is that if Americans use less energy——

The President. Correct.

Q. ——the supply/demand equation would improve. Why have you not sort of called on Americans to drive less and to turn down the thermostat?

The President. They're smart enough to figure out whether they're going to drive less or not. I mean, you know, it's interesting what the price of gasoline has

done—is it caused people to drive less. That's why they want smaller cars, they want to conserve. But the consumer is plenty bright, Mark. The marketplace works.

Secondly, we have worked with Congress to change CAFE standards and had a mandatory alternative fuel requirement.

So no question about it, what you just said is right. One way to correct the imbalance is to save, is to conserve. And as you noticed in my statement yesterday, I talked about good conservation. And people can figure out whether they need to drive more or less; they can balance their own checkbooks.

Q. But you don't see the need to ask—you don't think—see the value in your calling for a campaign——

The President. I think people ought to conserve and be wise about how they use gasoline and energy. Absolutely. And there's some easy steps people can take. You know, if they're not in their home, they don't keep their air-conditioning running. There's a lot of things people can do.

But my point to you, Mark, is that, you know, it's a little presumptuous on my part to dictate to consumers how they live their lives. The American people are plenty capable and plenty smart people, and they'll make adjustments to their own pocketbooks. That's why I was so much in favor of letting them keep more of their own money. You know? It's a philosophical difference: Should the Government spend their money, or should they spend their own money? And I've got faith in the American people.

And as much as I regret that the gasoline prices are high—and they are—I also understand that people are going to make adjustments to meet their own needs. And I suspect you'll see, in the whole, Americans using less gasoline. I bet that's going to happen. And in the meantime, technologies will be coming on the market that will enable them to drive and save money, compared to the automobiles they're using before. And as you notice, the automobile industry is beginning to adjust here at home as consumer demand changes. And the great thing about our system, it is the consumer that drives our system; it's the individual Americans and their collection that end up driving the economy.

Yes, Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News].

Iraq

Q. Could I follow up on a couple of points, please?

The President. Okay.

Q. You never mention oil companies. Are you confident that American oil producers are tapping all of the sources they have out there, including offshore? And on Iraq, will you sign an interim agreement with Prime Minister Maliki on American operations in Iraq, leaving it to your successor to do a more permanent agreement?

The President. There are—let me start with Iraq. We're in the process of working on a strategic framework agreement with the Iraqi Government that will talk about cooperation on a variety of fronts: diplomacy, economics, justice. Part of that agreement is a security agreement, and I believe that, you know, they want to have an aspirational goal as to how quickly the transition to what we have called overwatch takes place. Overwatch will mean that the U.S. will be in a training mission, logistical support as well as special ops.

In order for our troops to be in a foreign country, there must be an understanding with the Government. There must be authorities to operate as well as protections for our troops. We're in the process of negotiating that as well. And it needs to be done prior to the year because—unless, of course, the U.N. mandate is extended. And so there are two aspects to the agreement. This is people seem to conflate the two—and we're working both of them simultaneously.

Let's see here.

Oil Supply

Q. American oil producers?

The President. Oh, what was the question again on that?

Q. Well, you talked about offshore——

The President. What about them? Do I think they're investing capital to find more reserves with the price at $140 a barrel? Absolutely. Take an offshore exploration company—first of all, it costs a lot of money to buy the lease, so they tie up capital. Secondly, it takes a lot of money to do the geophysics, to determine what the structure may or may not look like. That ties up capital. Then they put the rig out there. Now, first of all, in a Federal offshore lease, if you're not exploring within a set period of time, you lose your bonus; you lose the amount of money that you paid to get the lease in the first place.

And once you explore—your first exploratory, if you happen to find oil or gas, it is—you'll find yourself in a position where a lot of capital is tied up. And it becomes in your interest, your economic interest, to continue to explore so as to reduce the capital costs of the project on a per-barrel basis. And so I think they're exploring. And hopefully, a lot of people continue to explore so that the supply of oil worldwide increases relative to demand.

Now, people say, "What about the speculators?" I think you can't help but notice there is some volatility in price in the marketplace, which, obviously, there are some people in the—buying and selling on a daily basis. On the other hand, the fundamentals are what's really driving the long-term price of oil, and that is, demand for oil has increased, and supply has not kept up with it. And so part of our strategy in our country has got to be to say, okay, here are some suspected reserves, and that we ought to go after them in an environmentally friendly way.

A buddy of mine said, "Well, what about the reefs?" So I'm concerned about the reefs. I'm a fisherman; I like to fish. Reefs are important for fisheries. But the technology is such that you can protect the reefs. You know? You don't have to drill on top of a reef. You can drill away from a reef and then have a horizontal hole to help you explore a reservoir.

It's like in Alaska, you know. In the old days, you would have had to have—if you ever go out to west Texas, you'll see—there's like a rig every 20 acres, depending upon the formation. In Alaska, you can have one pad with a lot of horizontal drilling, which enables you to exploit the resources in a way that doesn't damage the environment. These are new technologies that have come to be, and yet we've got an old energy policy that hasn't recognized how the industry has changed. And now is the time to get people to recognize how the industry has changed.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks].

Sudan

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes.

Q. Two questions; one on energy and another on Sudan.

The President. On what?

Q. Not energy, I'm sorry, the economy. When, in your guesstimation, will this country see a turnaround as relates to the softening economy? When will it become strong again?

And also, on the Sudan, the Sudanese Government is looking to the United Nations for help in this situation with the ICC. And this is a body that they have ignored before. What are your thoughts about what's happening with the Sudan?

The President. Well, we're not a member of the ICC, so we'll see how that plays out.

My thought on Sudan is, is that the United Nations needs to work with this current Government to get those troops in to help save lives—AU hybrid force. I talked to Williamson, who's the Special

Envoy to Sudan, yesterday. There's two aspects to the Sudanese issue. One is the north-south agreement, and he was talking about the need to make sure that there is a clear understanding about how oil revenues will be shared between north and south in a certain part of the border region there, so as to make sure that there is—that this agreement that Ambassador Danforth negotiated stays intact and stays full.

And the other aspect, obviously, is Darfur. And that's a very, very complex issue. We're trying to make—we're trying to work with the rebel groups so that they speak more with one voice. We're trying to work with Bashir to make sure he understands that there will be continued sanctions if he doesn't move forward. We're trying to help get this—AU troops in Africa—throughout Africa into Sudan. And we're working with the French on the issue of Chad.

And it's a complex situation, and sadly enough, innocent people are being displaced and are losing their life. And it's very difficult and unacceptable. And as you know, I made the decision not to unilaterally send troops. Once that decision was made, then we had to reply upon the United Nations. And I brought this issue up at the G–8 with our partners there. There's the same sense of consternation and the same sense of frustration that things haven't moved quicker. I talked to Ban Ki-moon about the issue, and he told me—I think he told me that by the end of this year, a full complement of AU troops will be there. Then the question is, will the Government help expedite the delivery of humanitarian aid?

Anyway, the other question?

National Economy/Legislative Agenda

Q. Yes, the other question——

The President. When will the economy turn around?

Q. Yes.

The President. I'm not an economist, but I do believe that we're growing. And I can remember this press conference here where people yelling "recession this," "recession that"—as if you're economists. And I'm an optimist. I believe there's a lot of positive things for our economy. But I will tell you, it's not growing the way it should, and I'm sorry people are paying as high gasoline prices as they are. And all I know is, good policy will help expedite a—will strengthen our economy.

Q. Do you think it will change before you leave office?

The President. I certainly hope it changes tomorrow. But it's—I'm also realistic to know things don't change on a dime. But nevertheless, the economy is growing. There's obviously financial uncertainty. We've talked about the decisions on the GSEs here. People need to know that if they've got a deposit in a commercial bank, the Government will make good up to $100,000 worth of their deposit. There's no question, it's a time of uncertainty. There's a lot of events taking place at the same time. But we can pass some good law to help expedite the recovery.

One such law is a good housing—piece of housing legislation. The Congress needs to get moving on it. Another such law is to send a signal that we're willing to explore for oil here at home. I fully understand that this is a transition period away from hydrocarbons, but we ought to be wise about how we use our own resources. I think it would be a powerful signal if we announce that we're going to really get after it when it comes to oil shale. There's enormous reserves in the western States. And I think if the world saw that we're willing to put a focused, concerted effort on using new technologies to bring those reserves to bear, which would then relieve some pressure on gasoline prices, it would have an impact.

The other thing is, is that—I'm sure you know this, April, but we haven't built a refinery—a new refinery in the United

States since the early seventies. It makes no sense. And yet you try to get one permitted, it is unbelievably difficult to do. People aren't willing to risk capital if they're deeply concerned about how their capital is going to be tied up in lawsuits or regulations. And we import a lot of gasoline, refined product, from overseas.

So there's some things we can do to send signals that it's important that we can get the economy—take advantage of the positive aspects and get it moving stronger again.

The other thing is trade. It is—I don't understand the decision on the Colombia free trade market—free trade agreement. The Congress has given preferential treatment to goods coming out of Colombia through the Andean Trade Preference Act. In other words, Colombia businesses can sell into our country relatively duty free. And yet we don't have the same—we don't get the same treatment. Now, why does that make sense? It doesn't.

You know, trade—our trade or exports have helped keep the economy growing, April, as paltry as it may be. Doesn't it make sense for us to continue to open up further opportunities to sell goods? I think it does. I do not understand why it's okay for Colombia to be able to sell into our country close to duty free, and we don't have the same advantage. And secondly, turning our back on somebody like Uribe makes no sense at all. He is a courageous fighter against terrorists. And yet our Congress won't even bring up a free trade agreement with Colombia.

Anyway, it's—politics is just choking good sense. And the other thing is, is that once we get moving on Colombia, we need to get moving on Panama and South Korea. It's in our country's interest we do that.

Olivier. Olivier [Olivier Knox, Agence France-Presse].

Afghanistan/Pakistan

Q. Yes, sir. A follow-up on——

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino. They look alike—[*laughter*].

Q. Following up on Bret Baier's question——

White House Press Secretary Perino. ——Olivier. [*Laughter*]

The President. I know who Olivier is. I was just winking at Myers, you know. [*Laughter*]

White House Press Secretary Perino. Oh, I see.

The President. Yes, Olivier.

Q. Thank you, sir. Following up on Bret Baier's question——

The President. What was the question, Olivier? I'm 62, I'm having trouble remembering a lot of things.

Q. It was about Afghanistan, sir.

The President. Good, yes.

Q. Okay. Afghan President——

The President. I remember it now.

Q. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has blamed Pakistan's intelligence services for a recent terrorist attack on his country, and recent reporting suggests that Al Qaida has regrouped to pre-September 11th levels along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Is President Karzai correct? And do you think the new President—the new Government in Pakistan is willing and is able to fight the terrorists?

The President. First of all, we'll investigate his charge and we'll work with his service to get to the bottom of his allegation. No question, however, that some extremists are coming out of parts of Pakistan into Afghanistan. And that's troubling to us, it's troubling to Afghanistan, and it should be troubling to Pakistan. We share a common enemy. That would be extremists who use violence to either disrupt democracy or prevent democracy from taking hold.

Al Qaida is—they're there. We have hurt Al Qaida hard—hit them hard and hurt them in—around the world, including in Pakistan. And we will continue to keep the pressure on Al Qaida with our Pakistan friends.

I certainly hope that the Government understands the dangers of extremists moving in their country. I think they do. As a matter of fact, we'll have an opportunity to explore that further on Monday with the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Pakistan is an ally; Pakistan is a friend. And I repeat: All three countries—United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—share a common enemy.

I remember very well the meeting I had at the White House with President Musharraf and President Karzai. And we talked about the need for cross-border cooperation to prevent dangerous elements from training and coming into Afghanistan, and then, by the way, returning home with a skill level that could be used against the Government.

And there was some hopeful progress made. Obviously, it's still a tough fight there. And we were heartened by the Provincial elections in that part of the world. We will continue to work to help the Government, on the one hand, deal with extremists, and on the other hand, have a counter—effective counterinsurgency strategy that uses aid to foster economic development. And it's a challenge. And the three of us working together can deal with the challenge a lot better than if we don't work together.

Okay, I've enjoyed it. Thank you very much for your time. Appreciate it.

Q. Come back soon.

The President. Yes. I will.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:22 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Hu Jintao of China; President President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia; President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Richard S. Williamson and former U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan John C. Danforth; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. Reporters referred to Republican Presidential candidate John McCain; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008"
July 15, 2008

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 6331, the "Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008." I support the primary objective of this legislation, to forestall reductions in physician payments. Yet taking choices away from seniors to pay physicians is wrong. This bill is objectionable, and I am vetoing it because:

- It would harm beneficiaries by taking private health plan options away from them; already more than 9.6 million beneficiaries, many of whom are considered lower-income, have chosen to join a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan, and it is estimated that this bill would decrease MA enrollment by about 2.3 million individuals in 2013 relative to the program's current baseline;
- It would undermine the Medicare prescription drug program, which today

is effectively providing coverage to 32 million beneficiaries directly through competitive private plans or through Medicare-subsidized retirement plans; and

- It is fiscally irresponsible, and it would imperil the long-term fiscal soundness of Medicare by using short-term budget gimmicks that do not solve the problem; the result would be a steep and unrealistic payment cut for physicians—roughly 20 percent in 2010—likely leading to yet another expensive temporary fix; and the bill would also perpetuate wasteful overpayments to medical equipment suppliers.

In December 2003, when I signed the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) into law, I said that "when seniors have the ability to make choices, health care plans within Medicare will have to compete for their business by offering higher quality service. For the seniors of America, more choices and more control will mean better health care." This is exactly what has happened—with drug coverage and with Medicare Advantage.

Today, as a result of the changes in the MMA, 32 million seniors and Americans with disabilities have drug coverage through Medicare prescription drug plans or a Medicare-subsidized retirement plan, while some 9.6 million Medicare beneficiaries—more than 20 percent of all beneficiaries—have chosen to join a private MA plan. To protect the interests of these beneficiaries, I cannot accept the provisions of this legislation that would undermine Medicare Part D, reduce payments for MA plans, and restructure the MA program in a way that would lead to limited beneficiary access, benefits, and choices and lower-than-expected enrollment in Medicare Advantage.

Medicare beneficiaries need and benefit from having more options than just the one-size-fits-all approach of traditional Medicare fee-for-service. Medicare Advantage plan options include health maintenance organizations, preferred provider organizations, and private fee-for-service (PFFS) plans. Medicare Advantage plans are paid according to a formula established by the Congress in 2003 to ensure that seniors in all parts of the country—including rural areas—have access to private plan options.

This bill would reduce these options for beneficiaries, particularly those in hard-to-serve rural areas. In particular, H.R. 6331 would make fundamental changes to the MA PFFS program. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that H.R. 6331 would decrease MA enrollment by about 2.3 million individuals in 2013 relative to its current baseline, with the largest effects resulting from these PFFS restrictions.

While the MMA increased the availability of private plan options across the country, it is important to remember that a significant number of beneficiaries who have chosen these options earn lower incomes. The latest data show that 49 percent of beneficiaries enrolled in MA plans report income of $20,000 or less. These beneficiaries have made a decision to maximize their Medicare and supplemental benefits through the MA program, in part because of their economic situation. Cuts to MA plan payments required by this legislation would reduce benefits to millions of seniors, including lower-income seniors, who have chosen to join these plans.

The bill would constrain market forces and undermine the success that the Medicare Prescription Drug program has achieved in providing beneficiaries with robust, high-value coverage—including comprehensive formularies and access to network pharmacies—at lower-than-expected costs. In particular, the provisions that would enable the expansion of "protected classes" of drugs would effectively end meaningful price negotiations between Medicare prescription drug plans and pharmaceutical manufacturers for drugs in those

classes. If, as is likely, implementation of this provision results in an increase in the number of protected drug classes, it will lead to increased beneficiary premiums and copayments, higher drug prices, and lower drug rebates. These new requirements, together with provisions that interfere with the contractual relationships between Part D plans and pharmacies, are expected to increase Medicare spending and have a negative impact on the value and choices that beneficiaries have come to enjoy in the program.

The bill includes budget gimmicks that do not solve the payment problem for physicians, make the problem worse with an abrupt payment cut for physicians of roughly 20 percent in 2010, and add nearly $20 billion to the Medicare Improvement Fund, which would unnecessarily increase Medicare spending and contribute to the unsustainable growth in Medicare.

In addition, H.R. 6331 would delay important reforms like the Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies competitive bidding program, under which lower payment rates went into effect on July 1, 2008. This program will produce significant savings for Medicare and beneficiaries by obtaining lower prices through competitive bidding. The legislation would leave the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund vulnerable to litigation because of the revocation of the awarded contracts. Changing policy in mid-stream is also confusing to beneficiaries who are receiving services from quality suppliers at lower prices. In order to slow the growth in Medicare spending, competition within the program should be expanded, not diminished.

For decades, we promised America's seniors we could do better, and we finally did. We should not turn the clock back to the days when our Medicare system offered outdated and inefficient benefits and imposed needless costs on its beneficiaries.

Because this bill would severely damage the Medicare program by undermining the Medicare Part D program and by reducing access, benefits, and choices for all beneficiaries, particularly the approximately 9.6 million beneficiaries in MA, I must veto this bill.

I urge the Congress to send me a bill that reduces the growth in Medicare spending, increases competition and efficiency, implements principles of value-driven health care, and appropriately offsets increases in physician spending.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 15, 2008.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso

July 16, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming. I first started my conversation with the President by complimenting him on his leadership in the United Nations and in the region. You've been a constructive force for peace and stability.

And we talked about Zimbabwe. I made my position abundantly clear that, one, we are disappointed with the veto of the U.N. Security Council resolution, for which both our nations worked in concert. Secondly, we deeply care about the plight of the citizens of Zimbabwe, and we hope there's a peaceful resolution soon. I told the President, in the meantime, our Government is looking at, you know, sanctions beyond that which would have been levied out of the U.N. Security Council.

I congratulated the President on the fact that his good nation is a recipient of a Millennium Challenge Account program. It's a program aimed to help farmers, entrepreneurs, and girls and women. It's the right thing to do, Mr. President. This grant would not have been awarded without your commitment to fighting corruption, your willingness to invest in the health and education of your people, and your adherence to marketplace principles. So I congratulate you, sir, on that.

Finally, I talked to him about issues that are dear to my heart, and that are the issues of HIV/AIDS. I congratulated his country for being effective at preventing the spread of AIDS. And we talked about malaria.

It's been my honor to have you here, sir. And I thank you for your leadership, and I thank you for your friendship. Hold on, go ahead.

President Compaore. First of all, the President and I seized this opportunity to meet, and the first thing I did was to show gratitude to President Bush for the engagement of the United States in favor of our country, Burkina Faso, and especially in terms of poverty reduction and economic development and all the help.

But I said to the President, other than Burkina Faso, all the continent of Africa is very grateful to initiatives taken by the United States administration in terms of debt reduction, public aid to development, fight against HIV/AIDS, and building schools in our country.

And we talked about the situation on the whole continent, the need for democracy and stability in Africa, and the urgent need for a true rule of law in Zimbabwe. We also talked about the need for a political solution to the crisis in Darfur, which is weighing very heavily in all Africa.

And again, I congratulate President Bush, Congress, and the American people for their commitment for Africa.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Compaore spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a White House Tee-Ball Game
July 16, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this historic occasion. The commissioner and I—that would be Frank Robinson, the Hall of Fame—[*applause*]—welcome you for the first all-star game here on the South Lawn of the White House.

We've got 50 players from 50 States, plus the District of Columbia, who have shown—come to show off their great baseball skills. And we're excited you're here. We welcome you; we welcome your families.

We want to thank Kenny Chesney for lending his great talent. We're proud you're here, Kenny. Thanks for coming.

I do want to welcome our baseball coaches today. We've got four fabulous coaches who've agreed to come: Ryne Sandberg, Hall of Famer—he's kind of pulling for the Cubs this year; John Smoltz of the Atlanta Braves. Our second game coaches: from the Baltimore Orioles, Kevin Millar—he'll be—here he is; and finally, two-time All-Star, Rick Monday. There he is. Hi, Rick. Thanks for coming.

I do want to welcome our announcers today, Mike and Mike. Yes, sir! Mike Golic and Mike Greenberg, we're proud you guys are here. We expect them to call a good game.

I do want to say that a member of my Cabinet, Carlos Gutierrez, has joined us. Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming.

And finally, Mr. Commissioner, we are so lucky to have Shelby Shayler with us today. She will be presenting you and I with the first ball, but not quite yet. Before we do, we're going to recite the Little League oath.

Are the players ready? All right, here we go.

[*At this point, the pledge was recited.*]

Play ball!

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Kenny Chesney, who sang the national anthem; ESPN radio talk show hosts Mike Golic and Mike Greenberg; and Shelby Shayler, member, Naval Air Station Little League, Norfolk, VA.

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation To Reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
July 16, 2008

I thank the Senate for the strong, bipartisan vote today to pass important, life-saving legislation reauthorizing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). I appreciate the efforts of Majority Leader Reid, Senators Biden and Lugar, and all other Senators from both sides of the aisle who came together today to ensure that America's generosity in battling HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases around the globe will continue in a manner consistent with the program's successful founding principles.

When we launched this program in 2003, about 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS. Today, PEPFAR supports life-saving antiretroviral treatment for more than 1.7 million people around the world. PEPFAR has also supported treatment and prevention programs that have helped HIV-positive women give birth to nearly 200,000 infants who are HIV-free. PEPFAR is the largest international health initiative in history to fight a single disease.

Traveling in Africa earlier this year, Laura and I had our most recent opportunity to witness the effectiveness of this program. We were honored to see the doctors, nurses, and caregivers of all faiths working to save the lives of their fellow citizens. And we met the patients, including many children, who understand and appreciate America's generosity.

With passage of today's bill, we are one step closer to ensuring that this excellent program continues to help those in need. I encourage the full Congress to move quickly to send me final legislation that I can sign.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor
July 16, 2008

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, 2008.

Today, Liberia continues its peaceful transition to a democratic order under the administration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The Government of Liberia has implemented reforms that have allowed for the removal of international sanctions on Liberian timber and diamonds, and Liberia is participating in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to ensure that its natural resources are used to benefit the people and country of Liberia, rather than to fuel conflict. Charles Taylor is standing trial in The Hague by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. However, stability in Liberia is still fragile.

The regulations implementing Executive Order 13348 clarify that the subject of this national emergency has been and remains limited to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor and specified other persons and not the country, citizens, Government, or Central Bank of Liberia.

The actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons—in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources, their trafficking in illegal arms, and their formation of irregular militia—continue to undermine Liberia's transition to democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States, and 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 16, 2008.

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

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Poland-United States Social Security Agreement
July 16, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and Poland on

Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative arrangement. The agreement was signed in Warsaw on April 2, 2008.

The United States-Poland Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the lost benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Poland Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Attached to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, a report on the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend to the Congress the United States-Poland Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

July 16, 2008.

Remarks at the Funeral Service for Former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow
July 17, 2008

Archbishop Wuerl; Father O'Connell; Mr. Vice President; members of the Cabinet and my administration; Members of Congress; distinguished guests; most importantly, the Snow family, Jill, Robbie, Kendall, Kristi, and Jim and other family members; former colleagues of Tony: Laura and I are privileged to join you today to pay our final respects to a cherished friend.

Tony Snow was a man of uncommon decency and compassion. He was a devoted husband, a proud and loving father, an adoring son, a beloved colleague, and a wonderful role model and friend.

In a life that was far too brief, he amassed a rare record of accomplishment. He applied his gifted mind to many fields: as a columnist, newspaper editor, TV anchor, radio host, and musician. He had the sometimes challenging distinction of working for two Presidents named Bush. As a speechwriter in my dad's administration, Tony tried to translate the President's policies into English. [*Laughter*] As a spokesman in my administration, Tony tried to translate my English into English. [*Laughter*]

Tony always gave me good and candid advice. He was a man of profound substance who loved ideas, held strong beliefs, and reveled in defending them. He took very seriously his duty to inform the public about what its Government was doing during historic times for our Nation.

In the White House briefing room, Tony worked to build a relationship of candor and trust with the press corps. On his first day at the podium, he told the gathered reporters this: "One of the reasons I took this job is not only because I believe in the President, but because, believe it or not, I want to work with you." Tony was the first working journalist to serve as the White House Press Secretary for nearly 30 years. He knew the job of a reporter was rigorous. He admired the profession and always treated it with respect. And the presence of so many members of the fourth estate here today attests to the admiration and respect that he earned.

Of course, Tony's adjustment from commentator to spokesman was not seamless. Ann Compton of ABC recently recalled that when you asked Tony a question, he would sometimes get going, and she would have to stop him and say, "Tony, wait, I asked what the President thought." [*Laughter*]

Tony brought a fierce and challenging intellect to his duties, and he displayed an engaging wit. When a reporter asked a rather labored question about Congress, Tony did not answer it. The persistent reporter pressed him: "Are you going to just evade that question?" With a smile, Tony quipped: "No, I'm going to laugh at it." [*Laughter*]

I believe the reason Tony was so good at his job is that he looked at the world in a joyful way. He was a proud patriot who believed in America's goodness and an optimist who knew America's possibilities. He believed strongly in the wisdom of the American people. And throughout his career, he took a special pride in being a vigorous and unapologetic defender of our men and women in uniform. He supported their missions, saw honor in their achievements, and found every possible opportunity to highlight their character and courage.

Tony Snow, the professional, is a hard act to follow. Tony Snow, the man, is simply irreplaceable. Everyone who worked with him quickly grew to love him. We will always remember his wry sense of humor and abundant goodness. We'll also remember he was just a lot of fun. After all, he played six different musical instruments and was a proud member of a band called Beats Working. He may be one of the few people in history to have jammed on the South Lawn of the White House and with Jethro Tull. [*Laughter*]

We remember Tony's thoughtfulness. No matter how busy he was, this was a man who put others first. He would go out of his way to ask about people's families. He would check in with friends whenever he heard they were ill. He'd reach out to others, sometimes strangers, who were struggling with cancer. Even when he was going through difficult chemotherapy sessions, he sent inspirational e-mails to a friend whose son was suffering from a serious illness.

We remember Tony's resilient spirit. When he received a second diagnosis of cancer, he did not turn to despair. He saw it as another challenge to tackle. He found comfort in the prayers he received from millions of Americans. As he told the graduates here at Catholic University last year: "Never underestimate the power of other people's love and prayer. They have incredible power. It's as if I've been carried on the shoulders of an entire army, and they made me weightless."

Most of all, we remember Tony's love of his family. There was no doubt for Tony Snow that his family was first. When Jill reached a milestone birthday, Tony had a huge celebration. He later said that he and Jill danced that night as if they were teenagers. He said he was the most fortunate man in the world to have shared love like

that. So today, Jill, our hearts are with you. And we thank you for giving Tony such a special life.

For Robbie, Kendall, and Kristi, you are in our thoughts and prayers as well. We thank you for sharing your dad with us. He talked about you all the time. He wanted nothing more than your happiness and success. You know, I used to call Tony on the weekends to get his advice. And invariably, I found him with you on the soccer field or at a swim meet or helping with your homework. He loved you a lot. Today I hope you know that we loved him a lot too.

I know it's hard to make sense of today. It is impossible to fully comprehend why such a good and vital man was taken from us so soon. But these are the great mysteries of life, and Tony knew as well as anyone that they're not ours to unveil.

The day Tony was born was also the day that many of his fellow Catholics pay tribute to Saint Justin. Justin was also a gifted thinker and writer and a powerful witness for the Christian faith. Because of his beliefs, he suffered many times of trial, and in the year 165 A.D., he was arrested. Before he received a sentence of death, he was asked, "If you are killed, do you suppose you will go to heaven?" Justin replied, "I do not suppose it, but I know and am fully persuaded of it."

Tony Snow knew that as well. That brought him great peace. When talking about the struggle he waged so admirably, he said that no matter how bad times may sometimes seem: "God doesn't promise tomorrow; He does promise eternity."

And so today we send this man of faith and character and joy on his final journey. Tony Snow has left the city of Washington for the city of God. May he find eternal rest in the arms of his Savior. And may the Author of all creation watch over his family and all those who loved him, admired him, and will always cherish his memory.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, DC; Father David M. O'Connell, president, Catholic University of America; and Jim Snow, father of Tony Snow. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following an Aerial Tour of Areas Damaged by Wildfires in Redding, California
July 17, 2008

The President. It's been my honor to travel with the Governor and the Senator and Forest Service folks and the fire folks here in California to see the fires. Couple of things I'd like to reflect on, and I asked the Governor to say a couple of words.

One, I always come to make sure that the Federal Government is coordinating closely with the State government. I know Governor Schwarzenegger well enough to tell you that if we weren't, he'd let me know.

Governor Arnold A. Schwarzenegger of California. That's right.

The President. And I want to thank those in the—who work for the Federal Government for their hard work and willingness to respond quickly and their service to our country.

Secondly, I want to say something to the firefighters. We had the privilege of going and meeting some of these smoke jumpers. These are unusual people who are very courageous, determined, and dedicated.

And I had this special sense there, when I was with them, the esprit de corps, and we want to thank them for their courage.

I want to thank all those who are helping making the effort work here. People are working long hours, and the citizens of this part of the world really, really thank you for it.

I want to thank the Boy Scouts. We've got three scouts here who are representative of a bunch of scouts who are working on the Healthy Forest Initiative and are helping make sure these firefighters are—don't have to deal with some of these hot blazes the way they have in the past.

And finally, I'd like to just let the people out here know that we're paying attention in Washington, DC, we care about you, and that we'll respond as best as we possibly can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at the Northern Operations Command Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Dianne Feinstein. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Schwarzenegger; and Mark Hendrick, Jake Wellman, and Alex Braden, members, Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996
July 17, 2008

Dear _____ :

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114)(the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 2008, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Thad Cochran, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; and David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks on Arrival in Houston, Texas
July 18, 2008

Congressional Candidate Pete Olson

It sure is good to be back in Houston, Texas. I am—I've come back to help Pete Olson win the congressional seat in the 22d Congressional District. I'm proud to support him. He's a Rice University graduate; he went to the University of Texas Law School; Navy fighter pilot; proud father, loyal husband, and a smart guy.

I—our country faces some big issues, one of which is to make sure we defend our homeland against coldblooded killers. I'm

convinced Congressman Olson understands that. We've got to make sure we keep our taxes low. And one thing is for certain: We need to explore for more oil and gas here at home. People are worried about the high gasoline prices. One way to take the pressure off gasoline prices is to make it clear that the United States is going to be active about finding crude oil and natural gas right here in our own hemisphere, in our own country. And I'm convinced we can do so in environmentally friendly ways.

No doubt in my mind, Pete Olson will make a fine United States Congressman, and I'm proud to be here to support him.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. at Ellington Field.

Statement on the 90th Birthday of Nelson R. Mandela
July 18, 2008

On behalf of the people of the United States, Laura and I extend congratulations to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela on his 90th birthday. I applaud the leadership he is providing on many vital causes in South Africa and around the world. Mr. Mandela is a great example of courage, hope, and the power of freedom.

The President's Radio Address
July 19, 2008

Good morning. This is a challenging time for families across our Nation. I know many families are worried about rising prices at the pump and declining home values. So this week, my administration took steps to help address both these challenges.

To help address the pressure on gasoline prices, my administration took action to clear the way for environmentally responsible offshore exploration of key parts of the Outer Continental Shelf or OCS. Experts believe that these areas of the OCS could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. So on Monday, I lifted an executive branch prohibition on exploration in these areas.

Unfortunately, a full month has passed since I called on Congress to lift a similar legislative ban, and Congress has done nothing. This means that the only thing now standing between the American people and the vast oil resources of the OCS is action from the United States Congress.

Bringing OCS resources on line will take time, and that means that the need for congressional action is urgent. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get these resources from the ocean floor to the gas pump. Democratic leaders need to show that they have finally heard the frustrations of the American people. They should match the action I've taken, repeal the congressional ban, and pass legislation to facilitate responsible offshore exploration.

In the short term, America's economy will continue to depend on oil, but in the long term, our economic future depends on promoting alternative energy technologies. So my administration has worked to expand the use of alternative fuels and

raise fuel efficiency standards. We're investing in new advanced batteries, plug-in hybrids, and hydrogen fuel cells. We're working to expand the use of clean, safe nuclear power, solar and wind power, and clean coal technology. With these steps, we're enhancing America's energy security.

To address challenges in the housing market, my administration announced steps this week to help increase confidence in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These two enterprises play a central role in our housing finance system, and we must ensure that they can continue providing access to mortgage credit during this period of stress in financial markets.

So Treasury Secretary Paulson has worked with Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke, the companies, and the Government regulators on a plan to strengthen these enterprises. I urge Congress to swiftly enact this plan into law. And I also urge Congress to pass legislation that strengthens the independent regulator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, modernizes the Federal Housing Administration, and allows State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to refinance subprime loans.

Despite the challenges we have faced, our economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Exports have continued to grow, productivity growth has remained strong, and while economic growth in the first quarter of this year was slower than we would have liked, it was growth nonetheless.

Thanks to the economic growth package we enacted, American families have more cash in their wallets. We now have delivered more than $91 billion in tax relief to more than 112 million American households this year. And in the coming months, we expect more Americans to take advantage of these rebates and inject new energy into our economy.

I have great confidence that our economy will pull through this difficult period, because I have great confidence in the boundless, innovative spirit of the American people. This is a nation that has faced tough challenges in the past and overcome them, and we will do so again. With sound policies in Washington and the ingenuity of our citizens, our economy will emerge from this period stronger and better than before.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:45 a.m. on July 18 in Tucson, AZ, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 18, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the 2008 United States Summer Olympic and Paralympic Teams

July 21, 2008

Thanks. Welcome to the Rose Garden. Please sit down. We are thrilled to welcome members of the—America's 2008 Summer Olympic and Paralympic teams to the White House. Welcome.

Today we honor skill and discipline. You're here because of the support of your coaches and your trainers and your families and your friends. They are proud of what you've accomplished, and so are the American people. And we're looking forward to rooting for you in Beijing.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for coming. I want to welcome the U.S. Olympic Committee staff, welcome the military personnel who

are with us, and welcome the rest of you. [*Laughter*]

In the coming days, around 600 American athletes will arrive in China for the 29th Olympic Games. You're going to compete in 30 different sports, ranging from soccer to sailing and from judo to gymnastics. Together, the talented men and women of Team USA will represent the great diversity of our country. You come from nearly every State. Some of you are young—the youngest teammate is a 15-year-old diver—and some of you are old—er. [*Laughter*] There's a 58-year-old sailor, which gives this 62-year-old mountain biker hope—[*laughter*]—that you may need me in Beijing. [*Laughter*]

Team USA shows the great power of sports to bring people together, and there's no sporting event that unites people like the Olympics. All Americans will rally behind you when you compete in Beijing.

We will be fascinated by the different stories behind each athlete. We will marvel at your hard work and your discipline; for example, the story of Matt Grevers. Matt seemed like a long shot to qualify for the U.S. team in the 100-meter backstroke. Because his parents are Dutch, the Netherlands tried to recruit Matt to swim for their team, offering him nearly a certain trip to Beijing. Instead, he chose to compete for the U.S. team and ended up qualifying in both the freestyle and the backstroke. And when he swims in Beijing, it will be as a proud citizen of the United States of America.

Or we think of the story of Lopez Lomong. When Lopez was just 6 years old, his family had to flee their village in Sudan when it was attacked by the Janjaweed. Lopez was separated from his family, who assumed he was dead. The little boy spent 3 years—3 days running from the militants and then 10 years in refugee camps. He finally made it to our country as a teenager, and his athletic career took off. Earlier this month, Lopez qualified for the Olympics in the 1500 meters. And now the boy who once had to run for his life is a man about to run for gold in Beijing, representing the United States of America.

And we think about Scott Winkler. Scott didn't spend his whole life training to become an elite athlete, but athletic competition helped give Scott his life back. Scott was an Army specialist serving in Iraq when an accident cost him the use of his legs. He found healing in the Wounded Warrior Project, in his work to mentor young people, and in wheelchair sports. Last month, a magnificent throw earned Scott an American record and a spot on the U.S. Paralympic team. And here's the way he put it: "I fought for this country, and now I'd love to win for this country in Beijing." Scott, we honor your service to our country, we thank you for coming today, and we'll be pulling for you.

America's Olympians have two very important things in common: God-given talent and an appreciation for the hard work required to achieve true excellence. The amazing athletic displays we see on our TV every 4 years result from the hard work that our athletes put in during the 4 years. For us, it's a moment; for them, it's a moment—a life of dedication.

Olympians don't rest on their laurels; they wear them. [*Laughter*] Being a champion takes character, yet also entails responsibility. In Beijing, you'll convey our Nation's most cherished values. As ambassadors of liberty, you will represent America's love for freedom and our regard for human rights and human dignity. You'll represent to other athletes and to the people of China. In Beijing, you'll also represent our Nation's character. As ambassadors of good will, you will be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. And by showing respect for your competitors, you will demonstrate America's respect for the world.

Laura and I look forward to joining you for the Olympics. I'm fired up to go. [*Laughter*] I can't wait to salute our athletes, and I can't wait to share in the joy

of your triumphs. And so today we send you off with congratulations on the success you have already achieved and on the accomplishments we know will be yours in Beijing.

May you and your teammates compete "swifter, higher, and stronger" in the games. And may God bless you as you represent our wonderful Nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Fatmir Sejdiu and Prime Minister Hashim Thaci of Kosovo

July 21, 2008

President Bush. It has been an honor to welcome the President and Prime Minister of an independent Kosovo to the Oval Office. I'm proud you all are here. I welcome you. I'm a strong supporter of Kosovo's independence; I'm against any partition of Kosovo. I believe strongly that the United Nations mission must be transferred to the EU as quickly as possible. I want to thank you very much for your support of minority rights, the full implementation of the Ahtisaari plan.

We discussed a variety of issues. We discussed the problems that Kosovo faces, its desire to be recognized by more nations around the world. I pledged that the United States would continue to work with those nations that have not recognized an independent Kosovo to convince them to do so as quickly as possible.

We talked about economics, education. And we talked about the transatlantic aspirations of both Kosovo and Serbia, which the United States supports in both cases.

I mentioned to both these leaders that they were sitting right below the portrait of George Washington, the Founder of a free United States. And I appreciate your courage; I appreciate your leadership. And I commit the United States to help you realize your dreams. Welcome.

President Sejdiu. It's an extraordinary occasion for us to be received by President Bush to convey to him all the aspirations and all the thanks of the Kosovo people—heartfelt thanks.

The Kosovo people have been following democracy—the principles of democracy and freedom. And the United States are—they are supporters. We guarantee the—President Bush that we will continue on this road, and at the same time to implement the Ahtisaari document.

Kosovo will be a country of democracy, a country of all its citizens. It will have a special respect for the minorities. We are very much interested to have good relations with the Republic of Serbia. Our progress will be with integration of NATO and EU.

Again, my heartfelt thanks, and God bless America.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Thaci. The meeting—today's meeting with President Bush not only reiterates the fact that we are closely connected with the United States, but will always be their trustful friend——

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Thaci. ——forever.

We have always trusted the United States and trusted the development of our country and that it will be to the benefit of the international development.

The Kosovo Government and the Kosovo people will always bow in deep respect for the United States and for the U.S. administration. It is a joint success story. We are

building a democratic Kosovo, affirmative action for the minorities. We'll develop economic—Kosovo economically. We'll have excellent relations with all our neighbors, and in the future, with Serbia.

As a sovereign and democratic country, we want to be part of NATO and part of the EU and have excellent relations with the United States. This is our pledge; this is our responsibility; this is our vision.

And thank you very much again.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Sejdiu and Prime Minister Thaci spoke in Albanian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Current and Former United States Olympic Athletes
July 21, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, Laura and I are thrilled to have you here. Welcome to the East Room of the White House. Chairman Ueberroth; Mr. Secretary—the—Veterans Affairs Secretary Peake; Members of the Congress; members of the 2008 United States Olympic and Paralympic teams; Mayor of Chicago, who will be hosting the 2016 Olympics; Ambassadors; supporters of the Olympics; distinguished guests: We're really glad you're here.

I also do want to recognize Seldom Scene. They're the bluegrass band that will be playing after dinner in the Rose Garden.

In a few weeks, the athletes here and others will participate in one of the greatest traditions in the world of sports. You're going to travel halfway around the globe, you'll step onto the field of competition, and you will represent the United States of America at the 2008 Olympics. And we're really excited. And not only we're excited, but people who have worn the USA uniform before are excited with you. And we welcome all the previous Olympians who are with us today, and I want to thank you for coming.

And you're not going to be alone in Beijing because you're going to be accompanied by the hopes and pride of millions of Americans. There's going to be a lot of folks in Beijing to watch you, including Laura and me. And I cannot wait to cheer you on. All the room have devoted years to training and preparation. You've developed the self-discipline that defines a champion. And you've proven yourself worthy of representing the Nation.

The tradition you're carrying on is long and it is noble. It turns out, when the first American Olympians traveled to the 1896 Games in Athens, Grover Cleveland lived here in the House. The Oval Office had yet to be built. In those 112 years that have passed, we have been reminded time and again that the Olympics are not just a chance to celebrate our greatest athletes, they're an opportunity to demonstrate the strength of the human spirit.

We were reminded of this truth in 1936, when Jesse Owens won four Gold Medals at the Berlin Olympics. We're reminded of the truth in 1972, when 80,000 spectators filled Munich's Olympic Stadium to honor 11 Israeli athletes and coaches killed by a cowardly act of terrorism. And we were reminded of this truth in 2002, when a tattered American flag recovered from the ruins of the World Trade Center entered the Olympic Stadium in Salt Lake City and displayed to the world the resolve and resilience of our country.

Those of you who will be competing in this year's games in Beijing are continuing a proud tradition of athletic excellence and a proud tradition of representing our country with honor and dignity.

We wish you luck. We wish you endurance. And we wish you victory. And now—[*applause*]. And before I ask Peter Ueberroth to join us, I would like to propose a toast to the Olympic athletes, past and present, and to the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Peter V. Ueberroth, chairman, U.S. Olympic Committee; and Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL.

Remarks at a Celebration of Colombian Independence Day
July 22, 2008

Gracias. Thank you. *Sientese. Gracias. Buenos dias. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca*. I am pleased to welcome you to the gathering of the 198th anniversary of Colombia's independence, which was celebrated last Sunday in grand style. Colombia and the United States have a long history of close ties. As many of you may know, Colombia supports [supplies] * America's primary source of energy, a resource that many Americans use, and we thank you for your coffee. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud that the Secretary of Agriculture is with us, Eddie Schafer; Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez; Chief of Staff Bolten; Director John Walters, the Office of Drug and—of National Drug Control Policy; other members of my administration who are concerned about making sure our relationship with Colombia is strong and vibrant.

I appreciate very much the Members of the Congress who have come today: Dreier, Herger, *y* Diaz-Balart. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for showing your solidarity with the people of Colombia.

I appreciate very much the *Embajadora de Colombia*—Ambassador Barco, thanks for coming. Carolina Renteria is with us, of the Cabinet—the President's Cabinet; welcome. Hector Morales, the Ambassador to—of the United States to the Organization of American States; Camilo Ospina, Ambassador of Colombia to the Organization of American States; Luis Moreno, proud Colombian citizen, president of the Inter-American Development Bank—*hola*, Luis. Representatives of LULAC, I am so proud of the resolution you recently passed. Thank you for your strong statement.

And after this brief *discurso*, I'll be welcoming Jorge Celedon *y* Jimmy Zambrano to entertain us with some songs.

Before we do, though, I want to—got some comments I'd like to make.

The anniversary of Colombia's independence falls only a couple weeks after America's Independence Day celebration. And that's appropriate, because our two nations have much in common. Like the United States, Colombia gained its independence when a band of patriots rallied together against a distant monarchy. Like the United States, Colombia was unified in its earliest days by a daring general who became the country's first President. And like the United States, Colombia built a new government around the rule of law and the notion that liberty was an unalienable right.

Our countries have shared a strong bond from the very beginning. In 1822, President James Monroe was one of the first heads of state to recognize Colombia's independence. And that same year, America became

* White House correction.

one of the first countries to establish a new diplomatic mission with that republic. From those strong foundations we built a lasting friendship on a mutual respect for liberty and a commitment to a more peaceful world.

This friendship has endured through good times and bad. Less than a decade ago, it looked as if peace and freedom were on retreat in Colombia. The country was in the grip of drug cartels and kidnapers. The Marxist terrorist network known as the FARC threatened to overthrow the democratically elected government. These were tough times for our friend. Our two nations launched an ambitious program that helped rescue Colombia from the brink of becoming a failed state.

Plan Colombia, which started under my predecessor, made it clear that the United States would support the Colombian Government's efforts to modernize its military, to fight terrorists and drug kingpins, to expand educational opportunities, and provide Colombians with alternatives to a life of terror and narcotrafficking. The Colombian Government has taken the lead on this bold plan, and the United States has been proud to help. And today, Plan Colombia is working.

One of the main reasons for Plan Colombia's success is the courage of Colombia's President, President Uribe. President Uribe has taken bold stands to defend our shared democratic values. He has been a strong and capable partner in fighting drugs and crime and terror. He's demonstrated that he is deeply committed to providing a better future for the people of his country.

Since President Uribe took office, the Colombian Government reports that homicides have dropped by 40 percent; kidnapings have dropped by more than 80 percent; terrorist attacks have dropped by more than 70 percent. Reforms to Colombia's criminal justice system have dramatically increased conviction rates. And last year, Colombia's economy saw its largest growth in nearly three decades. These are impressive achievements, and they're a testament to the determination of the Colombian people and their outstanding President.

Earlier this month, President Uribe's administration scored another impressive triumph. In a daring covert operation, members of the Colombian military infiltrated the FARC and convinced the terrorists to transfer 15 hostages, including 3 Americans, to a new location. Disguised Colombian agents arrived in a helicopter to carry out the transfer. And when the hostages lifted off, they were astonished to hear an Army officer say nine words they thought they would never hear: "We are the Colombia Army, and you are free."

Today, three Americans are back with their families because of the heroism of the Colombian allies. On behalf of our entire Nation, I welcome home Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell. And I thank the brave members of the Colombian military who rescued them.

The success of this rescue mission underscores the progress the Colombian Government has made. This progress is also evident in the hearts and minds of the Colombian people. On Sunday, more than a million Colombians marched in their nation's streets and called on FARC to release its remaining hostages and to stop practicing terror. They chanted a simple but powerful message: *Libertad*—that means freedom. [*Laughter*]

America should support this noble stand by the Colombian people. And the single most important step we can do so is for the United States Congress to approve a Colombia free trade agreement that our countries signed more than a year and a half ago.

Approving this agreement would strengthen our Nation's economy. Because of legislation that the Congress has passed—particularly the Andean Trade Preference Act—today, almost all Colombian exports enter the United States duty

free. The Congress made that decision. Yet our products exported to Colombia face tariffs of up to 35 percent, with rates even higher for some agricultural products. In other words, the current situation is one-sided. And the failure to approve the free trade agreement is hurting our businesses who want to sell their products into Colombia.

Tariffs imposed on U.S. exports to Colombia are estimated to have exceeded $1.1 billion while the trade agreement has awaited congressional approval. Every day that passes without the agreement's approval, that number only gets bigger. Congress has already voted to allow duty-free access to American markets for Colombian products. Now Congress should create a level playing field; they ought to give American workers and farmers the same access to Colombia's markets. And the way for them to do though—that is to approve the free trade agreement.

Opening markets is especially important during this time of economic uncertainty. Last year, exports accounted for more than 40 percent of America's total economic growth. Doesn't it make sense to continue that kind of growth during these economic uncertain times? I think it does. We ought to be working to open up new opportunities and new markets. More than 8,000 small and midsized American businesses export to Colombia. Approving this agreement will help these small businesses and middle-sized businesses grow their businesses and create high-paying jobs.

Approving this agreement is also an urgent national security priority. It makes good economic sense, but it's important for our national security that the Congress approve this agreement. While the FARC has seen its power reduced, the terrorists are still actively plotting against the Colombian Government. Colombia also faces a hostile and anti-American neighbor in Venezuela, where the regime has forged an alliance with Cuba, collaborated with FARC terrorist leaders, and provided sanctuary to FARC units. It is in America's interests to stand by Colombia in the face of this threat, and the best way to do so is for Congress to allow a vote on the Colombia free trade agreement.

President Uribe has stood strong against tyranny and terror. He's done everything we have asked him to do and more. He's told Members of Congress that approving this agreement is one of the most important steps that America can take to show its support for Colombia. Now the Colombian people are waiting to see what our Congress will do. To demonstrate America's good faith, to stand by our strong friend, to send a clear signal that we appreciate our ally, the United States Congress must approve this free trade agreement.

And once they do so, Congress should quickly approve our free trade agreements with Panama and South Korea. By doing so, they can reassure these countries that America will stand by its word, and that we will not abandon our friends.

It's been nearly two centuries since the United States of America and the nation of Colombia forged a friendship in the earliest days of our independence. In the years since, both of our nations have learned that the cost of maintaining a free society is remaining vigilant against the enemies of freedom. We believe that freedom is the birthright of all. We believe that it is the responsibility of free nations to support one another against those who would undermine our freedom.

The United States is committed to the security of Colombia; we're committed to defeating the forces of terror. Our countries can meet this challenge together. And through our partnership, we can usher in a new era of enhanced prosperity and peace in our neighborhood.

I want to thank you for coming. *Que Dios le bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. in the East Room of the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Colombia's Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson; and Director of National Planning Carolina Renteria of Colombia. He also referred to LULAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China
July 22, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export of 22 accelerometers for incorporation into railway geometry measurement systems and one 20-inch fluid energy mill for production of nutritional supplements is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 22, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 23.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Regarding Export Control Regulations
July 23, 2008

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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended, is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond August 17, 2008.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 23, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 24. The notice of July 23 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the North Atlantic Treaty Protocols on the Accession of Albania and Croatia
July 23, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Croatia. These Protocols were adopted at Brussels on July 9, 2008, and signed that day on behalf of the United States and the other Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State, which includes an overview of the Protocols.

NATO enlargement remains an historic success in advancing freedom, stability, and democracy in the Euro-Atlantic area. Albania and Croatia serve as two more examples of countries motivated by the prospect of NATO membership to advance significant and difficult political, economic, and military reforms. Their efforts and success demonstrate to other countries in the Balkans and beyond that NATO's door remains open to nations willing to shoulder the responsibilities of membership. I am pleased that, with the advice and consent of the Senate, these new democracies can soon join us as members of this great Alliance.

I ask the Senate to join me in advancing the cause of freedom and strengthening NATO by providing its prompt advice and consent to ratification of these Protocols of Accession. My Administration stands ready to assist you in any way we can in your deliberations.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 23, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 24.

Remarks on the President's Freedom Agenda
July 24, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Henrietta, thank you for the kind introduction. I am honored to join you all today to express America's solidarity with those who yearn for liberty around the world.

Captive Nations Week was first observed in 1959, at a time when Soviet communism seemed ascendant. Few people at that first gathering could have envisioned then what the—that the cold war would end the way it did, with the triumph of the shipyard workers in Poland, a Velvet Revolution in Prague, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union. Captive Nation Week is a chance for us to reflect on that remarkable history and to honor the brave dissidents and democracy activists who helped secure freedom's victory in the great ideological struggle of the 20th century.

Captive Nation Week is also a chance to reflect on the challenges we face in the 21st century: the challenge of the new ideological struggle against violent extremism. In this struggle, we can go forward with confidence. Free nations have faced determined enemies before and have prevailed, and we will prevail again.

I appreciate your leadership of USAID, Henrietta, and I want to thank all those who work for this very important agency.

I appreciate you being on the frontlines of compassion and decency and liberty.

I'm honored to be here with the Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez. The Cuban dissidents have no better friend than Carlos Gutierrez. Think about America: Carlos was raised—born in Cuba. Today, he sits in the Cabinet of the President of the United States. I love what our country represents. And, Carlos, I thank you for serving.

I'm proud to be here with Ambassador John Negroponte; he's the Deputy Secretary of the Department of State. Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England is with us. Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator; thanks for coming, Mark. Other members of the administration—a lot of members from the diplomatic corps; thank you for coming. I'm proud to be in your presence.

I believe America's a hope for the world because we are a nation that stands strongly for freedom. We believe that every man, woman, and child is given the gift of liberty by our Creator. That's a fundamental belief of the United States. This cherished belief has guided our leaders from America's earliest days.

We see this belief in George Washington's assertion that freedom's cause, as he put it—the cause is "the cause of mankind."

We see it in Lincoln's summoning of "the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere."

We see it in Wilson's pledge to make the world "safe for democracy" in World War I, and FDR's determination to make America the "arsenal of democracy in World War II."

We see it in Kennedy's promise to "pay any price . . . to assure the survival and success of liberty," and Ronald Reagan's call to "move toward a world in which all people are at last free to determine their own destiny."

Over the years, different Presidents, from different eras, different political parties, have acted to defend and advance the cause of liberty. These actions included bold policies such as the Lend-Lease Act, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, the creation of NATO and the Voice of America, support for freedom fighters in Central America, and the liberation of Grenada and Panama. Because we were steadfast in liberty's defense, the cause of freedom prevailed.

At the dawn of a new century, our belief in the universality of freedom is being challenged once again. We saw the challenge on September the 11th, 2001. On that day, terrorists, harbored by a tyrannical regime thousands of miles from America, brought death and destruction to our shores. We learned important lessons: To protect America, we must fight the enemy abroad so we don't have to face them here, and to protect America, we must defeat the ideology of hatred by spreading the hope of freedom.

For the past 7 years, this is exactly what we've done. Since 9/11, we recognized that we're at war, and we must stop new attacks before they happen, not wait until after they happen. So we're going after—we're giving our intelligence and law enforcement and homeland security professionals the tools they need to stop the terrorists before they strike again. We're transforming our military to meet the threats of a new century. We're putting pressure on the enemy. We've captured or killed thousands of terrorists, including most of those responsible for the September the 11th attacks. We've removed regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq that threatened our citizens and the peace in the world. And now we're helping the people of those two nations fight the terrorists who want to establish new safe havens from which to launch attacks on America and our friends.

In the long run, though, the best way to defeat the terrorists is to offer a hopeful alternative to their murderous ideology, and that alternative is based on human liberty.

We've seen a hopeful beginning for the cause of liberty at the start of the 21st

century. Over the last 7 years, we've seen the citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq emerge from tyranny to establish representative Governments. We've seen citizens in Georgia and Ukraine stand up for their right to free and fair elections. We've seen people in Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. We've seen strides toward democracy taken by nations such as Kuwait and Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, and Pakistan.

It's in our national interest to continue liberty's advance, because we know from history that the advance of freedom is necessary for our security and for world peace. Just think about World War II. During that conflict, Japan and Germany were enemies of America who invaded their neighbors and destabilized the world. And today, Japan and Germany are strong democracies and good friends and strong allies in the cause of peace.

During the cold war, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe were part of the Warsaw Pact alliance that was poised to attack Western Europe. Today, most of those nations are members of the NATO alliance, who are using their freedom to aid the rise of other young democracies. In these experiences, we have seen the transformative power of freedom. We've seen that free societies don't harbor terrorists or launch unprovoked attacks on their neighbors. Free societies are peaceful societies, and that is why the United States of America must continue to cause—to lead the cause of freedom.

Over the past 7 years, we've learned that leading the cause of freedom requires combating hopelessness in struggling nations. Combating hopelessness is in America's security interests, because the only way our enemies can recruit people to their dark ideology is to exploit distress and despair. Combating hopelessness is in our moral interests. Americans believe that to whom much is given, much is required. So the challenge for America in the years ahead is to continue to help people in struggling nations achieve freedom from corruption, freedom from disease, freedom from poverty, freedom from hunger, and freedom from tyranny.

In the years ahead, America must continue to use our foreign assistance to promote democracy and good government. Increased aid alone will not help nations overcome institutional challenges that hold entire societies back. To be effective, our aid must be targeted to encourage the development of free and accountable institutions.

In the past 7 years, we've more than doubled the Federal budget for democracy and governance and human rights programs. We've increased the budget for the National Endowment of Democracy more—by more than 150 percent since 2001. We've transformed the way we deliver aid by creating the Millennium Challenge Account, which is a new approach to foreign assistance, which offers support to developing nations that fight corruption and govern justly and open their economies and invest in the health and education of their people. The challenge for future Presidents and future Congresses will be to ensure that America's generosity remains tied to the promotion of transparency and accountability and prosperity.

In the years ahead, America must continue to promote free trade and open investment. Over the long term, trade and investment are the best ways to fight poverty and build strong and prosperous societies. Over the past 7 years, we expanded the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which is spreading prosperity by dramatically increasing trade between the United States and Africa; implemented free trade agreements with 11 countries, creating hope and opportunity for both our citizens and the citizens of these nations. We're striving to make this the year that the world completes an ambitious Doha trade agreement; we'll open up new markets for Americans' goods and services and help alleviate poverty around the world. The challenge

for future Presidents and future Congresses is to reject the false temptation of protectionism and keep the world open for trade.

In the years ahead, America must continue to fight against disease. Nations afflicted with debilitating public health crises cannot build strong and prosperous societies for their citizens. America's helping these nations replace disease and despair with healing and hope. We're working in 15 African nations to cut the number of malaria-related deaths in half. Our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, is supporting the treatment of more than 1.7 million people. And Congress will soon pass legislation to significantly expand this vital initiative. We're expanding our efforts to train health workers for the poorest countries, to treat key neglected tropical diseases, such as river blindness and hookworm. The challenge for future Presidents and future Congresses will be to continue this commitment so that we can lift the shadow of malaria and HIV/AIDS and other diseases once and for all.

In the years ahead, America must continue to lead the fight against global hunger. Nobel Prize winner Norman Borlaug once said, "You can't build peace on empty stomachs." Americans are answering the call to feed the hungry. This year, the United States has provided more than $1.8 billion in new funds to bolster global food security. We're the world's largest provider of food aid. But I strongly believe we must transform the way that our food aid is delivered. One innovative proposal is to purchase up to 25 percent of our food assistance directly from farmers in developing nations. This would help build up local agriculture; it will help break the cycle of famine. And I ask the United States Congress to approve this measure as soon as possible. The challenge for future Presidents and future Congresses will to—be to find still other innovative ways to alleviate hunger while promoting greater self-reliance in developing nations.

In the years ahead, America must continue to lead the cause of human rights. The Soviet dissident Andrei Amalrik once compared a tyrannical state to a soldier who holds a rifle on his enemy until his arms finally tire and the prisoner escapes. It's important we never strengthen the arms. The role of free nations like ours is to put pressure on the arms of the world's tyrants and strengthen the prisoners who are striving for their liberty.

For the past 7 years, we've spoken out against human rights abuses by tyrannical regimes like those in Iran, Sudan, and Syria and Zimbabwe. We've spoken candidly about human rights with nations with whom we've got good relations, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia and China. In keeping with this commitment, today I renew my call for the release of all prisoners of conscience around the world, including Ayman Nour of Egypt, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Oscar Biscet of Cuba, Riad Seif of Syria.

To ensure our Government continues to speak out for those who have no other voice, I recently issued a directive instructing all senior U.S. officials serving in undemocratic countries to maintain regular contact with political dissidents and democracy activists. The challenge for future Presidents and future Congresses is to ensure that America always stands with those seeking freedom and never hesitates to shine the light of conscience on abuses of human rights around the world.

As Henrietta mentioned, with us today are individuals who suffered terribly in the cause of freedom and whose stories inspire our country. And their examples of resilience and resolve should give us courage. I'm not going to mention all the ones I met, but I'd like to make—mention some.

First, we stand with Blanca Gonzalez. Her son Normando Hernandez Gonzalez remains in Castro's gulag for speaking the truth about the Cuban regime. *Bienvenido*.

We stand with Olga Kozulina. Her father Alexander Kozulin remains in prison in

Belarus for the "crime" of running for President. Welcome.

We stand with Manouchehr Mohammadi. Both he and his brother were viciously tortured by the Iranian authorities. He was the only one who survived and escaped. Welcome to America.

We stand with Cho Jin Hae, who witnessed several of her family members starve to death in North Korea. She herself was tortured by the Communist authorities.

I thank you all for coming. I thank the others who took time out of their day to meet me as well. I appreciate your testament to the universal desire for freedom.

This morning, I have a message for all those throughout the world who languish in tyranny. I know there are moments when it feels like you're alone in your struggle. And you're not alone; America hears you. Millions of our citizens stand with you, and hope still lives, even in bleak places and in dark moments.

Even now, change is stirring in places like Havana and Damascus and Tehran. The people of these nations dream of a free future, hope for a free future, and believe that a free future will come. And it will. May God be with them in their struggle. America always will be.

Thank you for letting me come by, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:26 a.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Henrietta H. Fore; Egyptian opposition politician Ayman Nour; Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma; Cuban dissident Oscar Elias Biscet Gonzalez; Syrian political activist Riad Seif; and former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing an Executive Order Blocking Property of Additional Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Zimbabwe
July 25, 2008

Today I have signed a new Executive order that expands our sanctions against the illegitimate Government of Zimbabwe. The new Executive order significantly enhances our ability to designate individuals in and entities connected to the Mugabe regime. Under the new Executive order, the Treasury Department will today designate several of these Government-controlled entities.

This action is a direct result of the Mugabe regime's continued politically motivated violence, disregarding calls from the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, and the United Nations to halt the attacks. The regime has also continued its ban against NGO activities that would provide assistance to the suffering and vulnerable people of Zimbabwe. No regime should ignore the will of its own people and calls from the international community without consequences.

Should ongoing talks in South Africa between Mugabe's regime and the Movement of Democratic Change result in a new government that reflects the will of the Zimbabwean people, the United States stands ready to provide a substantial assistance package, development aid, and normalization with international financial institutions.

In the meantime, I am reaffirming my commitment to support the suffering people of Zimbabwe, authorizing the use of up to $2.5 million from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance

Fund to assist Zimbabwean refugees and asylum seekers who have been displaced due to the ongoing violence in their country. We will also continue our efforts to provide food and health assistance as part of our commitment to help the people of Zimbabwe in their time of greatest need.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Blocking Property of Additional Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Zimbabwe
July 25, 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 (the "order") that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 of March 6, 2003, which was relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13391 of November 22, 2005, and takes additional steps with respect to that national emergency.

In Executive Order 13288, I found that the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions constituted an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States and declared a national emergency to deal with that threat. Executive Order 13288 blocks the property and interests in property of the persons listed in its Annex and permits the designation of any person or entity owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act directly or indirectly for or on behalf of, any person listed in that Annex.

Executive Order 13391 took additional steps to address the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 and amended the provisions of that earlier order. Executive Order 13391 blocks the property of the persons and entities listed in its Annex and permits the designation of any person or entity determined: to have engaged in actions or policies to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions; to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, such actions or policies or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13288, as amended; to be or have been an immediate family member of any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13288, as amended; or to be owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13288, as amended.

I have now determined that the continued actions and policies of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions, manifested most recently in the fundamentally undemocratic election held on June 27, 2008, to commit acts of violence and other human rights abuses against political opponents, and to engage in public corruption, including the misuse of public authority, warrant an expansion of the existing national emergency and the existing sanctions with respect to

Zimbabwe. The order supplements the designation criteria set forth in Executive Order 13288, as amended by Executive Order 13391, and provides additional criteria for designation of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State: to be a senior official of the Government of Zimbabwe; to be owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the Government of Zimbabwe or an official or officials of the Government of Zimbabwe; to be responsible for, or to have participated in, human rights abuses related to political repression in Zimbabwe; to be engaged in, or to have engaged in, activities facilitating public corruption by senior officials of the Government of Zimbabwe; or to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technical support for, or goods or services in support of, the Government of Zimbabwe, any senior official thereof, or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13288, Executive Order 13391, or the order.

The order also restates existing designation authority to block the property and interests in property of persons determined to have engaged in actions or policies to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions. Finally, the order restates existing derivative designation authority and adds derivative designation authority 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 owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, or to be a spouse or dependant child of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13288, Executive Order 13391, or the order.

In the order, I delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

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

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 25, 2008.

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

The President's Radio Address
July 26, 2008

Good morning. This week, Congress voted to expand a vital program that is saving lives across the developing world, the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, also known as PEPFAR. I thank Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle for working with my administration to pass this important bill, and I will be honored to sign it into law next week.

PEPFAR is the largest international health initiative dedicated to fighting a single disease in history, and it is a testament to the extraordinary compassion and generosity of the American people. When we first launched this program 5½ years ago, the scourge of HIV/AIDS had cast a shadow over the continent of Africa. Only 50,000 people with AIDS in sub-Sahara Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment. Today, PEPFAR is supporting treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region.

PEPFAR has allowed nearly 200,000 African babies to be born HIV-free, and this program is bringing hope to a continent in desperate need.

The new legislation that I will sign next week will build on this progress. We will expand access to lifesaving antiretroviral drugs. We will help prevent millions of new HIV infections from occurring. And we will also bolster our efforts to help developing nations combat other devastating diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.

Fighting disease is one part of America's larger commitment to help struggling nations build more hopeful futures of freedom. Over the past 7 years, we've learned how advancing the cause of freedom requires combating hopelessness. This is because the only way that the enemies of freedom can attract new recruits to their dark ideology is to exploit distress and despair. So as we help struggling nations achieve freedom from disease through programs like PEPFAR, we must also help them achieve freedom from corruption, freedom from poverty, freedom from hunger, and freedom from tyranny. And that is exactly what we're doing.

America is using our foreign assistance to promote democracy and good government. We have more than doubled the Federal budget for democracy and governance and human rights programs. And through the Millennium Challenge Account, we have transformed the way we deliver aid, so we can support developing nations that make important political and economic reforms.

America is promoting free trade and open investment. Over the long term, we know that trade and investment are the best ways to fight poverty and build strong and prosperous societies. So we have expanded the African Growth and Opportunity Act to increase trade between America and Africa. We have put 11 new free trade agreements into effect since 2001. And we're striving to make this the year that the world completes an ambitious Doha round agreement, so we can tear down barriers to trade and investment around the world.

America is leading the fight against global hunger. This year, the United States has provided more than $1.8 billion in new funds to bolster global food security. We are the world's largest provider of food aid, and we have proposed legislation that would transform the way we deliver this aid to promote greater self-reliance in developing nations.

America is leading the cause of human rights. Over the past 7 years, we've spoken out against human rights abuses by tyrannical regimes like those in Iran and Syria, Cuba, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. We've spoken candidly about human rights with nations with whom America has good relations, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia and China. And to ensure that our Nation continues to speak out for those who have no other voice, I recently issued a directive instructing all senior U.S. officials serving in undemocratic countries to maintain regular contact with political dissidents and democracy activists.

With all these steps, we're helping defeat the forces of violent extremism by offering a more hopeful vision of freedom. And as this vision takes hold in more nations around the world, America will be safer here at home.

Thank you for listening.

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

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Transfer of Defense Articles to Iraq
July 25, 2008

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 1228(f)(2) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Public Law 110–181 (NDAA), I hereby provide notice that the effective date of section 1228 of the NDAA is delayed for a period of 90 days.

I certify that it is in the vital interest of the United States to continue to provide defense articles to the Government of Iraq for this additional period of 90 days in order to develop and sustain the military and security forces of Iraq. Additional time is needed to review the export and transfer program for Iraq and to implement necessary measures to ensure compliance with the registration, monitoring, and recordkeeping requirements of section 1228. Halting the provision of defense articles to Iraq during this period of review and implementation would be contrary to the national security of the United States.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Carl Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Christopher J. Dodd, chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Ike Skelton, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 28.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani of Pakistan
July 28, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. It's been a very constructive morning. We've had a good meeting in the Oval Office. And then I'm going to have lunch with the Prime Minister here in the main White House. And that's fitting. After all, Pakistan is a strong ally and a vibrant democracy. And the United States supports the democracy and supports the sovereignty of Pakistan.

We talked about areas of concern. Of course, we're going to spend a lot of time on the economy, about how the United States and Pakistan can continue to cooperate to—for economic benefits for all the people of Pakistan and for our own country, for that matter. And of course, we talked about the common threat we face: extremists who are very dangerous people. We talked about the need for us to make sure that their Afghan border is secure as best as possible. Pakistan's made a very strong commitment to that. I told the Prime Minister that the United States is committed to helping the Afghan democracy succeed, which is in Pakistan's interest. After all, the Prime Minister wants there to be a peaceful country on his border.

The U.S., I repeat, respects the sovereignty of this democracy. And we also appreciate the Prime Minister's strong words against the extremists and terrorists who not only would do us harm, but have harmed people inside Pakistan.

So we welcome you here, Mr. Prime Minister, and looking forward to having a good lunch with you after your statement.

Prime Minister Gilani. Thank you so much. Now?

President Bush. Please, yes. Absolutely.

Prime Minister Gilani. First of all, I want to thank Mr. President Bush for inviting me to United States, and this is my second meeting with the President. Previously, I met Mr. President in Sharm el-Sheikh, and today again I am meeting Mr. President.

And I appreciate what he has said about supporting democracy, supporting sovereignty, looking after the interests and on a lot of other areas we are—there's a cooperation between us—we are both—Pakistan, United States have a very cordial relations and bilateral relations. And this is not of today; this is of—for over 60 years since the creation of Pakistan. We were inspired with their slogan of liberty and self-determination. And now we want to further improve our relations.

We are committed to fight against those extremists and terrorists who are destroying and making the world not safe. And that is—this is our own war; this is a war which is against Pakistan. And we'll fight for our own part. And that is because I have lost my own leader, Benazir Bhutto, because of the militants, and therefore, I assure United States and the people of United States that majority of the people of Pakistan and the people of those areas, the NWFP and FATA, they are the patriarchs, the loyalists. They want the peace in the world, and they want to cooperate. And there are few militants; they are handpicked people, militants, who are disturbing this peace. And I assured Mr. President we'll work together for democracy and for the prosperity and peace of the world.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. Prime Minister Gilani referred to former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who was killed in a suicide attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on December 27, 2007; and NWFP, the North-West Frontier Province, and FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, of Pakistan.

Joint Statement by the United States of America and Pakistan on Strategic Partnership

July 28, 2008

President George W. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani to Washington today for his first visit to the United States as the leader of Pakistan's democratically elected civilian government. The President and Prime Minister reaffirmed their commitment to the long-term Strategic Partnership between the United States and Pakistan, which is based on shared values and holds immense potential for the enduring peace, security, stability, freedom, and prosperity of Pakistan and of the region. The President affirmed his support for Pakistan's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity. The two leaders agreed that the focus of the broad-based Pakistan-U.S. relationship should remain on ensuring the well being of the people by assisting Pakistan to implement its national development agenda in a comprehensive manner. Pakistan and the United States will work together to eliminate the threat of extremism, build strong democratic institutions, modernize education, and increase economic growth and opportunity.

President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani reaffirmed their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They acknowledged that terrorism and violent extremism pose a common threat to Pakistan, the United States, and the international community. The two leaders pledged to work together to address this threat and to deny any space to militants or terrorists through increased cooperation. The President recognized the sacrifices the people of Pakistan and the Pakistani security forces have made in the ongoing fight. The President and Prime Minister reiterated that success in countering terrorism will require a comprehensive strategy, including increased security, improved governance, and opportunity for socio-economic development for the people especially in the less developed regions of Pakistan. The President and the Prime Minister expressed deep sympathy for the families of those who have fallen victim to suicide and other terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for U.S. efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. The United States is dedicated to providing Pakistan with the support and tools it needs to lead the fight against terrorism.

The two leaders also committed to increased bilateral economic cooperation to include expanded trade, an improved investment climate, promoting cooperation in the public and private sectors, and agreed to work together to ensure food and energy security as well as facilitate investment in infrastructure and social sectors in Pakistan.

In reaffirming the Strategic Partnership, President Bush and Prime Minister Gilani attached importance to the next round of the Strategic Dialogue, which will be co-chaired by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and Pakistan's Foreign Minister, in September 2008 and regularly thereafter to review issues of mutual interest. In addition, the two leaders committed both countries to undertake the following steps in development, counterterrorism, economic, and regional cooperation:

Focus on the needs of the Pakistani people: Food, Health, Education, Energy, and Democratic Governance

- The two leaders welcomed recent efforts in the U.S. Congress to extend the United States' assistance commitment to Pakistan to help address Pakistan's most urgent needs, including education, agriculture, and energy. The President will continue to work with Congress to ensure the continued support of the United States to Pakistan over the long term.
- The two leaders agreed to institute a separate track for agricultural cooperation under the Strategic Dialogue.
- The United States will provide $115.5 million in food security assistance to Pakistan, including $42.5 million over the next 9 months.
- The United States will assist with disease control activities in Pakistan to augment the Prime Minister's initiative to combat the spread of hepatitis and other infectious diseases.
- The United States highlighted its $30 million Pakistan Energy Development program focused on improving power availability, affordability, and efficiency.
- The United States and Pakistan will hold the next round of the U.S.-Pakistan Energy Dialogue this fall to help Pakistan meet its vast and growing energy needs.
- The two leaders agreed to hold the next round of the U.S.-Pakistan Education Dialogue later this year.
- The two leaders agreed to continue and enhance robust collaboration in science and technology under the successful bilateral Science and Technology Framework Agreement.

- The United States highlighted its support for democracy building and improved governance through project funding.

Expand Bilateral Trade and Improve the Business Climate

- The two leaders renewed a joint commitment to pursue steps to establish Reconstruction Opportunity Zones that will expand trade opportunities in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The United States and Pakistan will work together toward a goal of establishing direct non-stop flights between the two countries before the end of 2008, expanding people-to-people ties and improving the investment climate to the benefit of the people of both countries.
- The United States and Pakistan agree to convene officials promptly to review the status of bilateral investment treaty negotiations.
- The two countries will reconvene the Joint Council under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in September 2008.
- The U.S.-Pakistan Economic Dialogue will be held on August 11 in Islamabad.

Expand Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation

- The two leaders agreed to strengthen the long-term security relationship with a view to enhancing Pakistan's defense capabilities, especially in the field of counterterrorism, through training and equipment.
- Reconvene the bilateral Defense Consultative Group this fall with a renewed focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.
- Renew cooperative efforts to root out extremism along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, including the North-West Frontier Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Balochistan.
- Expand cooperation between the United States and the Pakistani Frontier Corps and other Pakistani security forces on the front lines in the fight against violent extremism.
- Focus U.S. security assistance on efforts to enhance the counterterrorism capability of Pakistan's military forces.

Work Together to Enhance Regional Peace, Security, and Stability

- Strengthen the Tripartite Commission between the International Security Assistance Force, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- Support the efforts of Pakistan and Afghanistan to hold the next joint jirga this fall.
- Hold the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference in Islamabad this fall.
- Encourage the Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue process to reduce tensions, build trust, and resolve all outstanding issues.

Prime Minister Gilani thanked President Bush and the people of the United States for the hospitality accorded to him, Mrs. Gilani, and the members of the Prime Ministerial delegation during their stay in the United States.

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

Statement on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact
July 28, 2008

I congratulate the Governors and legislatures of the eight States that border the Great Lakes on their conclusion of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. Made in the spirit of cooperative conservation, this compact is the result of many years of close coordination and consensus building that resulted in the compact's approval by the eight Great Lakes States and two Canadian Provinces.

The Great Lakes are a national treasure. They were vital to the exploration of this continent and have long supported commerce. Today, more than 33 million people live in the States and Provinces bordering the lakes, and the lakes provide an efficient means to transport food and other commodities destined for global markets. The Great Lakes provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities and serve as a source of drinking water for more than 30 million people.

The compact will ensure sustainable use and responsible management of waters from the Great Lakes Basin and preserve the Great Lakes for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

I strongly urge Congress to provide rapid approval of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Amendment for the Department of the Interior
July 28, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendment to the FY 2009 Budget for the Department of the Interior. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2009 Budget would not be affected by this amendment.

The details of this proposal are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks on Signing the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2008 and the Renewal of Import Restrictions Contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003
July 29, 2008

Laura and I are welcome—are pleased to welcome members of the Lantos family. Mrs. Lantos, thanks for joining us; and Members of Congress who care deeply about democracy in Burma. I'm going to

sign a piece of legislation and a joint resolution that will continue some sanctions, impose new sanctions, and extend import restrictions on the Burmese regime. Our message is, the United States believes in democracy and freedom.

Not only will I sign the joint resolution, I'm also looking forward to signing the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE Act of 2008.

Thank you all for joining us. Thank you for your caring.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Annette Lantos, widow of Rep. Thomas P. Lantos, who died on February 11. H.R. 3890, approved July 29, was assigned Public Law No. 110–286; H.J. Res. 93, also approved July 29, was assigned Public Law No. 110–287.

Remarks at Lincoln Electric Company in Euclid, Ohio
July 29, 2008

Thank you all. George D.—[*laughter*]—introduces George W.—[*laughter*]—at Lincoln Welding. Thanks. I'm proud to be here with "the welding experts."

I'm—I want to talk a little bit about our economy and the importance of energy, but before I do so, I do want to thank you all for your hospitality. I want to thank the workers here for their hard work. This is a productive site. This is a site that proves with good investment and good education and a company that treats its workers well, that America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere. That's what this country—[*applause*].

I appreciate Mayor Cervenik for being here from Euclid. Thanks for coming, Mr. Mayor; I appreciate you coming. I oftentimes say you have a tougher job than I do; you have to fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you coming.

Two Members of the United States Congress, Steve LaTourette and Pat Tiberi, right here from the State of Ohio, have joined us. Thank you all for coming; proud you're here.

Laura sends her best—mother of the bride and a great First Lady. I'm sorry John is not with us; he is in Colombia. Isn't that interesting? He's in Colombia trying to make sure that Lincoln Welding can sell more products down there. One of the issues that in a time of economic uncertainty—and these are uncertain times, no question about it. They're uncertain because you're paying high prices at the gas pump. They're uncertain because you're reading the newspapers about the housing issue. They're uncertain times.

And during uncertain times, we ought to be playing to our strengths and implementing good, commonsense policy. Well, one of our strengths is right here in this company. You're good at making a product that people want. People want it here in the United States of America, and when people are introduced to it around the world, they want it as well.

So John is down there trying to get new business. The problem is that our Government policy relative to a country like Colombia is backwards. I don't know if you know this or not, but most of the goods produced in Colombia come to our country duty free. The United States Congress, as a result of what is called the Andean Trade Preference Act, has passed law that said they can sell into our markets, which, frankly, is good for our consumers. The more product you get to choose from, the better off you are. On the other hand, products going into Colombia from the

United States face a duty, a tariff, a tax. In other words, the products made in the United States going into that market cost more because of taxes imposed by the Colombian Government.

I think it makes sense for the United States Congress to level the playing field, to say, we treat you one way; you treat us another way. So we've negotiated a treaty that said with Colombia, all we want to do is be treated fairly in the United States of America. We don't want anything special. We don't think you ought to go overboard, just treat us the way we treat you. Most of your products come in duty free. We want our products, like those manufactured right here in Euclid, Ohio, going into that Colombia market without a special tax on it.

And Congress needs to pass that trade bill. It would be good for workers right here in this plant and good for workers all across America. This Government ought to be working to make it easier for you to sell products. Because if you sell a product, you got people working here in steady jobs.

But I really want to talk to you about energy. I understand what it means to our families and our small businesses and people right here in this room to be paying high energy prices, high gasoline prices, like a tax. I've worked hard to keep your taxes low. Our energy policy hasn't done a very good job of keeping your gasoline prices low, and therefore, it's like paying a tax. My whole philosophy of government, by the way, is, yes, we've obviously got some needs in Washington, DC. The primary one is to make sure those who wear the uniform have the full support of the Government of the United States of America.

But I think it makes sense for government to trust you with your money. See, I'd rather have you spending your money than the Government spending your money. I trust—[*applause*]. I'd rather you figuring out what's best for your families rather than us telling you what's best for your families. And so therefore, I really have worked hard to keep your taxes low at the Federal level. I can't help it at the State level or local level, but I can help you at the Federal level. The problem is, gasoline prices have negated a lot of those tax cuts. And so it's—our economy is facing uncertainty. And I want to talk to you about what we could do about high energy prices.

First, let me tell you: There's no such thing as a quick fix. Somebody said, "What are you going to do about gasoline prices?" I said, "If I had the magic wand, I'd wave it." It took us a while to get to this position, and it's going to take us a while to get out of it.

First thing, obviously, that can make a difference is conservation. What's interesting, however, is that people are plenty wise about how to conserve. You're making the choices about whether you want to drive a little extra more or not drive extra more. It's the collective wisdom, again, of the American people that really do set the best conservation measures.

But the Government can help by working on higher fuel efficiency standards for automobiles, for example, so that as time goes on, automobiles will have better fuel efficiency. You'll get more gallons—miles per gallon than you normally would.

It's interesting to note that many of our consumers, however, have already made the decision to switch away from the automobiles, like SUVs, that consume a lot of gasoline to smaller cars. Why? Because you're smart. You know how to handle your own business. So conservation helps, and the Government can help promote good conservation.

The reason why your gasoline prices are high is because the demand for oil is greater than the supply of oil. The worldwide demand for oil has increased faster than the supplies of oil. Why? Well, one reason why is because there's some new emerging economies. China, for example, billions of people; more and more people are being

able to afford cars. So the demand for crude oil is going up. Same in India. I don't know if you know this or not, but there's 350 million people in India who are middle class citizens. That's more than all America total. So these economies are beginning to grow, and there's more demand.

The feedstock for gasoline is oil. So when you hear "my gasoline prices are going up," you got to understand the main reason why is because oil prices are going up. And the reason why—again, I want to repeat to you—is that the global demand for oil is growing faster than the global supply for oil. So it seems like we ought to be figuring out how to find more oil here in the United States, if we're worried about—[*applause*]. If we're worried about your gasoline price and recognize that it's high because of the price of crude oil, and it's possible to find more oil right here in the United States so we're not shipping our money overseas, doesn't it make sense to try to find that oil? I think it does. And here are some places where we can.

One place where there is a—the experts say is a bountiful supply of oil, perhaps as much as 10 years worth at current consumption rates, is in the Outer Continental Shelf. That would be offshore America. One interesting fact that I want you to think about is how technology has changed, how we can find oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways. Of all people who know that, it's you. That's part of your business, is to make products that make it easier to move oil and gas from remote parts of the world under challenging conditions to markets in an environmentally friendly way. That's what you do. And by the way, you do a really good job of it.

The American people must understand that new technologies make it easier to protect coral reefs, for example, when we drill offshore, that new technologies enable us to explore for oil and gas in ways that was not possible 20 years ago. You can have one platform and directionally drill from that platform. So I signed an Executive order that said, why don't we explore for oil and gas offshore. If we've got a problem with not having enough oil, let's go after some oil right here in the United States of America in environmentally friendly ways.

There was an Executive order blocking that; I signed an Executive order that unblocked it. Now it's up to the United States Congress to make a decision as to whether or not you're going to continue to face high gasoline prices at the pump or whether or not the United States ought to send a clear signal to the world: We're tired of being dependent on oil from overseas. Let's find it right here in the United States of America.

I wish people could see the products you make here. What's interesting is that not only would we send a clear signal that we're going to do our part of increasing supply, but there's also a direct correlation between investment and jobs. How do I know? I just saw a welding machine—actually, I was the guy that punched the button—[*laughter*]—on the welding machine that is making state-of-the-art pipeline equipment to be able to move natural gas to market. The more active we are here in the United States to find our own oil reserves, the more business companies like yours will get.

So now there's a double—there's a dividend: more oil here in the United States, which takes pressure off gasoline prices and continuing good jobs in companies like Lincoln Electric.

There are other things we can be doing as well. There's a lot of oil shale in the western part of the—our country, a lot. And there's new technologies that are now emerging that will make that oil shale, hopefully, become productive for increased crude oil here. And yet those lands have been taken off the exploration potential by U.S. law; Congress needs to change it.

We got an energy problem here. It's not the lack of energy; it's because there's laws

that prohibit us from finding that energy or getting that energy. In Alaska, in a very small part of that grand State, is the potential to find a lot of oil and gas. And we can do it in a way that does not damage the caribou herds or the tundra. And yet the Congress refuses to allow for there to be exploration in this part of the world. And they need to change the law. If they're really concerned about the gasoline prices you're paying, they need to change the law.

Do you know that we have not built a new refinery in the United States of America since the early 1970s? Do you also know that we get a lot of our refined product, gasoline, from overseas? It doesn't make sense to me for the Congress not to allow for refineries to be built on abandoned military bases and to make it easier to build those refineries without a bunch of unnecessary regulations so we can get more gasoline into the market so as to take pressure off price.

So here's some commonsense solutions to the problem you're facing. People say, "Well, it's not going to instantly change the problem." You're right, it's not. There's no magic wand. But it will certainly send a clear signal to the markets that the United States is no longer going to sit on the sideline, that we're going to use our new technologies to find hydrocarbons right here in the continental United States. And guess who's going to make the products to help move that product to market? You are. And you're going to be better off for it, and so is the United States of America.

I believe we're in a transition period from an era of hydrocarbons to new technologies. And the question is, how painful will it be for the American consumer?

But make no mistake about it, we are headed for a new era. The United States of America needs to understand that if we truly are concerned about the environment and want to make sure we continue to grow our economy, we've got to expand nuclear power. And guess who makes a lot of the products that go into nuclear power plants? You do. So when you hear me talking about making sure that we have electricity at reasonable price, just keep in mind that there are technologies available that make it easy for me to say I am confident nuclear power is safe, because I understand that the products that go into a nuclear power plant are made by some of the finest welders in the United States of America.

There's a lot of wind—they ought to have the biggest turbine farm in Washington, DC, where there's not only a lot of wind, there's a lot of hot air. [*Laughter*]

Part of the mix has got to be solar and wind power—part of the mix. But you hear somebody say, "Oh man, all we need is a bunch of windmills to make us run our economy"; they just don't understand the complexity of the American economy. But we can use wind power effectively. And you know the new technologies that have gone into wind turbines. You're actually making some here in Lincoln.

And then there's going to be different ways—and coal, by the way. We got about, I don't know, 250, 300 years worth of coal. Seems like to me we ought to be figuring out how to use it and be—protect our economy. That's why I'm a big supporter of clean coal technologies.

I believe you're going to be using batteries in your automobiles here within a reasonable period of time. And your automobile is not going to have to look like a golf cart. [*Laughter*] Battery technology is coming on line. That'll make it easier for us to say we're doing our part to conserve, that we're not using as much oil that we—as we used to.

I'm a big believer in having our farmers grow crops that can be converted into fuel. And I'd rather be paying U.S. farmers for fuel than people overseas for our fuel. So that's why I'm a big believer in ethanol. I also understand the strain that's putting on our chicken raisers and hog raisers; the strain that—being the price of corn. And therefore, we're spending a lot of your

money—I think it's well spent—to find cellulosic ethanol possibilities. That means wood—that's a fancy word for wood chips or switchgrasses—all aiming—my point to you is, is that we're heading into a new era.

There's not a single solution to make us less dependent on oil. There are a lot of solutions. And I fully believe that when my grandchildren are driving cars—and by the way, we've taken one step in that direction, called marriage—[*laughter*]—that there will be a whole different energy mix. The Government spends billions of dollars to encourage research and development toward that end. The private sector is spending billions of dollars toward research to that end.

But I'm here to talk about the meantime, the interim, the right now. And if the United States of America cares about how much gasoline—the price of gasoline, then we better get after finding some supplies of oil and gas. And here are three practical ways to do so, and I'm calling on the Democrat leadership in the United States Congress to pass good legislation on behalf of the consumers of the United States of America.

And so that's why I've come. It's also to thank you. I appreciate your patriotism; I appreciate your hard work; I appreciate you taking care of your families.

And now I'd like to answer some questions, if you have any. After 7½ years, if I can't figure out how to dodge them, I shouldn't—[*laughter*]. If you don't have any questions, I can tell you a lot of interesting stories. [*Laughter*]

Okay, I'll tell you a story. I was in Bucharest, Romania. There were 200 and—about 200,000-plus people there in a town square that had come to hear the President of the United States say these words: "An attack on one is an attack on all." That happens to be Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. This country had emerged from communism, had been admitted into NATO, and they were anxious to see the President basically say, "We're allies and we'll protect each other from harm."

This is a square that was a pretty dimly lit square because it was raining. But there was one balcony that was lit very brightly, and so I asked the guy walking out there, I said, "What's that balcony?" He said, "That's the balcony where the tyrant Ceausescu had given his last speech." And he and he wife were awful people; they were true tyrants. And it was lit because people always want to remember the difference between freedom and tyranny. So it's kind of a memorial to that last speech.

President Iliescu introduced me; I walk up to the podium, and a full rainbow appears. I'm talking full-spectrum rainbow. And it was a startling moment, so I turned back to Laura, who was sitting behind me there, and I said, "Look at that." Of course, 200,000 heads whip around to look at it too. I was so amazed that my opening comment of the speech—I ad-libbed—was, "God is smiling on Bucharest," because the rainbow ended exactly behind the balcony where the tyrant had given his last speech.

Now, you can look at that any way you want to look at it. I'll tell you how I looked at it. I looked at it as a sign that freedom is beautiful, that freedom brings peace, that freedom is not ours alone, that freedom is universal.

And it's in the interest of the world and the interest of the United States of America to fight and try to alleviate the tyranny of disease. And that's why tomorrow I'm going to sign a bill that commits the United States to dealing with HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa and dealing with malaria. There's nothing more hopeless than somebody seeing their baby die because of a mosquito bite.

The tyranny of government—if you believe in the universality of freedom like I do, then you shouldn't be surprised that when given a chance, people from all walks of life will do the hard work necessary to live in a free society.

We're in an ideological conflict today between people who use murder as a weapon to impose their ideology versus those of us who believe in human rights and human dignity and the right for anybody to worship any way they see fit. And the way to defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. And there's no more hopeful ideology than one that's based upon liberty.

We're a blessed nation because we're a free nation. We're a blessed nation because we're a nation that understands there are responsibilities in this world. So I saw that rainbow, and I said, I'm the fortunate—most fortunate man to be the President of this fabulous country. And to the best of my ability, I will protect us from harm, and the long way to do so is to help others realize the blessings of living under liberty.

It's a huge honor to be here with you today. It's a huge honor to represent our country. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:46 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to George D. Blankenship, vice president, Cleveland operations, Lincoln Electric Company; Mayor Bill Cervenik of Euclid, OH; Rep. John A. Boehner; and former President Ion Iliescu of Romania. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting
July 30, 2008

Good morning. I just finished a good Cabinet meeting, and I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for serving our country. We discussed the challenges facing our economy, amongst other things, and we spent time on the high gasoline prices. Every one of our citizens who drives to work or runs a small business is feeling the squeeze of rising prices at the pump, and they expect their elected leaders in Washington to take some commonsense action.

To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to lift the legislative ban that prevents offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders in Congress have refused to allow a vote. And now Congress is about to leave for its August recess without taking any action on this vital priority for the American people.

There is now a growing agreement across our country that the Government should permit the exploration and development of these offshore oil resources.

Exploration of the OCS would increase our supply of oil here at home. Experts believe that currently restricted areas of the OCS could eventually produce up to about 18 billion barrels of oil; that's almost 10 years worth of America's current oil production.

Exploration of the OCS would also create jobs for our citizens. Yesterday I visited the Lincoln Electric Company in Cleveland, Ohio. It's a business that produces welding products used for offshore exploration. If Congress were to permit exploration of the OCS, it would mean jobs at businesses such as these. American drivers on—are counting on Congress to lift the ban on offshore exploration, and so are American workers.

Bringing OCS resources on line is going to take time, and that means that the need for congressional action is urgent. So I've lifted the executive restrictions on offshore

exploration. I've done my part. And that means the only thing now—standing now between the American people and these vast oil resources is the United States Congress. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get this oil from the ocean floor to your gas tank.

Some Members of Congress say they object to exploration of the OCS, but they are in favor of other actions, such as taking oil out of the Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Well, if you agree that we need more oil, it makes no sense to say you're for draining our Nation's limited strategic reserve but against tapping into the vast resources of the Outer Continental Shelf.

America needs to take every reasonable and responsible step we can do to reduce pressure on gasoline and energy prices. That's precisely what my administration is doing. We're working to expand domestic oil production. And at the same time, we're working to speed the development of new clean and alternative energy resources. We're raising fuel efficiency standards, expanding the use of alternative fuels, and investing in next-generation fuels such as cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel. We're investing in new advanced batteries and plug-in hybrids and hydrogen fuel cells. We're working to expand the use of clean, safe nuclear power, solar and wind power, and clean coal technology. With these steps, we're enhancing America's energy security and increasing the supply of clean, safe energy made right here in the United States of America.

The time for action is now. This is a difficult period for millions of American families. Every extra dollar they have to spend because of high gas prices is one less dollar they can use to put food on the table or to pay the rent or meet their mortgages. The American people are rightly frustrated by the failure of Democratic leaders in Congress to enact commonsense solutions, like the development of the oil resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

There are now just a couple of days left before Congress leaves for its August recess. Legislation to open up this offshore exploration is pending in both the House and the Senate, and all the Democratic leaders have to do is to allow a vote. They should not leave Washington without doing so.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008
July 30, 2008

Thank you. Thank you for the kind introduction. [*Laughter*] And welcome to the White House for what has got to be an historic and joyous day.

I am about to sign the United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, and I'm looking forward to it. [*Laughter*] This act is—it's going to save millions of people, and it's—honors the memory of two great leaders, Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde. And we're proud members of their families are here, and I'm looking forward to you all joining us when we sign the bill.

This bill embodies the extraordinary compassion of the American people. We are a compassionate nation, and that's what this bill says loud and clear. I want to thank everybody who's helped make this bill possible.

I particularly want to thank the Members of the House and the Senate who have joined us. I know you're anxious to see the bill signed, so I'm not going to try to name every single name. But I do want to thank Joe Biden and Dick Lugar from the United States Senate. These men worked together in an incredibly constructive way to get the bill moving, and I want to thank you.

Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, worked very hard to get this bill going as well. And all the other Members, thank you for coming; I'm proud you all are here.

I want to thank Mike Leavitt; John Negroponte; Henrietta Fore; Mark Dybul, who happens to be the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. He's done such a fine job, he ended up on the stage for the bill signing ceremony.

And the bald-headed guy on the end—[*laughter*]—not you, Biden, but—[*laughter*]—Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer, who is the U.S. Malaria Coordinator—thank you for coming.

Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director—appreciate you coming, Peter. Rajat Gupta is the chairman of the board of the Global Fund. Glad you're here, Rajat. Thank you both for coming. Members of the diplomatic corps, we're proud to have you here. Congressional and agency staff who worked so hard on this bill, thank you for doing it.

African Children's Choir, which we'll hear soon, I think you'll find them to be as angelic as I did. I too want to thank all the supporters of PEPFAR. Thank you for your diligence and your care and your hard work.

Just a few years ago, HIV/AIDS raged out of control. An entire continent was caught in the pandemic's merciless grip. In countries like Botswana, AIDS had cut the average life expectancy by 15 years. One newspaper wrote, "The AIDS pandemic is destined to rival the Black Death of the Middle Ages as a global horror."

Well, today, the outlook is really different. HIV/AIDS is still one of the world's greatest humanitarian challenges, no question about it, but it is a challenge we're meeting. And a lot of it has to do with PEPFAR.

PEPFAR is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history. It is distinguished from past relief efforts by a few key principles. The emergency plan demands specific, measurable targets for progress. It puts local partners in the lead, because they know the needs of their people best. It enlists new partners from the faith community and the private sector.

And so far the results are striking. When we launched the initiative in 2003, only 50,000 people in sub-Sahara Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatments. Today, we support treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region and tens of thousands more around the world, from Asia to Eastern Europe. PEPFAR has also supported care for nearly 7 million people, including millions of orphans and vulnerable children. To date, PEPFAR has allowed nearly 200,000 children in Africa to be born HIV-free.

We're also making great strides in the area of prevention, thanks to our embrace of the principles of ABC: abstinence; be faithful; and use condoms. Guided by this philosophy, people are changing their behavior, and as they do, they're helping to turn the tide against HIV in their countries.

These statistics are promising. Yet there is no way to quantify PEPFAR's greatest achievement: the spread of hope. Spreading hope is in our Nation's security interests, because the only way our enemies can recruit people to their dark ideology is to exploit despair. And spreading hope is in our moral interests, because we believe that to whom much is given, much is required.

Laura and I saw the hope on our trip to Africa. I wish every single America

[American] * could have seen the tens of thousands of people who lined the streets during our visit, and they were cheering and waving American flags in gratitude to the generosity of the American people. It's important for our fellow citizens to understand that PEPFAR is saving lives, that PEPFAR is showing the good heart of our Nation, that PEPFAR earns us respect and thanks around the world.

We must remain vigilant in the fight against HIV/AIDS. As President Kikwete of Tanzania told me, he said—and told the people of his country: "If this program is discontinued or disrupted, there would be so many people who lose hope. My passionate appeal is for PEPFAR to continue."

Well, happily, the United States Congress heard this appeal. With this bill, America will continue PEPFAR for another 5 years. This legislation will dramatically increase our financial commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases. It will preserve the principles that have made PEPFAR a success. It will help us build on PEPFAR's strengths.

The bill maintains our insistence on results and allows us to set new and clear goals. With this funding, we will support treatment for at least 3 million people. We will prevent 12 million new HIV infections worldwide. We will support care for 12 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

This bill demonstrates our sustained commitment to strong bilateral partnerships. Under PEPFAR, leaders of our host countries come up with a strategy, a strategy aimed at—of defeating HIV with a program that works. They pledge to carry out the strategy with honesty. They agree to strong accountability measures. And once they do, the United States provides the money, the technology, and the expertise to make the strategy a success.

The bill will help bolster multilateral efforts to combat the disease and makes sure America's contributions are used even more effectively. Today, the United States is the largest contributor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and Tuberculosis and Malaria. The bill maintains our commitment to this program. It will bring greater transparency and accountability to the fund's vital work. The bill also demonstrates that the United States is keeping its promises to fight HIV/AIDS. And today America calls on other nations, particularly the G–8, to honor the commitments they have made as well.

The bill will expand the health care systems PEPFAR has put in place. Since PEPFAR began, we've helped build clinics and train health care workers in Africa and beyond. With this bill, we're committing to train at least 140,000 new health care workers to provide HIV prevention and treatment and care. The men and women will continue to help Africa curb HIV epidemics, along with many other health care challenges that face—that the continent faces.

This bill will help us combat the diseases that complicate HIV/AIDS. It commits $4 billion to fight tuberculosis, which is the leading killer of Africans living with HIV. The bill also pledges an additional $5 billion to our malaria initiative. Through this initiative, we've provided malaria treatment and prevention services to more than 25 million people. We've dramatically reduced malaria in many parts of Africa. The additional funds in this bill will help us save even more lives.

This bill will help us reduce HIV's deadly stigma, which is one of the greatest obstacles to defeating the epidemic. As more people get treatment, we will show the world that it is possible for people to live positively with HIV while making important contributions to their communities. Through this bill, the United States will also partner with governments around the world to ensure that reducing the stigma

* White House correction.

of HIV becomes a vital part of their countries' efforts to combat the pandemic.

With this legislation, America is showing its tremendous regard for the dignity and worth of every human being. This afternoon I want to speak directly to those around the world who have or think they may have HIV. A positive diagnosis does not have to be a reason for shame. So don't let shame keep you from getting tested or treated. Your life is treasured by the people who love you. It is precious in the eyes of God. It matters to the people of the United States.

Defeating HIV/AIDS once and for all will require an unprecedented investment over generations. But it is an investment that yields the best possible return: save lives. One of these lives belongs to Agnes Nyamayarwo. Agnes lost her husband and son to AIDS and is HIV-positive herself. Yet with the support from PEPFAR, Agnes has turned her grief into action. She has traveled the world educating others about this disease. I want to thank you for coming, Agnes. Thank you for coming all the way from Uganda. I appreciate you being here.

Mohamed Kalyesubula is with us—not yet, Mohamed. [*Laughter*] Hold your applause. [*Laughter*] Stay right there. No, you stay—[*laughter*]. By the time Mohamed was diagnosed, he had been bedridden for an entire year with HIV/AIDS. His immune system was almost wiped out. Yet antiretroviral treatment he received at a clinic supported by PEPFAR has helped his health improve. He now supports six children with money he earns at the clinic caring for others with HIV. I met him my first trip to Africa shortly after his diagnosis. He told me he had a dream, which was to come to the White House. [*Laughter*] Here you are, brother. Welcome.

Agnes and Mohamed are proof of what many in Africa call the Lazarus effect: Communities once given up for dead are brought back to life. Today we pray that God will comfort those who suffer and mourn. We pray that He will guide those who carry out this initiative's lifesaving work. And we ask for His blessings on each of you here today and the United States of America.

And now it is my pleasure to sign the United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. And I do so in the memory of Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania. H.R. 5501, approved July 30, was assigned Public Law No. 110–293. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Comprehensive Nuclear Threat Reduction and Security
July 30, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, consistent with the provisions of section 699M of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–161), the enclosed report entitled, "Comprehensive Nuclear Threat Reduction and Security Plan."

This report, compiled by the Departments of State, Defense, Energy, and Homeland Security, details Federal plans to ensure that all weapons and weapons-

usable material at vulnerable sites are secure from terrorist threats. As required, the report includes information on sustainability plans, interagency cooperation, programmatic and budgetary requirements, and international engagement related to these vital national security efforts.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of Certain Persons To Undermine the Sovereignty of Lebanon or its Democratic Processes and Institutions
July 30, 2008

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 blocking the property of persons undermining the sovereignty of Lebanon or its democratic processes and institutions and certain other persons are to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2008.

The actions of certain persons to undermine Lebanon's legitimate and democratically elected government or democratic institutions, to contribute to the deliberate breakdown in the rule of law in Lebanon, including through politically motivated violence and intimidation, to reassert Syrian control or contribute to Syrian interference in Lebanon, or to infringe upon or undermine Lebanese sovereignty contribute to political and economic instability in that country and the region and constitute a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of persons undermining the sovereignty of Lebanon or its democratic processes and institutions and certain other persons.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 30, 2008.

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

Interview With Foreign Print Journalists
July 30, 2008

The President. Thanks. Looking forward to my trip. As you all know, the itinerary is South Korea, Thailand, and then China. China will be a mix of—South Korea will

be all diplomacy, get a chance to see my friend the President, a good discussion about common issues. I'll see the Prime Minister of Thailand for a nice dinner. He'll have some interesting events related to Burma the next day. And then, of course, we go into China for the Olympics, but there will be a fair amount of diplomacy while I'm there.

And I'm really looking forward to it—looking forward to it because, one, my good wife will be going with me, and I love to travel with her. Secondly, one of my daughters is going with me, which will be fun. And my brother will be going with me. And in China, I'll be meeting my father, who will be traveling with my sister.

Q. A big family reunion, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

The President. It sounds that way. Anyway, I'm looking forward to it; I'm excited to go. Relations with the three nations that I have just described are good, strong. My trip will help advance them, the relations.

And I'll also be giving a speech in Thailand about our foreign policy in the Far East, where I will be leaving this foreign policy in 6 months. I will also remind people that I will be sprinting to the finish, that I will finish this job strong. And so I want to thank you for coming by and giving me a chance to visit with you. We'll go a couple of rounds here.

Kenneth.

Island of Dokdo

Q. Thank you, sir. It's a long question, and I'll probably—I don't know how to put it, but your strongest allies in Asia are Korea and Japan, recently on a tug-of-war game these days over this little island called Dokdo. And I know it's—Koreans get very upset because every time——

The President. I want to make some news with you.

Q. Pardon me?

The President. I'll make some news for you today.

Q. Yes, sir, that would be great—[*laughter*]—because, you know, Koreans get upset over this island because whenever the Japanese mention that—you know, it's like the Japanese expansionism in the region and so on. You know, when the U.S.——

The President. Get ready.

Q. Yes, so——

The President. Are you ready for some news?

Q. I am ready for some news, please.

The President. First of all, this dispute will be settled by Japan and South Korea. As to the database, I asked Condi Rice to review it, and the database will be restored to where it was prior, 7 days ago.

Q. Thank you, sir. That's big news. [*Laughter*] It is news.

The President. It is big news.

Q. Right. And I think Koreans will really appreciate that, because——

The President. Congratulations on breaking this. [*Laughter*]

U.S. Foreign Policy/President's Visit to Asia

Q. Do you have some vision regarding to this, like, U.S.-Korea-Japan sort of trilateral cooperation when you go to Korea?

The President. Between?

Q. The U.S., Korea, and Japan.

The President. Well, look, part of my—one of the reasons why it's very important for the United States to have an active presence and to establish good bilateral relations with the countries in the region is to help foster good relations between countries, whether it be South Korea and Japan, or Japan and China; it's essential. And it's in our national interest that South Korea have good relations with Japan. And I understand there's tensions. I listen very carefully to the respected leaders.

But first of all, we can't fix certain disputes; that will be up to the sovereign governments. But we can help facilitate dialogue. We can help facilitate understandings. And so I think it's very important for the United States to be very active and have a good, solid presence and have vibrant

diplomacy, which is what this administration has had.

Part of the reason that I'm stopping in South Korea prior to going to the Olympics—I mean, one could have attempted just to go straight to the Olympics, but I want to come to South Korea—I had just come from Japan, and it's all part of making sure that our foreign policy is active. I would hope that no President would ever dial us out of the Far East. Quite the contrary, I think it's very important for us to stay actively engaged in the Far East.

And one such multilateral engagement is the six-party talks, all aimed at keeping—dealing with a very delicate issue, but with five partners sending the same message to your neighbor to the north. So it's part of a foreign policy vision that's multilateral in nature, with strong bilateral relations that help create an atmosphere in which old grievances and new issues can be solved in a peaceful way.

Trade

Q. Are you going to deliver the FTA message to Koreans?

The President. Absolutely, delivered it yesterday. Went to a meeting of the South Korean-U.S. Business Alliance for a reason, I went in there to make it clear that this administration absolutely thinks it's essential that Congress pass the Korean FTA. And I will deliver it again because I know the President is concerned about whether or not—you know, he hears talk out of the Congress, and I will assure him that this free trade agreement is in our interest, in South Korea's interest, and that we want to get it done.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Pichai.

U.S. Foreign Policy/Asia-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned just now that in Bangkok, you're going to be sending a message of U.S. commitment to foreign policy, what your views are, and that you're going to sprint to the finish. Just—in two parts—some would argue that during your Presidency, you know, obviously the U.S. is focused on the war on terror—Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq—and that meant probably in the views of some that the U.S. was less engaged in Asia, especially vis-a-vis countering the influence of China, which has grown, and that basically your foreign policy has been pretty much like previous administrations, which lacked more higher level of proactive stance; some compared it to the Shultz period. How would you describe your legacy under your Presidency for Asia and U.S.-ASEAN relations?

And point number two, looking ahead with the changes happening with India growing stronger, China growing stronger, that's going to change the dynamics of the region and the U.S. is a global player in the world. How do you see U.S. role in that region in the future?

Thank you.

The President. Let me start with the second, then you can refresh my 62-year-old memory for the first. [*Laughter*]

There's plenty of room for countries to work with—the three countries you mentioned with other countries in the region in a constructive way. In other words, I don't view the diplomacy as zero sum, it's got to be either this country or that country. India and China and the United States will provide great opportunities for entrepreneurs, businesses throughout the region. And they'll provide great opportunities for development of services and goods that people in our big markets want. It provides great opportunities for capital flows that are—foreign direct investment, which is necessary for economic development. It'll provide opportunities to work collaboratively on strong strategic areas, security areas. One area will be—there's a great opportunity for all of us to cooperate on the environment.

So I view the emergence of India and China as positives. I think it's going to be very important for the United States to stay

engaged, not only with the two nations. If I were Thailand, I'd be asking, "What about us. Will you remember other nations?" And the answer is, absolutely. And one way to do that—the reason I brought up multilateralism is one way to stay engaged is through the mechanisms like the six-party talks on the Korean issue. Our vision is, once that issue gets solved, if North Korea verifiably gives up its weapons, programs, ambitions, then the six-party talks can serve as another mechanism.

ASEAN is a place where the United States can remain—should remain actively engaged with nations who are saying—say, "Wait a minute, we're your friends, as well. Don't just focus on the big guys; think about us."

APEC is another very important group of nations where we can work in a way that is beneficial, mutually beneficial. And so people may say, "Well, okay, fine, how can you?" I've gone to every APEC meeting, including the one right after September the 11th, 2001; I'm going to this one, even after our elections. I'll be semiretired by the time I—[*laughter*]—I'll be still sprinting, but semiretired.

And in terms of foreign policy in the Far East, it is mistaken if someone were to say that my preoccupation was on the war on terror. You bet I wanted to make sure that we protected ourselves at home. But that's the same sentiment other people have. Secondly, our foreign policy has been robust in the Far East. Our relations with your country, with South Korea, with Japan, and with China have never been better. And it took a lot of work to get relations, bilateral relations, as strong as they are. Not many Presidents could say, in the history of U.S. diplomacy, that relations with South Korea, Japan, China, and Thailand are strong and robust.

A lot of times, if you're friends with one, you made it hard to be friends with another. So as a result of a lot of work, a lot of personal diplomacy, as well as a lot of active engagement throughout our administration, I can tell you that I am satisfied with the variety of relationships.

Secondly, we've worked on common problems together. Who would have ever thought that Japan would have forces in Iraq, or South Korea would be alongside a lot of other nations in Afghanistan?

Q. Need to send more. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. My only point to you is, is that—or the Taiwan-Chinese relationship and that issue. It's a very sensitive issue for the Chinese Government. And people who study this very closely will see that the issue is in a better place. And I made it abundantly clear that there was some red lines for the United States on this issue, that there would be no unilateral declaration of independence, that our policy was still the same. It's very important for the President to be very consistent.

And my only point to you is, is that I'm very pleased with the state of relations now, and I recognize it took a lot of work to get them there. But I feel very comfortable in telling you that if there is a common problem, I've got personal relationships with the leaders where I can sit down and say, here's my point of view, what is yours? And if we have a common problem, let's work it out. We've had some common problems and some issues that have arisen, and yet I will tell you that relations are very cordial and open and honest.

And so anyway, good question.

Yes, Mr. Li.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes. Thank you very much, indeed, President, for this opportunity and your time. And you know that it will be the 30th anniversary of establishment of the diplomatic relations with——

The President. That's a true statement.

Q. Yes. And I noted yesterday many ministers from your administration attended the inauguration ceremony of Chinese new chancellery building, Chinese Embassy.

The President. Yes.

Q. So plus, you've made important increase in the importance of bilateral relations. So my question is, how do you evaluate the current relations, the welcome of the bilateral relations for the last part of 30 years, especially near the 8 years under your Presidency?

The President. Well, thank you very much——

Q. And which areas do you think two countries could broaden and deepen cooperation?

The President. I do. First, I will be dedicating a new Embassy——

Q. Oh yes, I'm sure you will preside over the new Embassy.

The President. I've got a new Embassy going. So yes, there was a deal here last night that people in my administration went to. But I'll just tell you what I'm going to. I'm going to the Embassy—the new Embassy opening in Beijing. Isn't that interesting? Two new Embassies open the same year obviously to celebrate the 30th anniversary of what has been a very important relationship.

It will be at that Embassy opening that I will be joined by my father, who first introduced me to China in 1975. I went to visit him——

Q. And so the friend of Chinese people.

The President. Yes. And so I spent my time riding a bicycle around Beijing. And there was no highrises. So the next time I go as President, and it was like going into another world. It was—there were a lot of cars, a lot of skyscrapers.

Q. And you didn't bicycle. [*Laughter*]

The President. I did bicycle. I mountain biked with the Chinese mountain biking team, the Olympic team—I rode with the Chinese Olympic team. As a matter of fact, I'm going to mountain bike again on the Olympic—hopefully, on the Olympic course, just to get some exercise. [*Laughter*]

And so my only point to you is that this has been an evolving relationship, and we're both honoring the 30th anniversary of the relationship. The fact that both countries are honoring the 30th anniversary of the relationship shows that—it's a statement about good relations. If we had bad relations, we wouldn't be honoring the 30th. It would be, "Okay, here comes the 30th anniversary, who cares?"

But this has got a—opening new Embassies in our respective capitals, and very fine Embassies—I.M. Pei did the one here, and I'm not sure who designed ours, but I know it's going to be a great Embassy—is a signal of how important the relationship is.

I mean, we'll let the historians evaluate the difference between what the relationship was like in the eighties, nineties, but I can tell you how—my view. One, I've had good relations with—good personal relations with Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. Secondly, we have worked hard during my time to put strategic dialogues in place that broaden and enhance the relationship. So Secretary Paulson has worked with his two counterparts to deal with economic issues that are—it's very important. It's very important for us; it's very important for other nations in the region, by the way.

And you know, we're working the currency issue or trade issues or international property rights—or intellectual property rights, I mean. And it's an opportunity for our two countries, who've got a interesting relationship, to be able to work through common problems and to seize common opportunities.

I've been committed to broadening our defense cooperation and exchanges. I think it's going to be very important for—I know it's important for our generals and admirals to deal with their counterparts. And I believe, more importantly, or as importantly, we ought to be getting younger Chinese officers involved with younger U.S. officers. Why? To create a feeling of trust.

You ask how has the relationship evolved. The crisis of my administration, the first crisis, was the EP–3. And it was like, "Oh man, this is unbelievable." And it—I will tell you—and frankly, it took a while to

get phone calls returned, and we were just trying to get information. And I'm confident that if a incident like that happened now, there would be a much more immediate response because there's more trust between the two administrations.

And that's good for the region. It's good for our bilateral relations and good for the region. So I would tell you that ours has been an evolving relationship that is in good, solid shape. And that's not to say that—on any of these relationships, that there needs to be constant work. An American President has got to know two things: one, the nature of the person he's dealing with, and the nature of the government he's dealing with, and the pressures that government feels. And I've worked hard to be a sensitive, open-minded person to that end.

Gregory.

China/U.S. Foreign Policy

Q. Yes.

The President. How are you, lad?

Q. Good, thanks.

The President. Good.

Q. A lot of people in Hong Kong talk about this. Looking ahead, do you think it's important for the American people to sort of view China mostly as a strategic competitor or more as a partner?

The President. I would call it a—I would—I think as we look ahead I would view it as a management of a complex relationship, where sometimes our national interests are aligned and sometimes our national interests are not aligned. They could—and let me just talk about the economy, for example. And one reason I call it a complex relationship is that here in America, trade with China is not necessarily universally accepted as good. It is universally accepted as good in this administration. I mean, free and fair trade is good for the world, and I believe it's good for this relationship. But it is a—some in America view the advent of Chinese manufacturing, particularly at the lower end of the economic scale, as direct competition with their own livelihood, thereby making the relationship complex.

Energy—what's very interesting is that if you view China as a market, you want them to become more robust and more prosperous. But in order to do that, China is going to have to have more energy, and as China demands more energy, it creates more global demand relative to a slower growing supply, means higher prices for us all.

It is a very interesting and important relationship made complex by globalization, and their constantly changing internal situation, particularly when it comes their economy.

I'm sure you've been reading about the Doha discussions. On the one hand, we've got very good relations. On the other hand, it was hard to find common ground to get the Doha deal closed. And so it's—your readers have got to know that there's opportunity and there's challenges. So it's hard to label the relationship one way or the other.

I will tell you this: An American President is going to have to pay very close attention to relations with not only China, but the region. And I say the region because if it ever—if the perception is ever that the United States is fixated only on China, then you're going to have issues with long-time allies, people that have been counting on the American support for a period of time.

And so never can the foreign policy be viewed as zero sum. It's always got to be viewed as additive. And my worry for America over time is that we've become isolationist and protectionist. I've spoken about this quite frequently. Protectionism will be bad for our own economy and our world economy, in my judgment. Isolationism will create a lot of concern.

And so the United States has got a forward-leaning foreign policy in the Far East, and we have. When people take an objective look at this administration, we have

been very much engaged. And I believe I'll be leaving office with the Far East in as good as shape as it can be from a U.S. perspective.

Kenneth. You've already had six questions. [*Laughter*]

North Korea/Six-Party Talks

Q. One other issue on this North Korea nuclear deal. I understand it's a headache and you're sprinting as fast as you can, but the North Koreans doesn't seem like they're keeping up with the pace. [*Laughter*] So maybe you could give me some more breaking news on this end. [*Laughter*] What about the delisting of North Korea from the terrorist list, what about the verification process, what about the North Korea——

The President. No, no, no, no, no. Sprinting is one thing; undermining good policy is another. And multilateral diplomacy is the best way to peacefully solve an issue such as the nuclearization or the weaponization or the desire to have a nuclear weapon program by the North Koreans. I will do nothing to undermine the six-party structure, the credibility of the six-party structure, and our partners.

And therefore, to answer your question, we are very clear that in order to move forward in the phase that we're now in—and this is a phased-in deal—that there must be verification that we're all happy with, a verification mechanism on not only plutonium, but also highly enriched uranium, as well as proliferation.

Q. ——weapons program as well.

The President. Yes, right. And we will obviously consult very closely with our partners. This will be a subject of discussion with the President. And I will be sprinting, but patient; sprinting, but realistic.

Freedom Agenda/North Korea

Q. Okay. Is the North Korean human—North Korean refugees, human rights issues will be discussed?

The President. Absolutely. As you know, I'm a believer in human dignity and human rights. I discuss it with all leaders. And I am—for example, when it comes to China, we have constantly asked China not to send people back into North Korea. I want to thank the South Korean people for welcoming their brothers and sisters who have been able to escape.

Q. It's what they need to do.

The President. Yes, I know.

Q. We thank you for——

The President. It's not easy. We need to open up—we have opened up our doors. And the first step—the two things on my mind now in North Korea are getting rid of the nuclear weapons program, which, as you know, can be very destabilizing. When North Korea fires rockets or tests, it creates reverberations around the immediate area. And secondly, is to recognize—constantly keep in mind the human rights violations that take place there.

Pichai.

Burma/Vietnam

Q. Mr. President, again, back to Bangkok, you were going to mention something about Burma, questions on Burma.

The President. I did, yes.

Q. Obviously, it's an issue with human rights. Burma is a concern for the U.S. It's also a concern for quite a number of members of ASEAN. But there is a view again that that's one issue that's hindering a more advanced cooperation between U.S. and ASEAN as an organization. What's your view on this, your take on that?

The President. I don't think so. I don't think so. I think—I don't think—matter of fact, I think our relations are very strong. I think they've been strong on counterterrorism and the economy. There's a difference about how hard people should push for democracy in Burma. I'm at one end of the ledger. And we'll continue to press hard.

And I do want to thank the Thai Government for its understanding of the refugee

issue, particularly as relates to the border policy. I think it's been very wise and very humane. My message is going to be one directed to the people in Burma when I meet with some of the activists, and Laura is going to be meeting with some of the people that she got to know.

Tell you an interesting story. I included Burma in my last United Nations address, and it was a pretty strong statement. And she was in the audience there at the U.N. And just as soon as the speech ended she got an e-mail from one of the activists she had met, a person that was trying to help deal with human suffering.

And I just thought it was interesting world we're in, in which the speech finishes; the word gets out; they e-mail back to Mrs. Bush, or Laura, to thank me, as I walked off the podium. Now, it's—my only point to you is that it is very important for us to—I understand pressures on countries, and I understand different interests. And I always try to put myself in the other person's shoes. But as I do so, I never forget certain basic fundamental values. And so we will be—I will be and Laura will be expressing our opinion in a way that is, I hope, very clear and hopeful to people. Thailand is a democracy.

Q. We're having some problems.

The President. Democracy is not easy, right?

Q. Right.

The President. On the other hand, it is a democracy, and they'll work through an issue, no question about it. The country next door to you is not and wants to hear that people remember them. See, one of my concerns is that we—that America gets so comfortable they say, "Who cares? What does it matter whether or not somebody has got HIV/AIDS?"

One of the things on ASEAN you ask about is that part of our AIDS initiative that I'm going to go sign a bill this afternoon, which is a firm commitment to dealing with disease is in Vietnam. Isn't that interesting?

And my only point will be that we are a compassionate country amongst a lot of other things. We are an idealistic country. We act for—you know, we act—at least this administration has—not afraid to make tough decisions if needed, particularly given the world in which we live, in which there are people that are willing to kill the innocent to achieve their political objectives.

But we're also a very compassionate nation. And it's interesting that a nation—you asked about ASEAN relations and bilateral relations—it's interesting that a nation with which this country had been at war is now a country that is receiving HIV/AIDS help to help deal with a human catastrophe.

My trip to Vietnam, by the way, was a fascinating experience when I went. And it's an interesting marketplace economy that's beginning to grow.

Q. It is.

The President. Vibrant. And it provides great opportunities for people in the neighborhood.

Yes, sir, Mr. Li.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes. President, just a followup question to my first question. And you know the bilateral relations between China and the United States had been improved under your Presidency, and now it's—[*inaudible*]. But what would be your expectation and predictions of the future bilateral relation under the new American administration, Republican or Democrat?

President Bush. Yes, thank you. Well, the only thing I can tell you with certainty is what it's going to be like for the next 6 months: sprinting to the finish. [*Laughter*]

Our relations are becoming more and more interwoven and—our economic relations are very, you know, intricate and—you know, there's dependency in a way; there's a lot of capital gain invested; there's marketplaces. As I mentioned, a strategic dialogue that Secretary Paulson set up—it's constantly evaluating different opportunities

dealing with the current problems, but also dealing with strategic opportunities.

I would predict to you that whoever follows me will have a—will be a combination of an active engagement with a constant reminder of our belief in human freedom and human liberty.

2008 Beijing Olympics/President's Visit to China

Q. My second——

The President. That's your third question. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——the Beijing, again, is a very important event, not only for China, but also for the whole world. So your stance against politicizing the Olympic Games is highly—[*inaudible*]—by Chinese people. So what you would like to convey, your messages and wishes to the 29th Beijing Olympic Games and nothing special to Chinese people, because Chinese people has made tremendous efforts to ensure the Olympic Games is a successful event; even sometimes they make some sacrifices.

The President. Yes. Well, our message is, is that I personally—and America respects the Chinese people—respect your history, respect your tradition, and I'm honored to have been invited to the games. And I make the case to people that by going to the games and respecting the people, it gives me a—it gives me credibility with the Government so that we can deal with common opportunities and common problems.

And I'll have a bilateral with Hu Jintao, which I'm looking forward to. I enjoy the man. I find him to be a straightforward guy; I'm very comfortable in his presence. And we will talk about the kinds of issues we always talk about.

So for me it's going to be a real pleasure to see the Olympics. I'm a sportsman; I love sports. As I mentioned, I'm looking forward—I hope I'll be riding my mountain bike on the mountain bike trail. I'll probably be taking the easiest route because the hills looked quite steep the last time I was there.

And I'm going to go to see some of the events. As I understand it, I think we've got a chance to go see the United States basketball team versus China, which ought to be a pretty interesting event. I bet it's pretty noisy, as I understand the great Yao Ming—[*laughter*]—who plays for my old hometown, Houston—the Houston Rockets—foot is healed. I hope so, because it will make it a very interesting contest.

I look forward to watching the fan reaction and to seeing good healthy competition. I am fascinated by the Chinese Olympics teams' efforts to capture the most medals. I think good competition is very healthy. They're going to—and so it'll be fun to watch, and it'll be really interesting to see not only the sports and to feel the atmosphere of the Olympics—I've never been to a summer Olympics before—but also to cheer on my team, because our objective is to get more medals than anybody. That's what competition is about.

And if we do, we'll be gracious in victory, and if we don't, we'll be humble in defeat. But I will be there as the President of the country cheering the team when it comes in the Olympic stadium, going by different venues, and just letting them know America is cheering for them. And so that's going to be exciting.

And as I say, there will be diplomacy. We're opening a new Embassy. I'll have a bilateral dinner, a lunch with the President, a meeting, and then I think his wife and my wife will join us, so it'll be a nice social occasion. And then there will be the Olympic committees and all the stuff you're supposed to do.

2008 Beijing Olympics/China-U.S. Relations

Q. But what kind of specific events you would like, you and Mrs. Laura Bush would like most, and you will watch during the——

The President. Yes. Well, I like a lot of sports. Unfortunately, we're not going to

be there—the most exciting, in many ways for kind of a baby boomer like me, is the track and field. That's like—that's it, to watch the sprinters and the different big events and——

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino. Get some tips, get some sprinting tips.

The President. Yes—[*laughter*]—sprinting tips. That's Kenneth. [*Laughter*] We're not going to be there for that. So, you know what, we'll see. I'm pretty relaxed about it. Not every single minute of every day has to be totally organized, and so I'll be with a lot of my family, and they're fun to hang around with. I'm sure we'll walk around the different venue sites and just get a sense for the whole atmosphere of people from all around the world coming to Beijing to compete in the Olympic Games. That's going to be a proud moment for the Chinese people.

And I made a decision not to politicize the games; this is for athletics. There's plenty of time for politics, and I'm confident I'll have time for politics and, you know—look, I've met with the Chinese President a lot. This isn't like once every 4 years you sit down with the man. I meet with him all the time, it seems like, at these different forums where the United States is at the table with a lot of other nations in the region.

And I have got very cordial relations, and it's important to be able to have those kind of relations, because he's got to tell me what's on his mind and I've got to tell him what's on my mind in order to be able to deal with problems. And I think when people study my Presidency and find out how Bush conducted foreign policy, they'll see I don't shy away from things; I am not a shy person. And if we have a problem, we can discuss it. And so the first time I met with your President at Camp David—first South Korean President to ever go to Camp David; he came—I knew there was some potential problems. And I wanted to put him in a frame of mind, in an atmosphere where he'd feel comfortable.

President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea

Q. Well, you have a knack to charm other leaders, and he was fascinated, actually.

The President. He's an interesting guy.

Q. Yes.

The President. He told me a fabulous story about his—you know, he's an elder of a huge church, and they asked him to be an elder. And he said, "No, I need to park cars to prove to myself and others that I deserve it in the first place." A very interesting story, I thought.

Air Quality in China

Q. Are you worried about the air quality in Beijing? [*Laughter*]

The President. Am I worried about it?

Q. Yes, do you worry about it? [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm sure I can adjust. I don't know. I'm going anyway. I mean, I will be there. And I don't know what it's like. The only way to find out is to go. I'm sure there's all kinds of stories.

I've read the paper today that the air quality was down. Who knows what it's going to be like. We'll deal with it.

Yes, last question. I've got to go to the electronic media, with people who have got beautiful faces. [*Laughter*]

Chinese Leadership/China-U.S. Relations

Q. Well, continuing to talk about the leaders, the Chinese leaders, what has surprised you about your dealings over the last 8 years with Chinese leadership?

The President. That's an interesting question. One thing that interests me is to watch China's leaders deal with the benefits and challenges of a marketplace. In other words, this is a country that has got a lot of mouths to feed and a lot of people to employ.

And they are committed to, in many ways, marketplace principles, particularly as

they have invited in foreign capital. And it's been interesting to watch them deal with a combination of the need for raw material versus the—from the foreign policy implications of dealing with a country that has a lot of raw material. The classic case is Iran, where I have spent a lot of time with the Chinese President talking about the dangers of Iran having a nuclear weapon, knowing full well that they need fuel in order to meet their own internal pressures.

And I'll repeat to you: Hu Jintao has been very open in many ways about his concerns and the pressures he feels, as have I. And I feel comfortable. And by the way, that's not easy when there is a language barrier. And yet I can report to you that we do have cordial, relaxed conversations in spite of the fact that we both have interpreters. It's much easier when you are dealing with a person that speaks your own language. Since the only one I speak is English, it's important to have English speakers.

But here is a man who I have had some—I feel comfortable talking about his family, and he asks about mine. And that may sound trite to you, but nevertheless, it's a part of getting comfortable with each other. So I guess what's interesting is to—just understanding the tensions that an emerging economy can feel, and particularly given Chinese—the Chinese role in international affairs, for example, their presence in the U.N. Security Council, Perm 5, which creates interesting tensions.

I would say that there's been a—it's just been interesting to watch, and interesting to participate with people. I mean, the Taiwan issue was a very touchy issue for a while, causing me to say in the Oval Office—that which is now well-chronicled—that the United States does not support a unilateral declaration of independence. Because I wanted to make sure that our message was clear, but also that the relationship was in a way—not our relationship, but others' relationship with China was in a way that it could evolve peacefully and constructively.

Okay, guys.

Six-Party Talks/Freedom Agenda/Trade

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned about sprinting. Bullet points: What if you could guard just three points, what is left to be done in the sprint?

The President. There is a lot left to be done. One, make sure that the six-party talks continue to—are you talking about the Far East, or just in general?

Q. Yes, the region. The region. Six-party talks, what else?

The President. It was—like, total agenda? There's a lot.

Q. Sure. But I'm just saying——

The President. But in the Far East—absolutely. Six-party talks is one. Go to APEC and have a successful conclusion. Meet with ASEAN nations to leave the relationship in a solid way. Continue pressing hard on the human rights agenda, human freedom agenda, a religious freedom agenda. There's three issues right there.

White House Press Secretary Perino. Your free trade agreement.

The President. Yes, free trade agreement. Absolutely. Concluding a relationship with—continuing to work with Japan on their defense forces posture, particularly given OEF. I mean, there's a lot to be done.

And just to make sure that people understand, the bilateral relationships are vital. Let's see, I've been to Japan three times as President; South Korea is going to be my second time; China, four times. I mean, I have been there a lot. Is that right, four times to China? Yes.

National Security Council Senior Director for East Asian Affairs Dennis C. Wilder. And this is your ninth trip to Asia.

The President. Ninth trip to Asia.

South Korean Athletes

Q. But still you will come——

The President. I'm looking forward to it. You know the thing that amazes me? The South Korean women golfers. [*Laughter*] Look at a women's—have you ever looked at the scoreboard?

Q. Yes, sure.

The President. It's unbelievable.

Q. I don't know——

The President. Yes, you're supposed to know. If you look at the scoreboard, it's phenomenal. You talk about an excellent athletic program.

Q. It's actually a Korean-born, American-trained.

The President. You think so? I'm not sure. I know the woman who won the LPGA, is that what it was—won the Open is Korean-born, American-trained. But I'm not so sure——

Q. Mostly they come—like they go to school in Florida or Arizona, or something like that. So they——

The President. All of them?

Q. Like, I would say 80 percent. They come to U.S. They work out——

The President. Okay. But they have got a pretty—they must have a young girls' program that's pretty active too, to get people interested in the first place.

Q. Yes, I think Korean women are much more disciplined than Korean men. [*Laughter*]

White House Press Secretary Perino. That's not just in Korea. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you all greatly.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Enjoyed it. Thank you, buddy.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:20 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of Thailand; architect I.M. Pei; former President Jiang Zemin of China; President Hu Jintao of China and his wife Liu Yongqing; Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets; and golfer Inbee Park, winner of the 2008 U.S. Women's Open. A reporter referred to former Secretary of State George P. Shultz. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Jei Choon Yun of KBS TV in South Korea
July 30, 2008

President's Visit to South Korea

Mr. Yun. You are scheduled to go pay a visit to Korea next month. And if you have any particular message to Korean people, let us know, please.

The President. My message is, one, I'm honored to come back. I'm looking forward to visiting with your President; I'm looking forward to seeing the beautiful country. And I bring a message of friendship. And we've had a long history together. We've got many ties, whether it be economic ties or political ties or ties of people on both—people who live here in America that were born in Korea, and people who got relatives in Korea. There's a lot of ties. And we've had good relations in the past, we'll have good relations in the present, and good relations in the future.

Island of Dokdo/South Korea-Japan Relations

Mr. Yun. I'd like to ask you about the—[*inaudible*]. U.S. Agency for Geographic Names recently changed the country code of Dokdo from South Korea to undesignated sovereignty.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Yun. From the Korean perspective, it may be seen as an act of acknowledging

the Japanese claim of the ownership of the island. So are you willing to reverse the—restore the original name or Korean sovereignty?

The President. First of all, this issue must be solved between South Korea and Japan. Secondly, I asked Secretary Rice to review the data, and I'm pleased to tell you that the data has been—the whole issue has been restored the way it was 7 days ago.

Mr. Yun. Oh, really? Very good.

The President. Yes.

Trade

Mr. Yun. Thank you very much, sir.

In regard to free trade agreement, do you have any specific plan to persuade the Congress leadership into moving forward the approval of FTA within this year?

The President. First of all, the goal is to get it done this year. I told your President I would like to get it done this year. I am pressing hard. I am constantly talking about the importance of a free trade agreement with Korea to our interests. Yesterday I met with important business leaders of the Korean-U.S. Business Dialogue Council. I, one, made it clear to them that I am very much for this, and secondly, I made it clear to them that we've got to work a common strategy, that they've got to help us, on Capitol Hill, move the issue.

I've told the President I make no promises, except I'll push as hard as I possibly can to get it done before I leave the Presidency.

North Korea

Mr. Yun. Now I'd like to ask you about Korean-North Korea issue.

The President. Please.

Mr. Yun. And the verification protocol is not completed yet. If you don't have the protocol until the 11th of next month, are you willing to reverse the process to rescind North Korea as state sponsor of terror?

The President. Yes, our position is very clear, and we've made that clear to our partners in the six-party talks, including your Government, that we expect there to be a verification regime that we're comfortable with—not only us, but that we're both comfortable with. After all, we're partners. And it's verification not only of a plutonium program, but verification of a highly enriched uranium program and verification of proliferation activities.

And it's very important for us to get confidence that we're being told the full extent of—the questions we're answering are being—asking are being answered fully. And so verification is a very important test as to whether or not North Korea wants to honor the agreement that they agreed to with all of us.

And so, you know, some say, "Well, he just wants to move forward." And the answer is, no, I want to have results. And it's very important for us to get something that we're comfortable with.

Six-Party Talks

Mr. Yun. And do you think the six-party nuclear negotiations can move toward to the third phase of dismantlement during your Presidency?

The President. Well, it all depends on whether or not we can complete the second phase. And that second phase is going to—what matters in the second phase is whether or not we get a good verification process. There's a lot of people in this country saying, "Why are you going forward when you can't trust them?" And my answer is, why don't we go forward with a process that will enable us to trust them? And so in order for us to get to the third phase we got to get through the second phase. And I'll answer that question better when North Korea honors their commitments. We'll honor our commitment, but they've got to honor their commitment.

And as you mentioned in your question, are we comfortable with the verification? Well, until we are comfortable, then we don't move forward.

North Korea

Mr. Yun. Will North Korea give up their nuclear weapons ultimately?

The President. Do I think they will? That's the question. That's the fundamental question. And I can't answer that for you. I know that it's good to put a process in place that gives them a chance to, in return for a different relationship with all of us. In the past it was, okay, we'll give you something, North Korea, and hope you respond. What's changed is, you must honor your agreement, and then you can have a better relation.

And there's a lot—North Korea is the most sanctioned nation in the world. And we've agreed to take them off just one aspect of many of the other restrictions placed on them, if they perform. And so, to answer your question, I hope they give up their weapons programs. It will be good for the North Korean people if they do. There will be a different relationship between the United States and all the parties involved if the leader makes that choice. But it's his choice to make. We've made our choice; South Korea and the United States, China, Japan and Russia have made our choice.

North Korea-U.S. Relations

Mr. Yun. This sense that normalization of relations between U.S. and North Korea is still a long way to go. Do you have any plan to establish liaison offices in Pyongyang and Washington?

The President. No.

Mr. Yun. No?

The President. No, we don't. Our focus is on this relationship that—with North Korea, bound in the six-party talks.

Is that good? Very good.

Mr. Yun. Thank you very much.

The President. You made some news today.

Mr. Yun. Yes. Thank you very much for the news.

The President. Yes. Absolutely.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:15 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Suthichai Sae-Yoon of the Nation Multimedia Group in Thailand
July 30, 2008

President's Visit to Asia

Mr. Suthichai. You plan to deliver a major speech in Bangkok on Asia. Is that your farewell speech? What will be the main theme, sir?

The President. A farewell speech will occur shortly before the next President is sworn in. This will be probably my last speech in the Far East.

President's Visit to Asia/U.S Foreign Policy

Mr. Suthichai. What is the main theme?

The President. The main theme is that the United States of America has got strategic interests in the Far East. This administration has worked hard to make sure we have good relations with all the countries of the Far East, that there are opportunities to work together to solve problems. There will be moments—and it's—the United States must stay engaged. I will talk about accomplishments; I'll talk about challenges. And I'm looking forward to giving

it. It's interesting that I'm giving a speech about the whole Far East in Thailand.

Mr. Suthichai. Right. Why Thailand?

The President. Well, because it's—first of all, the assumption is that when you give a comprehensive speech in the Far East, it would be in, you know, China or Japan or, you know—and Thailand is, one, a longtime friend; two, is an important part of ASEAN. In other words, there's—the Far East is more than just the countries that dominate the news. And so therefore, if you're going to give a comprehensive speech, you give it in a country that makes it—just by the sight alone, indicates how comprehensive the policy must be. In other words, you can't ignore other countries if you focus only on a few.

Thailand-U.S. Relations

Mr. Suthichai. Right. You are also joining the celebration of 175 years——

The President. One hundred and seventy-five years.

Mr. Suthichai. ——of Thai-U.S. relations. At this juncture in history, why is Thailand still important to the United States?

The President. Common values, close friends. Hopefully, Thailand views us a reliable ally; we certainly view Thailand as a reliable ally. And you know, it's just—175 years is a long time.

Mr. Suthichai. That's right—always had been close related in all major challenges.

The President. Absolutely.

Thailand

Mr. Suthichai. Vietnam war——

The President. Very much so. The Thai people were just fabulous and always have been. And it's a great country, and it's a beautiful country with a great history and tradition, and I'm looking to going again.

Democracy in Thailand

Mr. Suthichai. What would be the single most important pillar in Thai-American relations, if you can cite one?

The President. Democracy. And obviously, we're pleased that democracy is still very much alive and well in Thailand. And I think democracy is the pillar, and the Government's respect for human rights and human dignity and individualism.

Human Rights Activists

Mr. Suthichai. I understand that you are meeting some Burmese dissidents too.

The President. I am. Of course I am. I will, as is my wife.

Mr. Suthichai. Yes, the First Lady has shown great concern about Aung San Suu Kyi.

The President. Absolutely, and as should the world. Here is a very heroic woman that was elected overwhelmingly by her people and has now been under house arrest by a group of military guys that just simply won't allow the will of the people to flourish. And so we're concerned about that. And I do want to thank the Thai people and the Thai Government for its humanitarian missions on the border. I think it's very constructive and very helpful. And I will be speaking to activists to let them know that the United States of America hears their voices. And you know, it's a tough issue for some countries.

First Lady Laura Bush

Mr. Suthichai. Will the First Lady meet the dissidents and also call for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi?

The President. I'm sure she'll do that. I mean, she does that all the time. You know, I'm not sure exactly what her schedule is. You caught me off guard about her schedule, but I can assure you it will be comprehensive, and she'll make a very good impression.

Burma

Mr. Suthichai. Why haven't the sanctions against Burma worked?

The President. Because not every country is applying them. And sanctions—the idea of unilateral sanctions, they're effective only

to a certain extent. And therefore, other countries must also join, and frankly, there's some countries in the neighborhood that aren't interested in joining.

2008 Beijing Olympics/China-U.S. Relations

Mr. Suthichai. Yes. You are going to Beijing Olympics.

The President. Yes, sir.

Mr. Suthichai. What is the signal? Because some people say that you are going there as a sports fan, but are you going as a sports fan or as President of the United States?

The President. I'm going as the President who happens to be a sports fan. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Suthichai. Right.

The President. No, the signal—look, there's a couple of signals, and it's very important to understand, one, is I don't think the Olympics should be politicized. I mean, it is a sporting event of the greatest caliber. Secondly, I am going out of respect for the people of China. This is a big deal for the Chinese people, and I'm—and that's why I'm going. Thirdly, I will have, and always have had, very frank and candid discussions with the Chinese Government on a variety of issues.

And I'm confident that by showing respect to the people, to the Olympics, it will give me—put me in a position to continue to having frank and candid discussions. It's—when you show respect to a group of people, it gives you credibility when it comes time to discuss difficult issues. And we will discuss difficult issues in a very cordial and respectful way.

Freedom Agenda/China-U.S. Relations

Mr. Suthichai. Yesterday you met five Chinese dissidents——

The President. Yes, sir, I did.

Mr. Suthichai. And what did you tell them? Are you going to tell the Chinese leadership about their concerns?

The President. Of course I will. I do it every time I meet—oh, absolutely. I mean, their concern is religious freedom and political freedom. And I discuss religious freedom and political freedom with the Chinese leaders every time.

Mr. Suthichai. And they don't seem offended?

The President. No, I don't think so, because they know it's done out of respect. It's done out of—you know, in a way that I hope is—in a way that they will listen. That's my whole point. If you treat a people with respect and when it comes time to discuss your differences, people will be more willing to listen. And, look, I'm the only President to have ever stood up in public with the Dalai Lama.

Mr. Suthichai. Right.

The President. I told President Hu Jintao I was going to do that. He didn't like it, but I did it.

Mr. Suthichai. You did it anyway.

The President. Yes, I did. And so my only point is there are moments of great opportunity for us to work together on a variety of fronts, and we have. And there are going to be moments of disagreement. But I've worked hard to make sure those moments of disagreement are done in such a way that it doesn't rupture relations or doesn't embarrass somebody or doesn't humiliate. And I think when people look at my Presidency, when it's all said and done, they'll say, "It's amazing that the Bush administration had good, strong relations with South Korea, Japan, China, Thailand, India." And I happen to believe that it's—it enhances the stability of the region and helps all of us grow in a constructive way.

President's Legacy

Mr. Suthichai. What is going to be your legacy?

The President. Oh, I don't know. I'll be dead when they finally figure it out.

Mr. Suthichai. But what do you want history to remember you——

The President. Somebody who took on tough challenges and didn't shy away from doing what he thought was right. And, you know, look, I'm a big believer in freedom

and liberty. That's been a hallmark of my agenda. But I—there's no such thing as short-term history, so I am very confident in telling you that I'll be long gone before somebody finally figures out the true merit and meaning of the Bush administration.

Six-Party Talks/North Korea

Mr. Suthichai. Were you impressed by the meeting between Secretary of State Condi with the North Korean representative in Singapore recently?

The President. I thought it was—what impressed me was that the foreign ministers all—at the six-party talks, all said the same thing to the North Korean: If you want to move forward, verify, honor your commitments; if you don't honor your commitments, then there will be additional sanctions and additional measures.

Mr. Suthichai. Are they positive?

The President. The visits? Yes, I think they've been positive. There's just some fundamental questions. There's a lot of doubt as to whether or not the six-party talks will bear fruition. One thing is for certain: They destroyed their cooling tower. Everybody saw that.

Mr. Suthichai. Right, right.

The President. But will they verify their plutonium programs and HEU programs and proliferation programs? I hope so. They said they would. Now, whether or not they put a verification regime in place that we can trust, we'll see.

President's Future

Mr. Suthichai. Sir, last question—is there life after the White House?

The President. Absolutely. I'm only 62 years old.

Mr. Suthichai. What do you plan to do?

The President. You know, I'm going to write; I'm going to share my experiences. I'm going to build a policy center and library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Hopefully, I will contribute to mankind in positive ways. I haven't really had time to think about it because when you're the President of the United States, you got a lot to think about day by day. But I'm looking forward to finishing strong, and then I'm going home to Texas. That's where I was raised, that's where I'm from, and that's where I'm going to retire.

Mr. Suthichai. That's good, sir. Thank you very much.

The President. Yes, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:25 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma; Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. Suthichai Sae-Yoon referred to Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun of North Korea. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Fuqing Yang of CCTV in China
July 30, 2008

Mr. Yang. So thank you very much, Mr. President, for joining us.

The President. Thank you, sir.

2008 Beijing Olympics

Mr. Yang. The much anticipated Beijing Olympic Games will be opening in Beijing in just about a week's time. And you will be attending the opening ceremonies on

August the 8th. And the Chinese people are very much looking forward to your visit. So at this moment, what are your expectations for the Beijing Games? And what kind of messages will you bring to the Chinese people?

The President. First message to the Chinese people is, I respect the Chinese people, respect the history, tradition. And I'm coming as the President of a friend, and I'm coming as a sportsman. And I'm looking forward to the competition.

I'm looking forward to seeing—I think I'm going to go to the U.S.-Chinese basketball game. I understand Yao Ming is back on the court, and it will be an interesting challenge for the U.S. team. It will be exciting for me to see the athletes compete and to watch the Chinese fans respond, in this case, to the basketball game.

It's going to be exciting. And I'm not coming alone. My wife is coming. A lot of my family is coming as well. So it's going to be great.

2008 Beijing Olympics/President's Decisionmaking/China-U.S. Relations

Mr. Yang. Okay. You are under a kind of pressure from politicians here in Washington who call on you not to go to Beijing.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Yang. But you insist on going. So out of what consideration did you make such a decision?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm under pressure from politicians on a lot of fronts. I mean, this isn't the only issue that I get pressured on. And Presidents need to make their decision based upon what's best, not what's political.

And I think it's best for U.S.-China's relations that I go. I know it's important for me to send a clear signal to the Chinese people that we respect them. I tell people that, of course, we've got differences with China on issues. They've got differences with us on issues.

But the best way to conduct our diplomacy and conduct our relations is out of mutual respect. And it's much more likely a Chinese leader will listen to my concerns if he knows I respect the people of China. And so I'm looking forward to going. I'm going to have a dinner with President Hu Jintao, who I like. I respect the man a lot.

And do we agree on everything? Of course not. But do we agree to have good, cordial relations and work hard to make our relationship unique and strong? Absolutely.

President's Visit to China/Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC

Mr. Yang. On the agenda of your visit to Beijing, you will be attending the opening ceremony of the new U.S. Embassy in Beijing?

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. Yang. And the new Chinese Embassy was just opened in Washington.

The President. Last night. Yes, I know it. Isn't that exciting?

Mr. Yang. Yes, very exciting, a very beautiful building. I attended the opening ceremony.

The President. That's what I hear. You know, I.M. Pei is a famous architect who did the Chinese building.

Mr. Yang. Yes.

The President. So it just shows 30 years of a relationship that grows. And I found it very interesting, somebody said, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, first of all, we wouldn't be opening new Embassies or celebrating a 30th anniversary of relationship if, one, the relationships weren't important and the relationships weren't good.

I mean, if the relationships were terrible, no one would be celebrating anything. But it's interesting that both countries are opening new Embassies in the same month. And so I am looking—well, not exactly the same month. Today is July and August—but in the same couple of weeks.

And so yes, I'm going to go. And guess who is going to join me? President Bush 41, my father, will be there as well. And

he was the man that introduced me to China in the first place, in 1975.

Mr. Yang. And you were only 18 years old?

The President. No, no, no. I was older. I was—'75, I was 31.

Mr. Yang. Thirty-one?

The President. Yes, I was born in '46. My brother—see, my sister was 18 during the time.

Mr. Yang. Okay.

The President. But yes—no, look, I was a pretty old guy. And I explored around Beijing on a bicycle. It was a interesting time. Totally different city then than it is today.

China

Mr. Yang. Yes. And you also paid three visits in your capacity as the President of the United States to China. And in a sense, you bear witness to the changes in China too.

The President. Absolutely. It's amazing.

Mr. Yang. So yes, how would you elaborate on the changes in the past 30 years, since this year also marks the 30th anniversary of China's opening up and reform?

The President. Yes, 30 years ago, there were hardly any automobiles. And everybody was on bicycle, truly. Masses of people, me included, riding along on our bike. Everybody wore the same clothes, except for me. People—I can remember going to a department store, and nobody had seen a westerner. And they were amazed when I would go. And I would go with my mother and my sister. And they were amazed. It was like we were, like, from a different planet.

Today, it's a much different society. First of all, there's—very colorful. And obviously, there's a lot of automobiles. It seems like more automobiles than bicycles. And people are used to a relationship between the West and China. It's a common occurrence. There's a lot of exchanges.

One of the first—I think the first graduation speech I ever gave as President was to Notre Dame, and they were honoring the honors graduates in the sciences. And many of the people there were Chinese citizens, young Chinese students, girls and boys, got their degrees at the Notre Dame University. It was just—just shows how different things are after 30 years.

China-U.S. Relations

Mr. Yang. Okay. So there's also, like, China and the United States are going to celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations in January 2009.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Yang. Yes. How would you evaluate the developments between our two countries in the diplomatic field in the last 30 years? And particularly, during two of your administrations, if you can give us a self-assessment?

The President. Well, I think—look, I think they've grown very strategic. For example, the strategic dialogue on economics that Secretary Paulson is leading, that is very unique. And so he goes to China, and the Chinese leaders come here. And our Cabinet—many of our Cabinet works with their counterparts. And it's a broadening, a strengthening relationship.

We've dealt with some tough problems in a way that's cordial and respectful. And I would say that they're very good relations. And I told somebody the other day that it's amazing that the United States now has very good relations with China, South Korea, and Japan and the ASEAN countries, all at the same time. And I think that's positive for the region.

And take the six-party talks. There's a common problem. If North Korea were to end up with a nuclear weapon, it would be very destabilizing and very troubling for all of us. So we decided to work together, sit around the table as five parties, saying the same thing to the North Koreans. And I'm hopeful that it'll work. But it shows our relationship has matured.

Six-Party Talks

Mr. Yang. You mentioned the six-party talks. Also, six-party talks are high on your agenda during your administration for the last couple of years. With the demolition of the Yongbyon facility, the cooling tower, specifically, it makes some tangible progress, probably gave momentum before the talks. So how do you see this mechanism will go on?

The President. Yes.

Mr. Yang. What kind of messages, if you want to say, to the six-party talks?

The President. Well, first of all, I value our partners. The only way to solve this peacefully is for us to work together to send a common message. I thank the Chinese Government for their leadership on this issue.

I firmly believe multilateral diplomacy can work this issue better than bilateral diplomacy; secondly, that we're at a very critical moment now for the North Korean Government to make a decision as to whether or not they're going to verify what they said they would do. It's one thing to say it, but I think it's going to be very important for them to understand that we expect them to show us.

Now, there's no question the cooling tower went down. That's perfect verification; everybody saw it. But there's going to be—need to be verification on the plutonium program, the enriched uranium program and the proliferation program. And the decision is theirs. And if they make the decisions that we're comfortable with, then we move the process forward. And I certainly hope they make the right decision.

Mr. Yang. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes. I'm looking forward to going to Beijing.

Mr. Yang. Good wishes to you for a very pleasant visit to Beijing.

The President. I bet I have one. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Yang. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:35 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on the War on Terror
July 31, 2008

Good morning. This has been a month of encouraging news from Iraq. Violence is down to its lowest level since the spring of 2004, and we're now in our third consecutive month with reduced violence levels holding steady. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker caution that the progress is still reversible, but they report that there now appears to be a degree of durability to the gains that we have made.

A significant reason for this sustained progress is the success of the surge. Another is the increasing capability of the Iraqi forces. Iraqi forces now have 192 combat battalions in the fight, and more than 110 of these battalions are taking the lead in combat operations against terrorists and extremists.

We saw the capability of those forces earlier this year, when the Iraqi Government launched successful military operations against Shi'a extremist groups in Basra, Amarah, and the Sadr City area of Baghdad. Because of these operations, extremists who once terrorized the citizens of these communities have been driven

from their strongholds. As a result, our Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, was able to walk the streets of Sadr City last Wednesday. That's something that would not have been possible just a few months ago.

This week, the Iraqi Government is launching a new offensive in parts of the Diyala Province that contain some of Al Qaida's few remaining safe havens in the country. This operation is Iraqi led; our forces are playing a supporting role. And in the moments—in the months ahead, the Iraqis will continue taking the lead in more military operations across the country.

As security in Iraq has improved, the Iraqi Government has made political progress as well. The Iraqi Council of Representatives has passed several major pieces of legislation this year, and Iraqi leaders are preparing for Provincial elections. Prime Minister Maliki recently returned from a successful visit to Europe, where he held important diplomatic discussions with Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Berlusconi, and His Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI.

The progress in Iraq has allowed us to continue our policy of return on success. We now have brought home all five of the combat brigades and the three Marine units that were sent to Iraq as part of the surge. The last of these surge brigades returned home this month. And later this year, General Petraeus will present me his recommendations on future troop levels, including further reductions in our combat forces as conditions permit.

As part of the return on success policy, we are also reducing the length of combat tours in Iraq. Beginning tomorrow, troops deploying to Iraq will serve 12-month tours instead of 15-month tours. This will ease the burden on our forces, and it will make life easier for our wonderful military families.

We're also making progress in our discussion with Prime Minister Maliki's Government on the—a strategic framework agreement. This agreement will serve as the foundation for America's presence in Iraq once the United Nations resolution authorizing the multinational forces there expires on December the 31st.

We remain a nation at war. Al Qaida is on the run in Iraq, but the terrorists remain dangerous, and they are determined to strike our country and our allies again. In this time of war, America is grateful to all the men and women who have stepped forward to defend us. They understand that we have no greater responsibility than to stop the terrorists before they launch yet another attack on our homeland. Every day they make great sacrifices to keep the American people safe here at home. We owe our thanks to all those who wear the uniform and their families who support them in their vital work. And the best way to honor them is to support their mission and bring them home with victory.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:04 a.m. on the Colonnade at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the West Virginia Coal Association in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia
July 31, 2008

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you for your warm introduction. I have come to know your State very well. I've spent a lot of quality time here. I love its beauty, and I love its people. And I thank you for your warm greeting, and I'm proud to be here in Greenbrier.

This place has got a rich history. During the cold war, this was Congress's designated meeting place in case of an emergency in Washington. Also the site of three championship golf courses. [*Laughter*] You get to decide whether or not that was just a coincidence. [*Laughter*]

I want to talk about the energy today. No better group of people to talk about energy with than people who actually take risk to find energy. I'm—like you, I'm concerned about the price of gasoline people are paying. I know you're concerned about what it means for your workers. It's like a tax on the hard-working people here in America. So I'll spend a little time on that subject.

And I'm going to talk about the fact that this country needs a commonsense, realistic energy policy, that there's not a single solution, and that we got to work to have a comprehensive plan that takes advantage of our assets and is realistic and provides a hopeful future for our citizens.

As you know, I'm fixing to retire—[*laughter*]—in about 6 months. But I am going to sprint to the finish. And part of that sprint to the finish will be to continue to remind the American people that we need to be realistic and have common sense about today's energy needs and tomorrow's energy needs.

And I want to thank my friend Buck Harless for inviting me here. He's right; he came down to the Governor's mansion; came down just to take a sniff. [*Laughter*] And I appreciate his friendship and your friendship. I want to thank Andrew Jordon, who is the chairman of the board of the West Virginia Coal Association. I want to thank all the other members of the board, and I want to thank you as risk takers and entrepreneurs and dreamers and doers and job providers. And I welcome your family members who are here too. Thanks for coming. It's good to be with old and young alike. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Bill Raney, my friend. I've known Bill a long time; he's a good guy. And, Bill, I want to thank you for being here today. You can applaud for Bill if you want.

I'm so pleased to be traveling with Congressman Nick Rahall today. I can't thank him enough. The Congress is in session. He's a—he's got a chairmanship, and yet he took time to come down to fly down on Air Force One. I can't thank you enough—it's not a bad way to travel, by the way. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you coming, Nick.

I thank—want to thank the secretary of state, Betty Ireland. Betty has served this State with a lot of dignity. She came down from Charleston to encourage her old buddy—me. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank you for coming. I want to thank the mayor, Debbie Fogus. Madam Mayor, thank you for being here today as well; all the other State and local officials who have kindly come. But most importantly, thank you.

This is a—it's a challenging time. It's not the first time we've been through challenging times. I might remind you that in the beginning of my Presidency there were some challenging times. We had a recession, and of course, we got attacked. And yet, with good policy and by trusting the ingenuity and the enterprise of the American people, we came through those times

better than before. We'll come—the same thing is going to happen this time.

It's—we got some good news today, encouraging news. Not great news, but encouraging news—that in the second quarter, the economy grew at a rate of 1.9 percent.

Now, it's not as good as we'd like it to be, but I want to remind you, a few months ago, there were predictions that the economy would shrink this quarter, not grow. But in fact, the opposite has happened. As a matter of fact, it's more than double the rate we saw in the first quarter; that's positive.

It's—we saw the slowdown early, by the way. One of the jobs of people like me that you entrust is to see problems and react to them. Not, like, let problems fester and just hope for the best; it is to actually respond. And that's why we passed the stimulus package. Just so you know: Up to now, we've delivered $92 billion in stimulus payments. It fits into my philosophy of government, which is, I'd rather you spend your money than the Federal Government spend your money.

See, I can think you can spend it better than those of us in Washington, DC, can spend it. I'd rather have you trying to figure out what's best for your family than the Government trying to figure out what's best for your family. So the stimulus package was all part of making sure that we dealt with this slowdown that was coming.

And people believe that the stimulus package should have a positive effect in the third quarter. Of course, you can listen to these economists, on the one hand they'll say, and then on the other hand—if they had three hands, it would be on the one hand, the second hand, and the third hand. [*Laughter*] The stimulus package has been positive.

There's other good economic news. Productivity increases are up, which makes America, our goods, more competitive. I think you understand the definition of productivity increases in your own industry. You've seen the change, mighty change take place in your businesses. Workers are more productive, and your businesses are more competitive as a result.

Exports are on the rise; it's a—durable good orders are strong. What that means is that—that suggests that businesses are anticipating a better second half of the year. So I believe the foundations of this economy are strong. I think with sound policies and the ingenuity of the American people, we're going to emerge better and stronger. We've done it in the past, and we'll do it again this time.

You know, one of the challenges is energy prices—it's energy prices today. Another challenge is to make sure we've got energy for tomorrow as well. I'm a big believer in technology and innovation. I'm going to spend a little time today talking about how technology can change basic industry to keep us competitive and to keep us economically viable in the future.

I will also want to emphasize that the energy—the best energy we have is the ingenuity of the American people, the hard-working, enterprising, entrepreneurial people that get up every single day to make a living for their families and to contribute to the economic vitality of the country.

I want to talk about electricity, and I want to talk about fuel we need for our cars and trucks. In order for this country to be economically competitive beyond my time and time of some of the others around here, we need to be—make sure we've got a reliable supply of electricity. You can't grow your economy, you can't provide hope for your people, you can't afford to buy new—or spend money on new technologies unless you have a strong economy. And part of that strong economy is to make sure we have reliable sources of electricity. And there's no more reliable source of electricity than coal.

Coal is affordable, and coal is available right here in the United States of America. Coal allows us to keep our prices reasonable, and it provides jobs. It provides jobs

for hard-working people right here in the great State of West Virginia and other States as well.

We use about 1.1 billion tons of coal a year. That sounds like a lot to me. It—and so the challenge is, how do we make sure that this reliable source of U.S. energy remains in the center of our strategy? I believe the best way to do that is for the Government to invest in clean coal research and development.

Buck just wasn't down there to have lunch. [*Laughter*] He said, "Do you understand the promise of clean coal technology, and will you support it?" I said, "I will." As a matter of fact, I didn't say it just to him; I've said it throughout this State—not one time, but many times.

This year—I mean, since we've been in office, we've spent $2.5 billion on clean coal research. Why? Because it's a good investment to make sure that an abundant supply of energy is available and is in use for a long time coming. That's why we're doing it.

This year alone we've requested nearly $650 million in the budget for advanced coal research. It's the largest such request in 25 years. The funding is supported—is supporting the development of technology to capture carbon dioxide emissions that come from coal. This is something the industry wants the Government to do. We want us to be on the leading edge of change. We want to be able to capture CO_2. These advances obviously are going to make coal more environmentally friendly. It'll make it easier for people to say, "Let's use this abundant resource."

Today my administration announced $36 million for new carbon capture projects. In other words, it's more than just research. We're now beginning to get into the implementation stage of promising new technologies. And eventually, the technology may allow us to prevent 90 percent of coal's carbon emissions from being released into the environment. We're working collaboratively together, and I want to thank the Coal Association's support of this kind of technology and research and development. It makes a lot of sense.

Secondly, we've got to use nuclear power. Coal is obviously going to be an important part of the mix as we go forward, and it should be. What do they say, got 250 years of reserves here? That's a long time. Two hundred and fifty years is a—should—of reserves should say, gosh, we're in good shape, we got energy available right here in the United States of America.

This new technology will help us use those reserves, but we can also use nuclear power too. I'm a big believer in civilian nuclear power. I think it makes a lot of sense. People out there in the environmental community talk about the need for zero-emission, renewable fuel—there's one right there called nuclear power. And they ought to be supporting nuclear power.

Part of the problem with nuclear power is that it's hard to get a plant built because of excessive regulation and lawsuits. You understand the deployment of capital. There has to be certainty when it comes time to deploy capital. The deployment of capital entails risk, and that is the return on—whether or not there's a decent return on your capital. But risk can also come if the Government steps in at the last minute or a lawsuit steps in the last minute and says all the capital you deployed isn't going to be utilized. And that's been part of the problem.

So we're working to—and by the way, there hasn't been one new nuclear power plant built in this country in 30 years. If you're interested in making sure that we've got a viable economic future, we need electricity, and we can get good electricity from coal, and we can get good electricity from nuclear power as well.

So we've been working to help eliminate the barriers to development in nuclear power plants. We want there to be regulatory certainty. We want there to be fewer

lawsuits. We invested more than $300 million in research and development for energy technology. We want these little ones when they grow up to know that there's safe engineering in these plants.

We've launched a program called Nuclear Power 2010, which is a partnership between the industry and the Government to encourage the construction of new plants. Interestingly enough—I'm sure this hasn't made it to you yet, but I think you'll find this interesting, that we've received applications to build or operate 18 new nuclear reactors in the United States. And we anticipate another seven applications submitted this year. I'm glad to report that because there needs to be a comprehensive plan. There's not a single solution to making sure we got enough electricity. There needs to be a comprehensive solution.

And here's an important part of the plan. We ought to be utilizing wind. I tell people all the time, they ought to be putting wind turbines in Washington—[*laughter*]—particularly those that utilize hot air. [*Laughter*] We've increased our wind production by more than 400 percent since 2001. There's a lot of wind turbines out in my part of the country, out in west Texas in the desert where there's a lot of wind and a lot of open space.

Interestingly enough, last year, more than 30 percent of the new electrical generating capacity came from wind. And this country has installed more wind power capacity than any other country in the world. It's an interesting mix, isn't it? Make no mistake about it: Most of the energy is going to come from the kind of plants that we now have in existence, but wind can be an additive; it can be an additional part of an energy mix.

And so can solar energy. Solar energy has got a lot of promise, particularly in parts of the world where the sun shines a lot. [*Laughter*] We're working hard to figure out what's available, what's viable, how do you store, how do you feed back into the electricity grid solar energy. My only point to you is, is that—I'm going to keep saying this over and over again, because the country has got to hear it—we need a variety of sources of power in order to deal with the problems today and, as importantly, send the signal that the future is going to be viable for people, that there's going to be plenty of electricity.

I want to talk to you about gasoline prices here for a while. And there are some things we can do; there's some signals we can send. The—we're living in an interesting world, because a demand for gas—for oil in a remote part of the world affects the gasoline prices right here in West Virginia.

Hydrocarbon—oil is a commodity, and there are now growing economies like China and India that are demanding more oil in order to keep their economies growing. I don't know if you know this or not, but I find it very interesting that in India there are 350 million people in their middle class. That's more than all of America.

And so these people, they want better lives just like our citizens want better lives. And so there is increasing demand for gasoline, which means increasing demand for oil. Most Americans, I'm confident, understand that when the price of crude oil goes up, it drives the price of gasoline.

The demand for oil worldwide is outstripping the supply of oil worldwide, which creates pricing pressures. And so what do you do about it? It's one thing to identify the problem; it's another thing to do something about it. Well, one thing you do about it is obviously conservation. I mean, when people drive less, it takes pressure off the market.

I happen to believe in the collective wisdom of the American people, and you can make your own decision whether or not you want to drive extra or not. That's the marketplace and how it works. But the Government can help, and that's why we passed increased fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks.

I want to talk about the supply side. We have got to increase domestic production of oil. If you want to take the price pressure—[*applause*]—if you want to take the pressure off price, we ought to be sending a signal that the United States is going to find oil right here in our own hemisphere. And at the same time, we ought to be working on alternative sources. So I'll spend a little time on ethanol and biodiesel and hydrogen power. But I do want to concentrate on oil.

Congress has got an opportunity to send a signal to our own citizens in the world that we will, in environmentally friendly ways, explore vast opportunities to find—bring more oil to the market right here in the United States. I'd rather be buying our oil from U.S. producers than sending our money overseas.

And there's a lot of frustration building up. People are looking at Washington to actually do something constructive, and yet we can't get any votes on some practical solutions. Here they are.

First, we ought to be drilling offshore exploration, what's called the Outer Continental Shelf. These limits are—this Outer Continental Shelf is off-limits, and it has been for a while; although the experts say that this could produce enough oil to match our current production for nearly 10 years. There's a lot of potential. Problem is that the Congress has restricted access to key areas of the OCS since the early 1980s; in other words, there's prohibitions in law.

Technologies has advanced a lot since the 1980s. You know it in your own industry, but if you know anything about the oil and gas business, you know that there's been unbelievable technological breakthroughs when it comes for exploration for oil and gas. I mean, you can be very—you can drill in a single-site location with horizontal drilling to explore reservoirs, which makes it easier to protect coral reefs, for example, in the offshore—we all want to be environmentally friendly people, but we also want to have practical policies that deal with the problems we face today and the problems we'll face tomorrow if we don't get going.

I asked the Congress to lift the legislative ban in June and to allow there to be offshore exploration. Tomorrow is the 1st of August. That is now 6 weeks since I made the request, and Democratic leaders there haven't done anything. I—Members are fixing to go home on their August break; they get to explain to their citizens why nothing positive has happened. Looking forward to listening to the explanations. It's—there's legislation pending in Congress to lift the restrictions. My call is, before you go home for an extended period of time, you ought to bring these bills to the floor. The leaders ought to be giving these Members a vote, a chance to say yes or no as to whether or not we ought to be finding more domestic oil to take the pressure off gasoline prices.

There were executive restrictions on OCS exploration. I've taken them off; I've done my part. And now the Congress needs to do its part.

Secondly, we ought to expand oil production by tapping into oil shale. Oil shale is out West, in the Rocky Mountain West, and that alone, if fully recovered, equals more than a century's worth of imports at current levels; in other words, there's huge potential. And there's new technologies that may make this become economically viable.

The problem is, is that there's a provision inserted into law that blocks oil shale leasing on Federal lands. In other words, the Federal lands that contain the oil shale—you can't lease them. And if you can't lease them, obviously, you can't explore. The provision was slipped in; it can be slipped out. [*Laughter*]

We ought to be drilling in Alaska. I told you about the new exploration techniques, the new drilling techniques. You can have a drilling site that protects the flora and the fauna, and explore in ways to get—to be—doesn't deplete your reservoir unnecessarily. In other words, we get oil and

gas to the pipeline. We can drill on a tiny footprint relative to the vast tract of land, and it's estimated that that would produce about 10 billion barrels of oil. Now, some of the critics say, that's not much oil. Well, that's 10 billion barrels times current price less money going overseas and staying here in the United States of America.

One of the real problems we have is that we haven't built a refinery in the United States in 30 years. Isn't that an interesting statistic? It's kind of a sad statistic, because, you probably don't know this, but much of the gasoline that we use here in America is imported from overseas. We haven't built a refinery because there's typically a lot of regulatory burdens and costly litigation. And Congress can fix it, and they ought to fix it. I actually asked Congress a couple of times to allow for refineries to be built on abandoned military bases and expedite the regulatory process so we can get these refineries up so we can get more gasoline, U.S.-produced gasoline, into the pumps for U.S. consumers.

Supply and demand works. And if you got a pinched supply relative to increasing demand, you're going to have higher prices. We can send a signal to the world that the United States is going to get after these reserves here in the United States of America, that we're going to have an aggressive policy that respects our environment to take the pressure off international price, and we can also relieve pressure on our own gasoline stocks by producing it right here in the United States of America.

And so I'm talking about a comprehensive plan. But it starts with being wise about our own resources and having confidence that technology will enable us to extract those resources that accomplishes several objectives: one, an efficient way to get the product to market; two, keeping our money here at home; and three, protecting the environment. And I'm confident we can do all three.

We're in a interesting period of time. I happen to believe we're in a—it's in our national security interest to become less dependent on foreign oil. Matter of fact, I know it's in our national security interest. I sometimes remind people that we have to buy oil from places where people don't particularly like us. And so therefore, finding oil here domestically helps, but it also helps to promote alternative energy sources. I like the idea of our farmers growing product that powers our automobiles. That's one way to keep money at home. And that's why I'm a big believer in ethanol. And I understand the pressure on corn. If you're a chicken raiser, you're not happy about things right now. If you're a hog raiser, you know that your feed prices are going up.

And my answer is, it is just the beginning of an industry that is going to develop away from corn ethanol, because I feel pretty good about the fact that our research and development would allow us to use other sources of raw materials for ethanol, like wood chips. You got yourself a lot of wood here in West Virginia. Wouldn't it be possible—[*applause*]—and there is waste materials when it comes to the wood industry, the timber industry. Wouldn't it make sense to—and I think this is going to happen—to be able to use the waste material to produce energy that goes into our automobiles?

There's a lot of cars that are flex-fuel. I don't know if you pay attention to whether your car is flex-fuel or not, but that means you can either regular gasoline or ethanol. And the automobile industry has been responding to demands. In my part of the world, they could be growing switchgrass; it's a grass that grows where there's not a lot of rain. And that too could be converted. It's called cellulosic ethanol; that's a fancy term for using different kind of products to be able to manufacture ethanol. Biodiesel, as well, has got a lot of potential to it.

I believe that one really promising source of energy, so we can power our automobiles and become less dependent on foreign energy, is coal-to-liquids projects. I believe that it's worthwhile to—[*applause*]. I appreciate the fact that the leaders here in this State have pushed this project hard. I want to thank your—the industry for making sure people explore all possibilities. This has got a lot of potential to be able to help us in America diversify away from foreign oil. And I'm not sure how long it's going to take, but don't be surprised if technological breakthroughs don't enable you to become gasoline producers.

One of these days we're going to be driving cars with battery technologies that will enable you to be able to have a car that doesn't look like a golf cart—[*laughter*]—but will be able to get you from point A to point B. It's estimated that new battery technologies will be on the market relatively quickly, where you can drive the first 40 miles on electricity. That takes the pressure off of crude oil because it means you're not using gasoline. Of course, we're going to have to have enough electricity to be able to drive the cars. That's the challenge.

We're working on hydrogen-powered automobiles. These little fellows will be driving—maybe driving hydrogen-powered automobiles. That's not going to be happening any time soon, but there's a great potential in tapping hydrogen. I would repeat: In order to manufacture hydrogen, you're going to have to have enough electricity to be able to do so. But there's some great promise. If you think back to the changes in America, I mean, it's remarkable progress in our country. Technology has changed a lot about how we live, and it's going to continue doing it.

And that's why we got—that's why I'm confident in the future. I just want to make sure that we understand that there isn't a single solution and to make sure the American people understand, you're a part of the solution. You're a part of making sure that the country remains optimistic and hopeful.

I talk a lot about our energy resources, but the best resource in America is the brain power and the optimism of the American people. We're a fabulous country. You know, I have seen America at its very best in 7½ years. I marvel at the entrepreneurial spirit in our country. I love the fact that people go from nothing to something. I'm—our small-business owners are great people.

I love the fact that we've got people who understand the dangers we face, understand we're facing ideological people that use murder to achieve their objectives, and want to hurt us again here at home. I marvel at the fact that we've got a country where people say, "I want to serve, and to wear the uniform of the United States."

And I am constantly amazed at the millions of acts of kindness and compassion that take place on a daily basis in the United States of America. We've got people who feed the hungry, provide care for the homeless, love a neighbor in need, and it doesn't require one law from Washington, DC. Many of these folks respond to a higher law, a higher calling. This is a compassionate, decent, fantastic country, and it's been my honor to be your President for 7½ years.

I'm proud to be here with you. I'm proud to call you friend. This is not a farewell address. [*Laughter*] I'm sprinting to the finish. [*Laughter*]

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. at the Greenbrier. In his remarks, he referred to James H. "Buck" Harless, chairman of the board, International Industries, Inc.; William B. Raney, president, West Virginia Coal Association; and Mayor Debbie Fogus of White Sulphur Springs, WV.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments
August 1, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendments to my FY 2009 Budget for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, the Interior, Labor, and State, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency. The amounts requested are fully offset by proposed reductions to other accounts.

Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2009 Budget would not be increased by these proposed requests.

The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

The President's Radio Address
August 2, 2008

Good morning. This weekend marks the beginning of August, the month when many Americans take their summer vacation. This year, however, the high price of gas is taking a toll on summer travelers. Congress is now taking a month-long recess of its own. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders are leaving town without taking any action to ease the burden of high gas prices on families across America.

The fundamental source of high gas prices is the fact that supply is not keeping pace with demand. To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially oil produced here at home. So, in June, I called on Congress to lift the legislative ban that prevents offshore exploration of parts of the Outer Continental Shelf or OCS. But the leaders of the Democratic Congress have refused to allow a vote. Lifting the ban on this offshore exploration would benefit our economy in two important ways.

First, lifting the ban would allow our Nation to take advantage of a large and reliable source of domestic oil. Experts believe that these restricted areas could eventually produce about 18 billion barrels of oil; that's almost 10 years worth of America's current oil production.

Second, lifting the ban would create new opportunities for American workers and businesses. On Tuesday, I visited the Lincoln Electric Company in Cleveland, Ohio, a business that produces welding products used for offshore exploration. If Congress were to permit this exploration, it would mean new jobs at businesses like Lincoln Electric. American drivers are counting on Congress to lift the ban on offshore exploration, and so are American workers.

Bringing these resources on line will take time, and that means that the need for congressional action is urgent. I've lifted the executive restrictions on offshore exploration. This means that the only thing now standing between the American people and these vast oil resources is the United States Congress. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get this oil from beneath the ocean floor to your gas tank.

We also need to take other essential steps to strengthen domestic oil production.

Congress needs to pass legislation that allows us to tap the extraordinary potential of oil shale, permits exploration in currently restricted areas of northern Alaska, and enables the expansion of America's domestic refining capacity.

It appears that the leaders of the Democratically controlled Congress will let the entire summer pass without voting on any of these vital steps to help reduce pressure on gas prices. This failure to act is unacceptable to me and unacceptable to the American people. So when they return from their summer break, Democratic leaders should show that they've heard the frustration of the American people by allowing a vote on offshore exploration. If Congress does not act, they will owe families across America an explanation for why they're ignoring their concerns.

I know that high energy prices are making this a difficult time for many of our citizens, but it is important to remember that these high prices were not inevitable. They are partially the result of policy choices that have been made over the years by the United States Congress. Now Congress has an opportunity to begin reversing that damage. By opening up new resources at home, we can help bring energy costs down, and that will help ensure that our economy remains the strongest, most vibrant, and most hopeful in the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on August 1 in Walkers Point, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 1, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Military Personnel and Families at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska

August 4, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. I am honored to be with you. No better place to refuel an airplane than right here. I appreciate you all coming out. I'm traveling today with the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush, our daughter Barbara Bush.

I've just got one thing to ask the folks here at Eielson. Iceman Team, ready to go?

Audience members. At 50 below!

The President. Absolutely! I thank the Iceman Team for joining us. I also want to thank the Arctic warriors of Fort Wainwright for being here as well.

You know, I've been to a lot of military bases around the world. I don't think I've ever been to one where a moose can cause a traffic jam or a base where the snowmobile is considered a lawn ornament. [*Laughter*] And for you moms and dads out there, it must be a little strange in the summertime to say to your children, "Make sure you get home before dark." [*Laughter*]

I want to thank General Graper and his wife Melinda for their hospitality, and thank you for your service to our country, General. I want to thank Colonel Tim Jones, U.S. Army garrison commander of Fort Wainwright, and Theresa. I want to thank Colonel Wenke and his wife Wendy from the mighty 168th Air Fueling Wing.

The United States military has had no better supporter and stronger friend than Senator Ted Stevens. Thank you for coming, Senator; thank you for bringing your

daughter. Nothing wrong with a father bringing his daughter to an event like this.

I'm also pleased that the Governor of the great State of Alaska, Governor Sarah Palin, and her husband Todd are with us today too.

I first want to say something to our military families. I can't thank you enough for all the sacrifices you have given. There is no question, we have the finest military in the world, and one reason why is because we've got the finest military families in the world. These have been tough times on our families, and I want to thank you for staying in the fight.

I'm also proud to be here with people who have volunteered in the face of danger. There is no more important mission than to protect the United States from harm. Many of you volunteered after the attacks on the homeland on 9/11/2001. You understand what I know, that it is best to defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here in the United States.

We have been unrelenting in our efforts to protect America, and I want to thank you for your service. There is no finer honor than being the Commander in Chief of a fine group of men and women, and I'm proud to be in your midst.

I want to thank the members of the 354th Fighter Wing. I appreciate what you do; I appreciate your efforts. I want to thank you for keeping us safe on the Nation's western flank. I thank you for your training missions. The people in the lower 48 send their very best.

I want to thank the more than 200 airmen from Eielson who are deployed around the world, many in the Middle East. Their service in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere is making this Nation safer. And for the family members of those airmen, God bless you, and thank you for standing with your loved one.

Eielson is also the home of the "Guardians of the Last Frontier," the men and women of the Alaska Air National Guard 168th Air Refueling Wing. I'm an old Guard pilot myself. I want to thank the pilots who are here, and I thank those who help these planes stay in the air. Your contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are significant and important.

I want to thank the soldiers from Fort Wainwright. I'm proud to be standing with the men and women of Task Force 49 and the mighty Stryker Brigade. You got to know the folks from Task Force 49 are pretty tough; after all, they train in 50 below, and they fight in 120 above. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate what you're doing to support our missions, and I fully understand that a Stryker brigade will soon deploy to Iraq. The other day I made it clear that our policy on rotations is now 12 months in, 12 months out. I know the Stryker brigade from Fort Wainwright was one of the first brigades to extend, and I understand it puts stress on the families. Because of the progress we're making in Iraq, there's now certainty in the rotations.

Deployments are difficult, but they are necessary. We are a nation at war. Oh, some in America say, "This is a simple law enforcement matter; dealing with these extremists who would do us harm is law enforcement." Well, if it's a law enforcement matter, that means you react after the crime. I think it's important, and I know most of you here think it's important, to stop the crime from happening in the first place.

And therefore, the United States, today and tomorrow, must stay on the offense and keep the pressure on this enemy and bring them to justice so they don't hurt the American citizen again. And we've got no greater asset than the United States military.

The Stryker brigade that's heading into Iraq will be heading into a different situation than the previous Stryker brigade when they first went into Iraq. About a year ago, people thought Iraq was lost and hopeless.

People were saying, "Let's get out of there; it doesn't matter to our national security." Iraq has changed a lot thanks to the bravery of people in this hangar and the bravery of troops all across our country. The terrorists on the run—the terrorists will be denied a safe haven, and freedom is on the march. And as a result, our children are more likely to grow up in a peaceful world. And I thank you for your service, and I thank you for your sacrifice.

It is important for the United States of America never to forget the transformative power of liberty. I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. And I know free societies yield the peace we all want. It's in our national interest to keep the pressure on the terrorists, to give them no safe haven, no place to hide, to keep them on the run.

It's also in our national interest to help others realize the blessings of a free society, so that when we look back at the initial chapters of the 21st century, we will say, we've done our duty. We defended the United States of America, and we laid the foundation for peace to come.

I want to thank you for your contributions to that hopeful chapter. I thank you for your courage. And there is no doubt in my mind that we will prevail. I've seen firsthand the character of the men and women who wear our uniform. I know such a man named Sergeant Gregory Williams. He's right here with us today.

He was on night patrol in Baghdad when his vehicle was hit by an explosive device. The blast caused Sergeant Williams to lose consciousness. He recovered, and he put out the flames that were beginning to engulf him and the soldiers around him. He gave emergency aid to members of his platoon until he realized he was under enemy fire, and then he provided covering fire. He pulled his platoon leader out of the smoldering vehicle. Williams performed these actions despite the fact that he was burned himself, that he was wounded. His heroism that night saved the lives of his fellow soldiers, and for that he received the Distinguished Service Cross. And I'm proud to be in the presence of such a courageous American citizen.

All here have my pride and have my gratitude, and you have the thanks of our entire Nation. We honor your service. We appreciate the sacrifice of your families. A lot of Americans will keep you in their prayers. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. at the Thunderdome. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Mark W. Graper, USAF, commander, 354th Fighter Wing, who introduced the President; Col. D. Scott Wenke, USAF, commander, 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard; Col. Wendy Wenke, USAF, director of staff (air), Joint Force Headquarters—Alaska; and Susan Covich, daughter of Sen. Ted Stevens.

Statement on the International Convention Against Doping in Sport
August 4, 2008

Today I signed the instrument of ratification for the International Convention Against Doping in Sport adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization on October 19, 2005.

This convention is a valuable tool in protecting the integrity of international sport and the health of athletes. The convention advances international cooperation on doping control matters and promotes a

drug-free competitive environment for athletes. Ratification of the convention represents the culmination of the longstanding efforts of the international community and the United States to jointly develop an equitable and harmonized approach to antidoping control and enforcement measures in international competition. Importantly, the convention highlights the vital role of youth education, comprehensive drug testing, and research in combating doping.

The timing of the United States ratification, on the eve of the Beijing Olympic Games, is appropriate. Over the next several weeks, the world will be focused on the talent and dedication of the world's most accomplished athletes. The convention makes clear that the use of performance-enhancing drugs to gain a competitive advantage undercuts the positive attributes of sport.

I remain particularly concerned that doping sends to young people the message that performance is more important than character and health. As a result, my administration has aggressively pursued education campaigns, research, and drug testing, as well as cooperation among public and private partners to encourage clean, fair, and healthy sport competition. These efforts have coincided with a significant decline in the number of young people using performance-enhancing drugs.

The challenges posed by doping must also be addressed by international cooperation and collaboration. By ratifying the convention, the United States is demonstrating its continued commitment and leadership in working with the international community to combat this public health issue.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea in Seoul, South Korea
August 6, 2008

President Lee. Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, as well as your lovely daughter, Barbara Bush, I would like to welcome you from the bottom of our hearts. Yes, well, Mr. President, the majority of the Korean people have been eagerly waiting for your visit to Korea this time, and as you saw yesterday, there were many people who gathered together to welcome your visit to Korea.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Lee. And also, Mr. President, yesterday in the lawn in front of the Seoul City Hall, there were many people gathered there, thousands of people gathered, who came together to pray, not only for your visit, but also for the future of the Korea-U.S. relationship as well.

And of course, behind those people, there were those who were sort of opposed. [*Laughter*] But, however, the number was minimal, sir.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Lee. Yes, well, Mr. President, I don't need to reiterate the fact that Korea and the United States, we are traditional allies and friends for many, many years. And also, it's been only a little over 5 months since I assumed the Presidency, but today is already our third meeting, Mr. President. So officially, but as well as personally, I have deep friendship for you and for the people of America, and I believe in the future of the Korea-U.S. relationship.

And as you saw, Mr. President, the weather today is beautiful. We had rain coming—torrential rain coming up until about 2 days ago. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Laura and I are

delighted to be with you and Mrs. Kim again. Ours is a vital relationship. And our three meetings will only strengthen the relationship. I admire your forthrightness, your integrity, and your deep love for the people of Korea.

And I enjoy coming to a free society, where people are able to express their opinions. And your country is a free society. So thank you. I'm looking forward to our conversations. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:46 a.m. at the Blue House. In his remarks, he referred to Kim Yoon-ok, wife of President Lee.

The President's News Conference With President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea in Seoul
August 6, 2008

President Lee. President Bush, along with Mrs. Bush and Barbara Bush, visited Korea. I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all three of them.

It's been a little over 5 months since I became President, but already today's meeting was the third meeting with President Bush. We had a very deep and insightful meeting. President Bush and I reaffirmed once again the importance of our alliance, and we discussed ways on how to strengthen this alliance.

The security environment is changing very rapidly, and there's a need for the Korea-U.S. alliance to adapt to these changes. With this in mind, President Bush and I agreed that not only must we strengthen the military and security aspect of our alliance, but also expand our alliance so that it encompasses the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects as well.

Furthermore, we both agreed that we must work to expand our alliance so that Korea and the U.S. will continue to cooperate in various global issues, such as maintenance of peace, eradicating terrorism, climate change, and nonproliferation. Based on shared values and mutual trust, President Bush and I agreed to continue discussing specific ways to build our alliance into a strategic and future-oriented structure.

President Bush and I agreed that through the six-party talks, there were positive steps made in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. And I offered my sincere appreciation and praised President Bush's leadership in this endeavor. We agreed that our ultimate aim is to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea, and we agreed that this aim will be achieved by thoroughly verifying, through a rigorous verification regime, the completeness and correctness of the declaration submitted by North Korea.

Throughout this process, Korea and the U.S. will, of course, continue our close cooperation. And President Bush and I agreed to work closely together so that the third-phase actions can take place as soon as possible, bringing us closer to our objective, which is North Korea completely abandoning all their nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.

President Bush and I also agreed that the denuclearization of North Korea and substantive cooperation between the two Koreas should move along in parallel. Also, we made it clear that we are willing to actively assist North Korea strengthen exchange and cooperation with the international community so that it can take part in building peace and sharing in the prosperity of the peninsula and Northeast Asia.

Last July 11, at the Mount Kumgang resort area, an innocent South Korean national was killed, an unacceptable incident that should have never occurred and one that must never happen again. President Bush and I agreed that North Korea must be forthcoming and fully cooperate so that we find out what really happened and to come up with ways to prevent such incidents from recurring.

We also discussed specific ways to strengthen cooperation between Korea and the U.S. President Bush said that he will do his best so that the ratification of the KORUS FTA, as well as Korea's participation in the Visa Waiver Program will be finalized within this year.

I also welcomed the work-study program called WEST, the first-ever program of its kind to be proposed by the U.S. to any other country, and assured President Bush that I will do my best so that it can be implemented as soon as possible. This WEST Program allows approximately 5,000 students every year to visit the U.S. for a period of 18 months so that they can study English, work, and have an opportunity to experience life in the U.S. This program will help young Koreans and Americans get a better understanding of each other's culture.

President Bush and I agreed to further expand our cooperation in the area of space science and aeronautics by promoting joint space exploration, development of scientific research satellites, and Korea's participation in NASA's International Lunar Network project.

We also talked about how we are going to continue working closely together, as well as with the international community, on issues of global concern, such as climate change, issues that we already had a chance to discuss during our last meeting in Toyako, Japan, last month.

I thanked President Bush for his swift action in correcting the Dokdo issue, and I also explained to him the historical background of this critical importance.

Once again, along with the Korean people, let me extend to you, Mr. President, and to your family our warmest welcome from the bottom of our hearts. Also, I look forward to you and Mrs. Bush to come and visit Korea freely when you have more time, Mr. President. I will always be ready to welcome my real friend whenever you come by. I will always be ready with open arms.

President Bush. I think you're referring to my retirement. [*Laughter*] It's great to be back, and I can't thank you and Mrs. Kim enough for your gracious hospitality. And Laura and I and Barbara are looking forward to lunch.

It's important for the people of your great country to know how much Americans value our friendship and our relationship and that we have a very important alliance and that it is being transformed to make sure that it's modern and effective. It's—alliances aren't stagnant; they've got to constantly reassess. And that's what we're doing in a way that will not only help defend the freedom here on the peninsula, Korean Peninsula, but also will help us meet the challenges of a new century.

And I want to thank you for being a—you know, a forward-looking President. Transformation involves realigning our forces here in Korea, improving the interoperability of our forces, as well as preparing for Korea to take on greater operational responsibilities in times of conflict. Of course, the whole purpose of the alliance is to prevent the conflict from happening in the first place.

We're working to speed your entry into the Visa Waiver Program, as you mentioned. The idea is to get it done by the end of this year. I think people are optimistic about that, Mr. President. And then I appreciate you bringing up the work-study program. It's an exciting opportunity for young Koreans to come to our country to learn and study and work. And I believe the best foreign policy for America is for

people to get to know our country firsthand. And I thank you for bringing up the program, and the responsible officials in our Government will work hard to bring it to a conclusion.

We talked about the six-party talks. Yes, I'm pleased that the 5-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon was destroyed. That's then the ultimate verification, isn't it? We could see with our own eyes that they—the North Korean Government did what they said they were going to do. And now the question is, will they continue that type of accountability? And so we're in the process now of making sure the North Korean Government understands they have many more obligations under the six-party talks, and that we will deal with the North Koreans based upon the principle of action for action.

I mean, I told the President I am concerned about North Korea's human rights record. I'm concerned about its uranium enrichment activities, as well as its nuclear testing and proliferation, its ballistic missile programs. And the best way to approach and answer those concerns is for there to be strong verification measures. And that's where we are in the six-party talks. And the choice is the leader of North Korea's to make. We made our choice: five nations bound together saying the same thing. And so we'll see what his decision is, Mr. President.

I strongly support you—your Government's request to investigate last month's shooting of a South Korean tourist. And you spoke eloquently in our meeting about how you felt when you first learned about the incident and how the people of your good country must feel when they learned the news of this woman's death.

We talked about our confronting global security challenges together. I do want to thank you very much for your contributions to two young democracies, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Korean people have made sacrifices to support troops there and support other missions there, and they've made a difference. And I appreciate that very much. I also want to thank you very much for committing to send 350 troops to Lebanon as part of the U.N. mission.

The United States and Korea are working to open up markets. We concluded a free trade agreement with Korea. And it's an important agreement for the United States. It's important for our businesses; it's important for our workers. And our Congress must get this agreement done and ratify it. I'm going to push hard for it, Mr. President.

I am worried about the protectionist signals coming out of the U.S. Congress. And one way to kind of send a different message is for the Democratic leadership in the Congress to bring the—bring a couple of trade bills up, Colombia and Korea, and get some votes out there, and let Congress—people in Congress declare one way or the other whether they're for open markets and free and fair trade. And I can assure you, Mr. President, this administration is for free and fair trade and will continue to press hard for what I think is a very good agreement.

Finally, I do want to say how much I appreciate your work on environmental challenges. Korea has been very constructive when it comes to climate change, and I want to thank you for your leadership on that issue. There's no doubt we need a long-term global goal for reducing emissions. We need midterm national goals and plans, and we need a lot of research and development to solve the problem in a way that enables us to say to our people, our economies can continue to grow and we'll be responsible stewards of the environment.

I want to thank you once again for your grand hospitality. Our relationship is important, it's vital, and I believe it's strong. Thank you, sir.

South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement/ Island of Dokdo/Afghanistan

Q. A question going out to President Lee. Mr. President, President Lee, you said that passage of the KORUS FTA will be one of the most important aspects of reviving the Korean economy. Do you, sir, despite the opposition within the U.S. Congress, do you expect the KORUS FTA to be ratified within the U.S. Congress? And if so, when do you expect the KORUS FTA to be ratified?

Additionally, with regards to the Dokdo issue, we already see the conclusion of this issue, but, however, we still have the question of the naming issue because Dokdo is still referred to as Liancourt Rocks. What kind of dialogue did you have with President Bush during the summit meeting regarding Dokdo naming?

Lastly, did President Bush request President Lee to dispatch troops to Afghanistan?

President Bush. You sound like the American press. [*Laughter*]

President Lee. As for the last question, I think President Bush should be answering that question.

As for the KORUS FTA, it benefits both Korea and the United States, and this is my firm belief. It will help the Korean economy revive itself, and the KORUS FTA will be an opportunity for us to upgrade Korea's economy up a notch. It will improve our competitiveness internationally, improve our productivity, broaden our trade base. And also, through the broadened trade base, we will be able to create new jobs for Koreans. So these are all reasons why I fully support and why I believe that the KORUS FTA must pass.

And also, the KORUS FTA has a lot of implications in terms of improving and strengthening the Korea-U.S. bilateral relationship. And so that is why I recognize the significance of the KORUS FTA.

Today President Bush and I discussed and we agreed that we will continue to do our best so that the KORUS FTA will be able to pass by the end of this year. We promised each other we'll do our best. I will, on my part, continue to convince the Korea National Assembly for ratification, and President Bush said that he will continue his strenuous efforts to try to convince the U.S. Congress that they ratify the U.S.—the KORUS FTA.

As for the Dokdo naming issue, this is not a Korea-U.S. issue, this is a Korea-Japan issue. So—well, I told President Bush—I thanked him, of course, for correcting swiftly the naming issue within the United States. But for the remaining issues, this is an issue that the Korean Government must take up in terms of the justifiability, the historical right that we have over Dokdo, and all the data that we have managed to accrue.

And so we will continue our efforts to try to correct this and to tell the international community of our sovereign rights regarding this Dokdo issue. So we'll be very consistent and continuously let people know—and tell the international community and let them know that this is a sovereign land belonging to South Korea. We have Korean nationals living there, and we have exercised control over these islands for many years. And so this is our position, which has always been consistent. And so we have—we're confident that we'll be able to correct this.

As for Afghanistan and sending Korean troops, I think, again, President Bush should be able to answer that. But I can tell you that we did discuss this issue.

President Bush. We discussed it. I thanked the President for the contributions that Korea has made to Afghanistan. And the only thing I talked to him about was noncombat help. I asked him to consider as much noncombat help as possible to help this young democracy.

China/Six-Party Talks

Q. Thank you, both. To President Bush, China's crackdown on human rights is drawing intense scrutiny. People are being

harassed and jailed just for speaking their mind, trying to speak their mind. I know you say that you speak candidly with President Hu about this, but with all eyes on Beijing and the world watching, I'd like to ask you directly, what do you think of how China treats its people?

And, President Lee, I'd like to ask you—you noted progress in the six-party talks. Do you think that North Korea will go along with verification of its nuclear programs? For people who think that this is just another go-around, why will this time be any different?

President Bush. I've been meeting with Chinese leaders now for 7½ years; my message has been the same: You should not fear religious people in your society; as a matter of fact, religious people will make your society a better place; that you ought to welcome people being able to express their minds. And to the extent that people aren't able to do that and people aren't able to worship freely is—you know, I think is a mistake. And I explained it to him every single time.

And the reason I'm going to the Olympics is twofold: one, to show my respect for the people of China; and two, to cheer on the U.S. team. And by the way, the order ought to be reversed as to why I may—went. I hope our team wins as many gold medals as possible, and if not win gold, silver, and if not silver, bronze.

And this is an athletic event. But it's also an opportunity to say to the Chinese people, we respect your traditions; we respect your history. And as I said many times, I don't need the Olympics as an opportunity to express my views about religious freedom, since I have been doing it since I've been the President.

President Lee. I think I need to answer part of the question. As for the six-party talks and the prospects for the six-party talks, I think there are many skeptics as to the future of the six-party talks. I think many people around the world look at the behavior of North Korea up until today and they say—and they wonder whether North Korea will faithfully carry out verification. However, we have a difficult opposition, and I think right now is a good time to really praise the leadership of President Bush for dealing with a very difficult opponent.

And as to what kind of behavior North Korea will take, what's most important is—number one is that we must have a denuclearization of North Korea. So I will be patient, I will be consistent, and I will do my best. And I have faith and I am confident that we will be able to move on to the verification process and move on to the next phase of that. And we will try to—our best to make it complete, and I believe that North Korea must faithfully cooperate in the verification process

So regardless of what North Korea has in mind, I believe it's important for the rest of the members of the six-party talks to continue pursuing our objective. And at times, we might have to wait; at times, we might be difficult, but we will be consistent.

North Korea/Six-Party Talks

Q. A question going out to His Excellency, President Bush. With regards to removing North Korea from the terrorism list, we understand that beginning on the 12th, North Korea might be able to be removed from the list. When do you expect, Mr. Bush, President Bush, that North Korea may be removed from the list? Are there any preconditions or is there anything that North Korea must do for them to be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism?

President Bush. Yes. The 12th is the first opportunity where they may be lifted off the list. And, yes, they got a lot to do. They got to, like, show us a verification regime that we can trust. This is a step-by-step process.

I don't know whether or not they're going to give up their weapons. I really don't know. I don't think either of us

knows. I know this, that the six-party talks is the best way to convince them to give up their weapons. I know there's a framework in place that will make it easier for those of us who care about this issue to work together to send a common message to the North Korea leader: You have a choice to make: You can verifiably do what you say you're going to do, or you'll continue to be the most sanctioned regime in the world.

We have put out a step-by-step process to—as a way forward for the North Korean leader. This isn't a U.S. proposal; this is a five-party proposal. South Korea has been a very integral part of the process, and they will remain an integral part of the process. We're all at the table together, saying the same thing.

And so part of the step-by-step was to say, okay, if you do the following things like you said you would do, you get off the terrorist list. That could conceivably happen, as you mentioned, on the 12th. However, it's going to require action on the leader of North Korea's part. It just doesn't automatically happen.

We changed the way it used to be. It used to be that—okay, we'll give you something and hope that you end up responding. It's no longer that way. The six-party talks basically says, you have made a promise; once you fulfill your promise, then something will happen positively. And so I—we'll see. It's his choice to make as to whether or not he gets to come off the list. If he is off the list, I want to remind you that he'll still be—they will still be the most sanctioned country in the world.

And so then the fundamental question is, do they want to continue on and try to change the status? Do they want to try to change their isolation? Do they want to enter the community of nations? Do they want to be viewed as a peaceful country? And so there's a series of steps that we've all agreed to, including North Korea, that it's up to them to make the decision as to how they'll proceed.

North Korea

Q. Yes——

President Bush. Yes, Paul [Paul Wiseman, USA Today]. [*Laughter*]

Q. I was wondering, do you think that North Korea has fundamentally changed from being a member of the axis of evil a few years ago?

President Bush. That's to be determined. The human rights abuses inside the country still exist and persist. The North Korean leader has yet to fully verify the extent to which he has had a highly enriched uranium program. There's still more steps to be done on the plutonium program. So in order to get off the list, the axis of evil list, then the North Korean leader is going to have to make certain decisions. And that's all part of the six-party talks.

And again, I can't predict the North Korean leader's decisionmaking. I don't know what he's going to do. But I do know that the best way to solve this issue is for five other nations to be saying the exact same thing.

And there has been progress. I mean, one thing is for certain, that he did blow up the cooling tower. That was—that's verifiable because we all saw it. And it's—that was a positive step. And I—you know, I think all of us appreciated that positive step, but there's more steps to be taken. And my hope is that the axis of evil list no longer exists. That's my hope, for the sake of peace. And it's my hope for—you know, for the sake of our children.

Thank you very much for your attention. Thank you for your questions. Why don't you go find a shade tree to stand under? [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:05 a.m. at the Blue House. In his remarks, the President referred to Kim Yoon-ok, wife of President Lee; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; South Korean tourist Park Wang-ja, who was killed by a

North Korean soldier on July 11; and President Hu Jintao of China. President Lee and some reporters spoke in Korean, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to Military Personnel at United States Army Garrison—Yongsan, South Korea
August 6, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Berlus—how about the corporal? What a silver-tongued devil. Thank you, Corporal Berlus. Thanks for the kind introduction. I'm feeling pretty spiffy in my new jacket; feeling pretty warm in it too. [*Laughter*]

I am so honored to be here at freedom's frontier. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I always look forward to the chance to say, "Hooah!"

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Yes, sir! No better place to do it than right here with U.S. Forces Korea. I thank the units here from the 8th Army Pacific Victors——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——members of the 7th Air Force——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——the U.S. Navy Forces Korea——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——Marine Forces Korea——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——and members of the Special Operations Command.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I appreciate the fact that you're carrying our flag with such honor in this vital part of the world. The American people are grateful for your service, and so is your Commander in Chief.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Thank you. I bring greetings to the South Korean military who is with us today, members from the KATUSA and the Zaytun Division.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We're honored by your friendship, we're proud of our alliance, and we're inspired by your work to advance the cause of liberty.

I also bring my love and greetings and appreciation to the military families.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Now, I understand our spouses did not take the oath of office when they enlisted. They took another oath. Matter of fact, their service to the country began with the simple words, "I do." So to the military spouses and to the children who are here, please know that the United States of America is grateful for the sacrifices that you all are making on behalf of our country. And I'm proud to be in your presence, and so is the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush.

And I'm traveling—or we're traveling with our daughter, one of two daughters—welcome, Barbara.

I know the commander very well. See, I got to see General Sharp up close a lot during the last 7½ years. He was in the Pentagon for a while; then he was transferred to this very important post. So, General Sharp, it's great to be with you again. Thank you for your fantastic service to our country. I'm proud to be with your wife. I also am proud to be with General Lee, deputy commander of the Combined Forces Command. It's an honor to meet your wife too, General. How about Sergeant—Command Sergeant Major Robert Winzenried. Robert, I'm glad you're here.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. By the way, just so you sergeants understand, you are the backbone of the United States military——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——and I appreciate your service.

We're also here today with the Ambassador from the United States to Korea, Sandy Vershbow, and his wife Lisa. Ambassador, thank you for your fine service to our country. Proud to be serving with you.

Fifty-five years have passed since the guns went quiet and the cease-fire was signed on this peninsula. Now, for some of you, 55 years seems like a long time. [*Laughter*] But if you're 62 years old, it's just a snap of the fingers. [*Laughter*] It wasn't all that long ago.

And since that time, our forces have kept the peace. Our nations have built a robust alliance. Notice I'm saying "our nations." We're working side by side with our strong allies, the Korean people and the Korean military. And thanks to the contribution of men and women who are wearing the uniform just like you, the partnership between America and Korea has become one of the great success stories of modern times.

We've worked with our allies to help build a free and prosperous country out of the rubbles of war. And America is better off for it. Because of the sacrifice of troops just like you, a part of the world that was ravaged by war is now a—is now peaceful. And that enhances the security of the United States of America. We're bringing hope to people, and that's important, for people to have hope.

One of the signs of Korea's emergence is a professional and capable military. It's one of the things you look for when you see a country begin to get on its feet and take control of its destiny, is what kind of military does it have.

America is going to continue to stand with the Korean Peninsula, no question about it. And as South Korea has grown in strength, it takes a larger role, more significant role in its own defenses. And so America, in turn, is modernizing its presence. We're closing unneeded installations, and we're going to return this valuable land right here to the Korean people. See, this is a nice piece of real estate, as I'm sure you know. [*Laughter*] And it's going to go back to the Korean people, and then we're going to relocate. And that will make this alliance even stronger and even more viable in the future.

This historic transfer is recognition of the skill and the capabilities and professionalism of the Korean forces. And those forces have become skillful and professional, thanks to the United States military. And I want to thank you for your contributions.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. The bedrock of this alliance is our belief in liberty. And there's no place on Earth that more clearly demonstrates the contrast between free and open societies and repressive, closed societies than the Korean Peninsula. No better place to see an example between the beauty of freedom and the hope of freedom and the difficulties with repressive and closed societies. As South Korea takes its rightful place on the world stage; North Korea traps its people in misery and isolation.

The regime at Pyongyang has threatened the peace of the world with pursuit of nuclear weapons. We're responding to this challenge in two ways. First, you're making sure that there's a strong deterrent against North Korean aggression, and I appreciate that a lot. And secondly, we're going to stand united with South Korea and China and Japan and Russia until we reach our ultimate goal, and that is a Korean Peninsula where people are free from nuclear weapons and free from oppression.

The story of this region——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. There's another story from this region that's important for everybody to understand, and it shows that freedom

is the surest path to move to a more peaceful world. In this part of the world, it's interesting to look at the history. In Japan, a country that was at one time at war with the United States and, obviously, others, freedom has helped transform the enemy into a ally. Freedom has helped transform that country into a prosperous and peaceful nation.

And in South Korea, freedom has helped turn a nation mired in poverty and recovering from war into a vibrant democracy and a strong partner. And here we are in the beginning of the 21st century, and once again, freedom is called upon to lay the foundation for peace that we all want.

We're at war. Now, I know some in the United States say that we're not at war; they say it's a simple law enforcement matter. Well, in law enforcement, you respond after the crime. Hopefully, the September the 11th, 2001, lesson will teach us all that it's important to prevent the crime from happening in the first place, that we have a duty——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. And that's why it's important to use all assets of national power to keep the pressure on the enemy, to do our solemn duty to protect the American people from further harm.

But in the long run, I want you to remember that in this ideological struggle, the best way to yield the peace for our children and our grandchildren is to understand the transformative power of freedom. I brought a set of principles to the Oval Office, principles I will not compromise from. And one such principle is I do believe there's an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom.

And as you're far away from home, just remember freedom is going to yield the peace. And I want to thank you for being carriers of freedom and liberty. I want to thank you for standing strong for certain fundamental truths. And I thank our Korean allies as well.

Some of Korea's bravest citizens are working to spread the hope of freedom to other nations, especially in the Middle East. Korean troops have served with courage alongside ours in Afghanistan and Iraq. And the people of Afghanistan and Iraq will always remember that the people of Korea stood with them in their time of need. And they'll always remember the contribution that our U.S. troops have made as well.

Many of you have been to Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank you for volunteering to wear the uniform of the United States in this time of war. It's an amazing group of citizens who, in a time of war, say, "I'm willing to serve; I want to serve my Nation." And I want to thank you for making a huge difference in this great ideological struggle that is—here in the beginning of the 21st century.

In Afghanistan, we removed a dangerous regime that harbored the terrorists who plotted the attacks on September the 11th, and now we're working to make sure Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists to plot against us.

In Iraq, we removed a dangerous regime that threatened its neighbors and the peace of the world. Removing Saddam Hussein was the right decision at the time, and it's the right decision today.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. No question, it's been a tough fight against Al Qaida and other extremists in Iraq. Since we launched the surge last year, events have turned toward victory. The enemy is on the run; violence is down; Iraqi forces are assuming more responsibility in the fight. Because of this progress, our troops have begun to come home under the policy of return on success.

We're going to continue to stand with the Iraqi people. America will continue to support the men and women who wear the uniform. And we will defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them at home.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. So I thank you for your service. I thank you for your sacrifice. And as I leave this peninsula for probably my last time as your President, I go with confidence in our mission, confidence in our country, and with great gratitude in my heart for everyone who wears our Nation's uniform.

Thank you for what you're doing. May God bless you. May God bless the people here. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:48 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Cpl. Victor L. Berlus, USA, 8th Army, who introduced the President; Gen. Walter L. "Skip" Sharp, USA, commander, U.S. Forces Korea, and his wife Joanne; Gen. Lee Sung-chool, South Korean Army, deputy commander, Combined Forces Command, and his wife Park Jung-shin; and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert A. Winzenried, USA, U.S. Forces Korea.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand
August 6, 2008

Prime Minister Samak. We are pleased to welcome President Bush visit to Thailand on the auspicious occasion of the celebration of 155th—75th anniversary of Thai-U.S. relations. As Thailand has now assumed the ASEAN chairmanship, we will use the opportunity to strengthen our engagement and cooperation with the U.S., both bilaterally and through ASEAN.

President Bush and I had just a very good discussion on several issues of common interest. We discussed the strengthen of the close military and the security cooperation, which benefit both country and the region. A case of—in point is our military close partnership during the tsunami and post-Cyclone Nargis to facilitate access of American relief and assistance to the affected countries.

We will continue our discussion on the other regional issues over the dinner this evening. President Bush expressed his appreciation for Thailand's humanitarian role in sheltering displaced persons from neighboring countries for over 30 years. I also thanked the President for the United States understanding on the Preah Vihear issue.

We agreed to enhance the Thai-U.S. relation by focusing on education, public health, sciences, security, and the law enforcement cooperation. Our two countries share the long and special connection. President Bush—former President Bush senior and Mrs. Barbara Bush came to Thailand to pay tribute to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of accession to the throne in December 2006.

Looking towards the future, we agreed that our alliance and friendship will remain firm and close as have been in the past 144—174 years. We are determined to continue working closely together to further strengthen our relationship and good will for the benefit of our two countries and the region.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. *Sawatdee khrap.* [*Laughter*] Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for welcoming Laura and me and our daughter Barbara to your beautiful country. I want to thank you very much for welcoming us on behalf of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. We appreciate the opportunity to come back, and we honor the

friendship that has been in existence for 175 years.

I want to thank you very much for being such a strong ally in the war against terror. Our nations are strengthening our security and defense cooperation. Thailand continues to host Cobra Gold, which is one of the largest annual multilateral training exercises in Southeast Asia.

Thailand's troops have helped the people of Iraq and Afghanistan as they battle extremists and strengthen their democracy, and I want to thank you for those contributions, Mr. Prime Minister. America and Thailand are coordinating our law enforcement, counterterrorism, and counterproliferation activities so we can do a better job of protecting our citizens from danger.

The United States and Thailand are working to expand freedom with good governance. I want to thank you very much and congratulate the people of Thailand for restoring its democracy. Through the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership, our nations are working together to strengthen democratic values and institutions throughout the region. As the chair of ASEAN, we support your efforts to reduce trade barriers and to expand economic opportunity and help Southeast Asia grow in hope.

The United States and Thailand work together to fight disease. I don't think our citizens understand this, Mr. Prime Minister, but we've dedicated $35 million to help prevent and treat HIV/AIDS here in Thailand, and we're happy to do so. I'm looking forward to going tomorrow to the clinic where we get to see the efforts of the initiative. It's called the Mercy Centre, and I appreciate you arranging that, for me to go see, Mr. Prime Minister.

We're also working on avian flu. I think it's very important for our nations to prepare for the worst. Obviously, we're hoping for the best. And so we've got a good, strong initiative on avian flu.

We're working together to help the people of Burma. We responded very quickly when Burma was struck by the terrible cyclone, and I want to thank you very much for your leadership on that issue. After all, yours was the place where much of the world aid came to be distributed to the poor people there that were deeply affected by the storm.

We want to see prosperity and freedom restored to Burma. Tomorrow Laura is going to the Thai-Burmese border to visit a resettlement camp where Burmese refugees are receiving health care and humanitarian aid. She's looking forward to the trip, and I'm looking forward to hearing her report from the trip.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, I want to thank you very much for your hospitality. I want to thank you for feeding my delegation. We're looking forward to eating some good Thai food, which is very famous throughout the world. Please give my very best regards to His Majesty and Her Majesty.

Prime Minister Samak. I will.

President Bush. And thank you very much for being so gracious.

Prime Minister Samak. All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:51 p.m. at the Government House. In his remarks, the President referred to King Phumiphon Adunyadet and Queen Sirikit of Thailand.

Remarks in Bangkok
August 7, 2008

Thank you. *Sawatdee khrap*. Thank you for the warm welcome. Laura and I are delighted to be back in Bangkok. Such a beautiful city, full of gracious and hospitable people. We appreciate the warm welcome extended by His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen.

I realize I'm a few days ahead of time, but I do wish Her Majesty a happy birthday. Above all, I bring America's warmest wishes to our oldest allies in Asia, the people of Thailand.

Our friendship began 175 years ago this spring, when President Andrew Jackson dispatched an envoy to Siam. Negotiations soon concluded a treaty of peace and commerce and sealed it, curiously enough, with a lotus flower on one side and an eagle and stars on the other. Generations of close friendship followed. At one point, the Thai King offered to send elephants to America. [*Laughter*] President Abraham Lincoln politely declined. [*Laughter*] Yes, I was wondering whether or not we can kind of get the offer back on the table. [*Laughter*] Although my ranch isn't big enough, probably, to hold the elephants. [*Laughter*]

The values of freedom and openness that gave birth to our alliance have sustained it through the centuries. American troops and Royal Thai Armed Forces have stood united from Korea and Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq. Our free market economies have surged forward on a rising tide of trade and investment. Tourism has boomed as more people have discovered this beautiful and ancient land. And some 200,000 Thai Americans now enrich my nation with their enterprise and their culture and their faith.

On this historic anniversary of our alliance, America looks to Thailand as a leader in the region and a partner around the world. I was proud to designate Thailand a major non-NATO ally of the United States. I salute the Thai people on the restoration of democracy, which has proved that liberty and law reign here in the "land of the free." In many ways, the story of Thailand is the story of this region. Over the past six decades, Asia has gone from an area mired in poverty and recovering from world war to a thriving and dynamic region. America has played a role in this transformation. By maintaining a stabilizing military presence, we helped to—we helped free emerging nations to grow without concerns about their security. By pursuing strong diplomatic engagement, we helped once-hostile nations resolve their differences in peace. By opening our markets to Asian exports, we helped powerful economies to take shape.

I'm proud of these contributions. Yet the primary source of this region's success is the people. From South Korea to Singapore, nations pursued economic policies based upon free enterprise, free trade, and the rule of law. And the results have astounded the world. Last year, trade in goods between the United States and this side of the Pacific reached $1 trillion. And there's striking change from the pattern of centuries: More trade now crosses the Pacific than the Atlantic.

With the rise of economic freedom has come a dramatic expansion of political liberty. Think about this: After World War II, Australia and New Zealand were the region's only democracies. Today, the majority of Asian nations answer to their citizens. With this shift, the people of this region have defied the skeptics who claimed that Asian values were incompatible with liberty. Free societies emerged in largely Buddhist Thailand, largely Hindu India, largely Muslim Indonesia, largely Shinto Japan, and the largely Christian Philippines. As freedom has taken root,

peace has followed. And the region has gone decades without a major war.

Some have called this transformation the "Asian miracle." In truth, it's no miracle at all. It's evidence of universal truths. The passion for liberty transcends culture and faith. Free markets unleash innovation and blaze the path to prosperity. Trusting in the natural talent and creativity of a nation's people is the surest way to build a vibrant and hopeful society.

When I became President, I brought a conviction that America is a Pacific nation and that our interests and ideals require stronger engagement in Asia than ever before. So over the past 7 years, America has pursued four broad goals in the region: reinvigorate our alliances, forge new relationships with countries that share our values, seize new opportunities for prosperity and growth, and confront shared challenges together.

Confident and purposeful alliances are the best way to advance peace and prosperity in Asia. America has five treaty alliances in Asia. And we take them seriously, and we bolstered each one. We signed a new treaty with Australia that deepens our cooperation in defense trade. We helped the Philippines upgrade its military capabilities. We've strengthened security initiatives here in Thailand. We're improving our force posture in South Korea by working to move our troops out of cities and towns and into more strategically effective positions. We've reinforced our close alliance with Japan by launching new missile defense initiatives and by transforming our troop posture in a way that preserves our strong position to maintain the peace in the Pacific. All these steps were designed to reassure our allies that America will stand firmly beside them in any test we face.

I've also worked to develop strong personal relationships with our allies' elected leaders. Who could ever forget the trip to Elvis's place with Prime Minister Koizumi? [*Laughter*] I certainly will never forget it. [*Laughter*] I don't think a lot of people in Memphis, Tennessee, will ever forget it either. These friendships are built on a foundation of honesty and respect and shared values. And when a new occupant moves into the White House next year, America's alliances in Asia will be the strongest they have ever been.

As America has revitalized our treaty alliances, we have forged deeper ties with other free nations in Asia. Countries that share our democratic ideals should be natural partners of the United States. Yet when I took office, our relations with many free nations in Asia were strained. For example, America has dramatically improved our ties with India, the world's largest democracy, including historic agreement on civilian nuclear energy.

We've turned around our relationship with Indonesia, which is home to more Muslims than any other nation on Earth. We've partnered closely with Indonesia's freely elected Government to help develop the institutions of a vibrant democracy after decades of military rule. We signed a landmark agreement with Mongolia to help boost democratic development. We've enhanced cooperation with the thriving countries of ASEAN, which is now chaired by the great nation of Thailand. We've joined with free nations throughout the region to establish a new Asian Pacific Democracy Partnership, the region's only organization whose sole focus is promoting democratic values and institutions in Asia.

Overall, America has improved our relationships with all of Asia's major powers at the same time. Experts would have said this was impossible because of historical tensions between these nations. But something has rendered the old patterns obsolete. In an era of integrated markets and common threats, the expansion of freedom in one nation benefits all other free nations. This change marks a sharp departure from the zero-sum mentality of the past. And this change provides a clear charge for the future. Every nation in this region has a

stake in ensuring that Asia continues to grow in liberty and prosperity and hope.

One of the most powerful drivers of liberty and prosperity and hope is trade. When I took office, America had free trade agreements in force with only three countries, none of them in Asia. Today, we have agreements in force with 14 countries, including Australia and Singapore. We've concluded a promising agreement with South Korea, which I am pushing the United States Congress to pass. We've begun negotiating free trade agreements with Malaysia and a bilateral investment treaty with Vietnam. We look forward to resuming trade negotiations with Thailand. We've supported the vision of a free trade area of the Asia-Pacific, which would bring down trade barriers across this region.

The nations of the Asia-Pacific now have more vibrant trade and investment ties than ever before. And workers and consumers and entrepreneurs across this region will reap the benefits from years to come. Unfortunately, our country sometimes sends mixed signals about the openness of our economy. Voices of economic isolationism do not represent the interests of the American people. For decades, America has maintained a bipartisan commitment to flexible and open markets, and this must not change. I urge people across this region to reject protectionism in your own countries. Together, we can lead the world toward more growth and more jobs and more opportunities by staying open for—to investment and trade.

For all the gains we've made, our nations still face challenges, and we're working together to confront them. No bigger challenge, as far as I'm concerned, than the threat of terror, than the threat of extremists willing to murder the innocent to achieve their political objectives. With partners across this region, we have brought to justice some of the world's most dangerous terrorists. We're also working to counter the hateful ideology of the extremists by promoting a more hopeful alternative, one based upon freedom and liberty.

We strongly support democracies like Thailand and Indonesia and Malaysia, which are making determined stands against extremists and showing that Islam and tolerance go hand in hand. Many of America's friends in Asia have also stood with us in Afghanistan and Iraq, where newly free people are replacing decades of fear with a future of hope. America is proud to stand with so many brave partners in answering the call of our time. And no matter how difficult the test may be, we will not relent until this ideological struggle is won.

Together, we're confronting the threat posed by North Korea. The nations of Northeast Asia all have an urgent stake in ensuring that Pyongyang does not threaten the region with nuclear weapons. Yet when I took office, there was no way for these nations to approach North Korea with a unified front. So America joined with China and South Korea and Japan and Russia to create the six-party talks. Faced with concerted pressure from all its neighbors, North Korea has pledged to dismantle its nuclear facilities and give up its nuclear weapons. Recently, the regime submitted a declaration of nuclear activities. Now the North Korean regime must commit to help us verify the declaration and address outstanding concerns about its behavior, including its proliferation and uranium enrichment.

The other five parties will stand united until we reach our ultimate goal: a Korean Peninsula free of oppression and free of nuclear weapons. And the United States will continue to insist that the regime in Pyongyang end its harsh rule and respect the dignity and human rights of the North Korean people.

Together, we seek an end to tyranny in Burma. The noble cause has many devoted champions, and I happen to be married to one of them. Today Laura is traveling to the Thai-Burmese border, where she's

visiting a resettlement camp and a medical clinic. America reiterates our call on Burma's military junta to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. We'll continue working until the people of Burma have their freedom that they deserve.

Together, we're confronting other serious challenges to our people and prosperity. Governments across the region have coordinated efforts to address pandemics like avian flu. The major economies of the region are working for a global climate agreement that improves energy security and cuts greenhouse gases without cutting economic growth. The region has come together to respond to natural disasters, from the tsunami of 2004 to this year's cyclone. With all these partnerships, we're deepening trust and openness among our nations. And we're ensuring that whatever challenges the future may bring, the nations of the Asia-Pacific will meet them together.

One question on the minds of many here in Asia and many around the world is the future direction of China. I've been fascinated by China since my first trip there in 1975, when my dad was the head of the United States Liaison Office in Beijing. At the time, the country was just emerging from the Cultural Revolution. Poverty was rampant, bicycles were everywhere, and people were wearing almost identical clothes. It seemed unimaginable that three decades later, Beijing would be sprinting into the modern era, covered in skyscrapers, filled with cars, and home to international businesses, as well as hosting the Olympic Games.

Over the years, America has had complex relations with China. I was determined to set our relationship on sturdy and principled footing. Four goals we've pursued in Asia—reinforcing our alliances, forming new democratic partnerships, deepening our economic ties, and cooperating on shared challenges—have given America and our allies valuable new platforms from which to confidently engage China. A peaceful and successful future for this region requires the involvement of both China and the United States. And it's important that America's engagement throughout the Asia-Pacific be purposeful and enduring.

China and the United States share important economic interests. The growth sparked by China's free market reforms is good for the Chinese people, who are building a confident middle class with a stake in a peaceful future. China's new purchasing power is good for the world because it provides an enormous market for exports from across the globe. The key to ensuring that all sides benefits is insisting that China adhere to the rules of the international economic system. So America strongly supported China's accession to the World Trade Organization, where we're able to contest trade practices that we find unfair. I was disappointed that the Doha round of trade talks has stalled, and the United States will continue to engage China, India, and other nations to help reach a successful collusion—conclusion.

America has also established a new strategic economic dialogue with China, where we discuss ways to ensure long-term growth and widely shared prosperity in both our economies, as well as issues like currency exchange rates and intellectual property rights. Through these discussions and others, we're making clear to China that being a global economic leader carries with it the duty to act responsibly on matters from energy to the environment to development in places like Africa.

America and China have found other areas of cooperation. We're partnering to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. China has played a critical leadership role in the six-party talks. America has also stressed our determination to maintain peace across the Taiwan Strait. From the beginning of my Presidency, I have stated clearly that America's approach to Taiwan would be based on our longstanding "one China" policy, our three joint

communiques, and our steadfast commitment to the security of Taiwan's democracy under the Taiwan Relations Act. I've also articulated a principle that there should be no unilateral attempts by either side to alter the status quo. And as a result of frank engagement and firm diplomacy, the tensions that once roiled the Taiwan Strait have calmed, and we're witnessing a new period of stability and peace.

Our constructive relationship in these areas has placed America in a better position to be honest and direct on other issues. I have spoken clearly and candidly and consistently with China's leaders about our deep concerns over religious freedom and human rights. I have met repeatedly with Chinese dissidents and religious believers. The United States believes the people of China deserve the fundamental liberty that is the natural right of all human beings.

So America stands in firm opposition to China's detention of political dissidents and human rights advocates and religious activists. We speak out for a free press, freedom of assembly, and labor rights not to antagonize China's leaders, but because trusting its people with greater freedom is the only way for China to develop its full potential. We press for openness and justice not to impose our beliefs, but to allow the Chinese people to express theirs. As Chinese scientist Xu Liangying has said, "Human nature is universal and needs to pursue freedom and equality."

Ultimately, only China can decide what course it will follow. America and our partners are realistic, and we're prepared for any possibility. I'm optimistic about China's future. Young people who grow up with the freedom to trade goods will ultimately demand the freedom to trade ideas, especially on an unrestricted Internet. Change in China will arrive on its own terms and in keeping with its own history and its own traditions. Yet change will arrive. And it will be clear for all to see that those who aspire to speak their conscience and worship their God are no threat to the future of China. They're the people who will make China a great nation in the 21st century.

This is my last trip to East Asia as President. I have great confidence that Asia will continue to grow in opportunity and achievement and influence. I'm confident because I know the creative and enterprising spirit of this region's people. I'm confident because the forces of freedom and hope that unleashed the transformation of Asia can never be turned back. And I'm confident because I know the bonds between America and our friends in Asia will never be broken.

When forces from Imperial Japan entered Thailand during World War II, the Thai Ambassador in Washington was directed to declare war on the United States. He bravely refused to deliver the declaration. In turn, America refused to recognize Thailand as our enemy. Instead, we helped Thais in America band together in a movement called Seri Thai. They deployed across the Pacific, infiltrated behind enemy lines, and gathered intelligence that helped speed the liberation of this great land.

Several members of the Seri Thai movement are still with us—here. And I'm honored you all are here, and I appreciate your presence more than you can possibly know. You've earned the lasting gratitude of the American people. And all in this region can count on a solemn promise from the United States: America stood with the free people of Asia in the past, America stands with the free people of Asia today, and we will stand with the free people of Asia long into your bright future.

Thank you for your time, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to King Phumiphon Adunyadet and Queen Sirikit of Thailand; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Aung San Suu Kyi,

leader of the National League of Democracy in Burma.

Remarks Prior to a Lunch With Burmese Activists in Bangkok
August 7, 2008

The President. Thank you all for joining me. I'm looking forward to my lunch with men and women who care deeply about the human condition in Burma.

Unfortunately, my wife is not here. She's on the Thai-Burmese border talking about the same thing that we're going to be talking about. I want you to know and want the people of your country to know the American people care deeply about the people of Burma, and we dream for the day in which people will be free. And part of my reason for asking you for lunch is not only to hear your own stories—hear your stories, but for you to give me advice about what you think America ought to be doing.

I've just been briefed on the response to the typhoon. And I'm pleased that our Government was so generous. And I'm pleased that a lot of the aid that we paid for is actually getting to the people themselves. One of my questions is not how much money you give, but is it actually making a significant difference in people's lives, and was told it is. I was told the stories about U.S. money going to buy seed and fertilizer so farmers in the delta can get their crops in the ground and feed their families and, hopefully, feed people in their communities.

I'm always inspired by acts of courage, and I'm having lunch with courageous people. So I want to thank you for coming. I have a couple of comments, and then we'll eat some food.

Do you want to start, please? What's your name?

Lway Aye Nang. My name is Lway Aye Nang. I'm the Palaung ethnic. I also belong to the Women's League of Burma, a Burma women's organization comprised of 12 women's organizations based on different ethnicities of Burma. And we are working to empower women and to be able to participate in peaceful reconciliations in Burma, and also raising awareness about Burma, about the gross human rights violations in Burma that are committed by the military regime. And the international community can help with this work.

And the military regime, if they are continuing to deploy their troops along the ethnic areas, and their soldiers continue to commit systematic human rights violations against the ethnic nationality, which includes also rapes—this has been used—long used as a weapon of war in Burma.

The President. Yes.

Lway Aye Nang. And we advocate to get the support—with the support from the international community, and we are very lucky and very fortunate to have the United States Government to support us in different means and different ways. And especially, we would like to give—I would like to give our gratitude to the United States for the new sanctions in blocking the import of Burmese jade——

The President. Jade, right.

Lway Aye Nang. ——to the United States.

The President. Right.

Lway Aye Nang. And this is really hitting the regime and—the regime and their associates who have been destroying the country's natural resources for their own benefit and leaving ordinary citizens in extremely poverty.

And secondly, we are also very glad—grateful to have the—our American friends and helping the Cyclone Nargis survivors——

The President. Yes, yes.

Lway Aye Nang. ——the victims. And we also would like to inform the United States Government here, and there is still restrictions of aid to the Cyclone Nargis victims by the military regime. And we'd like to also request that the United States Government to put pressure—to continue to pressure on the regime to hinder the—to give the access by the locals and international community to the victims of the Nargis Cyclone survivors.

The President. Thank you.

Lway Aye Nang. And because we are really concerned at the women's organization here, our women and children who are in the Cyclone Nargis affected area are——

The President. Yes.

Lway Aye Nang. ——vulnerable to the sexual exploitations.

And thank you so much.

The President. Good job.

Yes, sir.

Aung Zaw. My name is Aung Zaw. I was a student activist in 1988, and I was briefly detained. I spent a week in a notorious military prison. I was tortured there; then after that, I left Burma. I started the Irrawaddy Magazine, which I started document the human rights violations, and I started collecting information from Burma. So we have a stringer who works inside the country, send us information to us. And from here—that we release the information from here. We use information from him. We also promote an independent person's participation on Burma—in Burma.

And I think we are very pleased that we have this lunch meeting. And this was a very, I think, not only a symbolic meeting, but also send a strong signal to some ASEAN nations, and also to China, in particular, who continue to defend and protect the Burmese military Government.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador to Burma's residence. Participating in the lunch were Lway Aye Nang, joint general secretary, Women's League of Burma; Aung Zaw, editor, Irrawaddy Magazine; Aung Naing Oo, senior associate, Vahu Development Institute, Chiang Mai University; Lian Sakhong, general secretary, Ethnic Nationalities Council; Win Min, lecturer, Chiang Mai and Payap Universities; political analyst Bo Kyaw Nyein; Bo Kyi, head, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners; Naing Aung, general secretary, Forum for Democracy; and Kyaw Kyaw, director, Political Defiance Committee of the National Council of the Union of Burma.

Interview With Foreign Radio Journalists in Bangkok
August 7, 2008

The President. I am in Bangkok, and one of the reasons I've come is not only to pay my respects to the Government and the people of Thailand, but also to be in a position to speak about freedom in Burma. I just had lunch with some people that are deeply concerned about the future of Burma, people that were involved in the student marches of '88, people involved with humanitarian assistance. I was regretful that my wife couldn't join us, because she's an articulate spokesman for the people of Burma; but she's on the border on

this mission of saying to the Burmese people, you have friends, and you're not alone, and the United States cares about you.

So I want to thank you for giving me the chance to answer your questions, and I'll be glad to do so now. Why don't we just go around the table?

Q. Mr. President, it's an honor to be with you, and many thanks, giving a chance to—this roundtable discussion.

The President. Thank you.

Q. My name is Thein Htike Oo, from Voice of America; Toe Zaw Latt from Democratic Voice of Burma; and Soe Win Than from BBC. We have one lady here from Radio Free Asia, May Pyone Aung.

The President. Good, thank you. Welcome.

U.S. Aid to Burma

Q. I would like to start a couple questions about the relief aid policy of United States.

The President. Yes.

Q. Recent relief operation, the Burmese regime didn't allow the U.S. Navy ship aid through the Pacific come, and international community, the U.S., obviously, was really frustrated. I would like to know, if Burma faced another catastrophe or disaster, are you going to try to help, or are you going to—[*inaudible*]—Burmese regime again?

The President. Well, absolutely. But first of all, we care about the human condition, human suffering. And there's no question, there was huge human suffering when the cyclone came through. I can remember the day it hit. I was told that this was going to be a major disaster for the people, and so I ordered our Navy ships in the area to be prepared to sail toward the Burmese area to provide aid and logistics and management. We're very good about dealing with major emergencies. And interestingly enough, we were involved with a military mission in the area, so we were prepared to send a robust package in.

Unfortunately, the Government, the military leader chose not to allow for there to be immediate help. No telling how many lives could have been saved or how much human suffering could have been dealt with more effectively had there not been the slow response of the military dictator.

But now our aid, along with other people—other countries' aid, is beginning to move. In answer to your question, yes, our Government will respond if there's another catastrophe. And hopefully, the military people have learned a lesson: that there needs to be truthfulness at the highest levels of government. People have got to understand and listen to reality and understand that nations and people want to help when there's suffering. And so we will respond. In the meantime, we're going to keep pushing for freedom.

Burmese Government's Acceptance of Foreign Aid

Q. During the time, a lot of Burmese people, they were expecting a sort of humanitarian intervention, even though the Burmese regime didn't allow the aid. So why it didn't happen, or what is the reason——

The President. We chose to go through the normal routes. We wanted to basically say, here's your opportunity to receive aid. I'm disappointed that the military dictator chose not to allow the aid in quickly. But I don't think it would have been helpful for the Burmese people had there been a conflict over the delivery of aid. What we don't want to do is compound a terrible situation. In other words, if we just sent in—sent people in, our military in without visas or permission from the Government, there's no telling what the reaction would have been. And so therefore, we were trying to make the problem better, not worse.

And so yes, I—no question, there was frustration on the delays, but I felt the best way to do so was the way we ended up doing it. My only point is, is that there's—if there's another catastrophe, and let's pray there's not, but if there is, the Government will now see that they have nothing to fear

by welcoming in U.S. aid and other countries' aid. They ought to welcome that.

And now the question is, how quickly can the delta region rebuild? And of course, we'd like to help on that too. We spent about $57 million, or over $50 million of help so far. And we do so generously. We care about the stories we hear. And we want the farmers to get seed and fertilizer so they can grow and feed their families and feed the people in their area and, hopefully, grow enough for the country.

Joint Military Exercises

Q. Now, I don't take too long. Now, the United States has proposed civil military relief exercise with the countries in this region, and recent ASEAN meeting endorsed that relief exercise, and probably next year the Philippine will host. So they agree to cooperate relief exercise.

The President. That's good.

Q. I wonder, if the countries in this region agree to cooperate, are you going to invite this exercise to include Burmese military regime or North Korea?

The President. That's an interesting question. I don't know. I haven't thought that through yet, to be frank with you. I can't answer your question, because you're the first person who's asked me that question. I will take it back to Washington and—under consideration. Interesting idea. I have no—but I can't say yes or no right now.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Yes, very good.

Yes, sir.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Toe Zaw Latt.

Burma's Foreign Policy/China

Q. There's no real consensus on how to deal with Burma in international community. How will the United States try to overcome this impasse, most recently seen at the Security Council over Burma?

The President. Well, what we've got to do is continue to work with countries on the Security Council and explain to them that what matters most in life is the human condition and that individual rights are important. And we just have a lot of work to do to convince people that the status quo in Burma—that life can be better, let me put it that way. And it's in their interest that life is better, particularly China.

China is an important country on the United Nations Security Council; they're an important country in the world, obviously, Burma's neighbor. And we—I hope that I can use my good relations with the Chinese leadership to convince them that the way forward is for there to be more civic participation, more citizen participation in the future of the country, and that the perfect way to do that is to explain to them how backward the Government was when it came to the response for the natural disaster. Hopefully, that will open up eyes.

But no question, there's a lot of diplomacy that needs to be done to convince others that people like Aung Suu San Kyi [Aung San Suu Kyi] * deserve to be free and political prisoners ought to be free. And the reason I'm talking to you today is because I want those in prison and their families to know that we care about them and think about them.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Do you think there will be some common ground that the United States and Chinese Government can work together?

The President. Well, I hope so. I mean, it's in the common ground, for example, that the Burmese be a peaceful country. I mean, we care about that. Whether or not the Chinese will agree that somebody like Aung Suu San Kyi [Aung San Suu Kyi] * ought to be free and ought to be the center of foreign policy like it is for us, I don't know. We just have to work it hard.

* White House correction.

President's Upcoming Visit to China/ Meeting With Chinese Leadership

Q. Soe Win Than from BBC. Picking up on this China relation, you are going to China today——

The President. I am soon.

Q. ——you will be meeting the highest Chinese leadership tomorrow.

The President. Yes.

Q. And you said you would mention Burma to those leaders. You haven't been able to convince them until now.

The President. Right.

Q. How optimistic are you that you will be able to convince, and how are you going to go about doing this time, sir?

The President. Well, you know, look, it's—I've mentioned Burma a lot to the Chinese leadership, and it's—I've mentioned Darfur; I've mentioned Tibet; I've mentioned religious freedom inside China. So there's a lot of subjects to discuss with the Chinese leadership. And it's just a matter of continuing to make the case. I have—I'm sure the Chinese leader's mind is going to be on the Olympics. This is a big deal for the people of China. One of the reasons I'm going is to be able to pay my respects to the people of China, and well as to be in a position where I can bring up these issues with the Chinese Government.

We'll see. I'm just—it's—to me, this is a process of continually having a consistent message, speaking to the people of Burma, letting the prisoners know we care about them, and pressing hard at the international level. I make no promises to your listeners except that we'll continue to try.

Burma-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes. One thing is the relationship with the regime. Then you have been probably the President who is more committed for the Burmese democratic movement. But the United States tough line against Burma sometimes entrenched the generals there, and some people would say that given the example of the Nargis Cyclone relief efforts, then if you have had this kind of relationship with the generals then you could be able to do more. So——

The President. Yes, it's an interesting question. I understand your point. We have been tough, because we believe that the general has been very stubborn in not allowing certain freedoms, and we believe that's wrong. We believe that those arrested in the marches of '88 ought to be released from prison. There's about 2,000 political prisoners who are being held simply because they had a belief that was contrary to what the general thinks.

You notice I'm saying "general" because it's generally viewed as a one-man regime. I know there's others that support him.

But yes, I have been and—because I believe that—as a matter of fact, just signed a bill that's going to continue the sanction regime, particularly when it comes to jade and precious gems.

That's an interesting question, had we had a different relationship, one, what would it say to the reformers, but also, would it have changed the number of days required to let relief in? It's hard for me to tell. What I'm concerned about is the general wasn't being given full information, that he wasn't fully aware of reality. And I don't think his reaction was because of relations with the United States; I think his reaction was—is because he was in denial to a certain extent about the realities on the ground.

But I'm constantly—look, my mission, so long as I'm the President, which is 6 more months, is to think about ways to relieve human suffering and how to help people inside Burma. And if I thought it would make—help us achieve the objective by changing the relationship with the Government, I'd give it serious consideration. But I don't necessarily agree with that premise. I wish there was a magic wand to wave; there isn't. On the other hand, the people that are listening to your radio broadcast has got to know that the President of the United States and a lot of other people

in America are concerned and care about how they live and want them to be free and want them to realize the beauties of a Burmese-style democracy. And whether that happens tomorrow or not is doubtful. Nevertheless, what is important, though, if for there to be a strong voice in laying out that vision. And that's what I'll continue to do.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Lunch With Burmese Activists

Q. Mr. President, you just met a group of Burmese activists and then you share views with them on Burma's struggle. What do you see and what do you get from having lunch with them?

The President. First of all, there's a lot of courageous people that have made a decision to work hard on behalf of the rest of their citizens to achieve a free society. Secondly, that they have great hopes that the United States will continue to speak out, that the United States will not abandon our belief in the universality of freedom. Thirdly, they were—I asked—I said, if you were me, what would you do? And I got a variety of opinions. And it was fascinating to hear voices of people who have actually been on the frontlines of change.

I came away with the impression that they're very grateful to the American people for the generous support. Sometimes our generosity is not—actually ends up in the hands of the people as quickly as it should, but nevertheless, that they are—there seems to be a general awareness that the American people care. And there was a—there's a certain reality, a certain sense that there are—one of the things I came away with: There are people who may even be wearing the military uniform who understand that the status quo is not acceptable, and there needs to be a better way forward.

But a lot of the frustration was focused on a single person, the general in charge of the country, and that—there was a belief that he didn't seem to care that much about the plight of the average citizen. And so hopefully, U.S. pressure and U.S. focus will get him to think more about the average person and care about the way the average person lives.

Burmese Democracy Movement

Q. Many critics said that our opposition itself is also very much divided and they are not united enough against the military regime and that—do you think that the United States can help prepare them for their future democratic Burma?

The President. Well, first of all—that was an interesting question—I didn't think they were very divided, at least the crowd I was with. But I thought they were pretty united in their dream for a better Burma.

You know, one of the things that, obviously, the people involved in the democracy movement have got to think through is how do you get from here to there. In other words, it's not easy to go from a very fierce military one-man rule to democracy. And so therefore, it needs to be well thought out. And you have a very good point, and that is, is that there is a—is there a focused roadmap to get to a better tomorrow? It's hard for me to tell just in that conversation. Obviously, that's going to be a concern for—it must be a concern for people.

One thing is for certain, is the Constitution is a sham. The rewrite of the Constitution is just a—it's not a good document; it's not a fair document. So therefore, there needs to be a constitution at some point in time that will enable Burma to be a Federal state that—based upon the will of the people.

Burmese Elections

Q. Follow up on that. The military regime will hold a election in 2010, and they began preparing this month for election. And then what is U.S. stand on this election?

The President. My stand is they ought to be open and fair, and I doubt they will be. I think the Constitution is a sham constitution, and therefore—but, you know,

I—this is a society that's not interested in democracy. They have proved they're not interested in democracy. If they're interested in democracy, they'd let the prisoners out of prison, for starters. The political prisoners would be a—given to chance to leave and live in a free life. That's the first test, not election under a sham constitution.

And so, you know, they'll play like the election was fair and all this—to justify their behavior. And I think people like yourself ought to be speaking out that the elections, unless certain conditions are met, can't possibly be fair.

Burma-U.S. Relations

Q. We understand and the Burmese listeners also understand how you and the First Lady are compassionate for Burmese people, how much you strongly support to the freedom for Burma. But I wonder, place here the new administration—will be installed, and any chance the policy changes from the United States and——

The President. I would be very surprised. I know both candidates and the—freedom for Burma is a bipartisan issue. And the Burmese people—it's not just the President that thinks about the citizens of Burma. There's a lot of people in our Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, that feel the same way. And so I think the Burmese people are going to have a consistent friend in the United States.

China's Role in Burma

Q. You're talking to the China authorities. Do you think China can play a role to make situation better in Burma?

The President. I think—oh, yes, I think China could play a different role. I do. The question is whether they want to or not. And so I'll—I will bring up the Burma—Burmese issue again to President Hu Jintao, who I like. He's an easy man to talk to. And they just got different interests, at times, from the United States. And so I've got to work hard to see if I can't convince him that we share the same goals. It's not going to be easy, but I'll try to do so.

Thailand's and ASEAN's Role in Burma

Q. Wonder will Thailand and ASEAN in Southeast Asia——

The President. Yes, Thailand can help. ASEAN can help. They need to send a signal. Obviously, Thailand was very helpful when it came to helping with the cyclone—aftermath of the cyclone. After all, this is a staging center for a lot of our materials and other peoples'—countries' materials that came through. Yes, and they can continue to work the issue. We just got to make sure that ASEAN delivers a message that is inspiring to the people of Burma.

International Community's Role in Burma

Q. Mr. President, besides sanction and travel restrictions on the generals in Burma, do you—have you ever thought of alternative strategies work on Burma—under U.S. and then with the international community?

The President. A different strategy?

Q. Yes.

The President. You mean, trying to convince—well, I think our strategy is the right strategy, the U.S. strategy. And if your question is, do I—am I trying to convince others to join us on the strategy? Well, yes. In other words, it would be better if we could all speak with one voice. And I've been in—you know, it hadn't been that hard with some countries, like the European countries, for example. But it's been difficult with some of the countries in the neighborhood here because we don't share the same goals.

My goal is democracy. Their goal is stability and—at times. And that's not necessarily the—I'm for stability too. Don't get me wrong. But I'd like to see the system move toward a free society. I want to see these prisoners released. I want to see people treated better. I've got a friend who helps deal with the rape victims along the border. These women are being raped—

she says, systemically raped by the military as part of their campaign of fear. That stuff has got to end in order for me to feel comfortable with any other policy toward Burma.

And that's a—this is a priority. In other words, there's—and others have different priorities. And so therefore, it's hard to find common ground, but we'll continue to try to do so.

Okay, last—yes. Then I got to go to the games. [*Laughter*] I'm cheering the American Olympic team.

U.S. Foreign Policy in Asia

Q. I'm going tonight too, sir. You have the conviction and idea to bring freedom and democracy to Burma, but some people would say that the United States doesn't have much strategic interest in Burma, unlike Afghanistan. Where does Burma fit in, sir?

The President. I think so long as there's human suffering like there is here in Burma, then this will be of strategic importance to the United States. Look, no question, we've got a lot of issues on our platter, but I think about Burma a lot. Maybe one reason why is my wife was such a activist on the subject.

But nevertheless, I gave a speech today in Thailand that talked about how America is, in many ways, a Pacific nation, and that I think—I know the center of gravity of a lot of policy is shifting to the Far East. And therefore, Burma—the Burmese issue is—will be an integral part of any Far Eastern policy. And no question, America's strategic interests lie in a lot of places, but they lie here as well. And so long as this issue festers, then it will have the attention of the American policymakers.

Thank you all for your time. Very good job.

Q. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:38 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador to Burma's residence. In his remarks, the President referred to Senior Gen. Than Shwe, Chairman, State Peace and Development Council of Burma; Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League of Democracy in Burma; and President Hu Jintao of China. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on the 10th Anniversary of Terrorist Attacks Against U.S. Embassies in Africa
August 7, 2008

Today marks the tenth anniversary of the Al Qaida terrorist attacks against U.S. Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. In Dar es Salaam, the terrorists killed 11 people and wounded more than 85 others. The blast in Nairobi killed 218 people and injured approximately 5,000. We remember today those who lost their lives or were injured in the attacks, their families, and their loved ones.

The attacks in East Africa are brutal examples of Al Qaida's tactics in its war against innocent people worldwide, carried out in the heart of two African capitals without regard to the race, creed, or nationality of the victims. This has been Al Qaida's method for more than a decade, indiscriminately attacking civilians throughout the world. The attacks in Kenya and Tanzania remind us that Al Qaida and its terrorist affiliates continue to want to attack the United States and our allies. This anniversary reinforces the need to confront the terrorists, to work with our allies to bring them to justice, and to prevent such attacks from happening again.

Remarks at a Dedication Ceremony for the United States Embassy in Beijing, China

August 8, 2008

Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] It is quite an honor to be introduced by your dad. This has got to be a historic moment: father and son, two Presidents, opening up an Embassy. I suspect it's the first, although I must confess, I haven't done a lot of research into the itinerary of the Adams boys. [*Laughter*]

My dad was a fabulous President. And I tell people one reason why was not only did he know what he was doing, he was a fabulous father.

Mr. Ambassador, honored guests: Laura and I, my brother and my sister are proud to be here with our dad as we open and dedicate this new Embassy.

No doubt, this is an impressive complex. To me it speaks of the importance of our relations with China. It reflects the solid foundation underpinning our relations. It is a commitment to strengthen that foundation for years to come.

I thank all those who designed and built the Embassy and all those who work here to advance the interests and values of our great Nation. Dad and I are honored that Councilor Dai has joined us, and Minister Xie; Ambassador Zhou, who, by the way, opened a new Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC, designed by I.M. Pei, a couple weeks ago.

We appreciate our friend Anne Johnson being here, director of the Art in Embassies Program. Dr. Kissinger, thanks for coming.

It takes a special band to open the Embassy. Out of west Texas—Odessa, Texas, for that matter—the Gatlin boys are with us today. I thank the Red Poppies. Thank you for your talent.

And finally, I want to pay tribute to Sandy Randt, who has done a fabulous job as our Ambassador to China. Sandy, thank you and—[*applause*].

We're proud to be here with those citizens of ours who work at the Embassy, and we say thanks to the Chinese nationals who make our Embassy go as well.

I'm honored to represent the United States at this opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games here in Beijing. And I'm looking forward to cheering our athletes on. Mr. Ambassador, I'm not making any predictions about medal counts, but I can tell you the U.S. athletes are ready to come and compete in the spirit of friendship.

You know, during my last visit here, I had the opportunity to break in the mountain biking course. I was so proud of my efforts, I told Laura I was thinking about entering the competition myself. [*Laughter*] She reminded me they don't give any medals for last place. [*Laughter*]

Tonight the Olympic torch will light the home of an ancient civilization with a grand history. Thousands of years ago, the Chinese people developed a common language and unified a great nation. China became the center for art and literature, commerce and philosophy. China advanced the frontiers of knowledge in medicine, astronomy, navigation, engineering, and many other fields. And the Chinese are even said to have invented the parachute, something for which the 41st President is very grateful.

We share a long history. The first American ship arrived in China just after the year we won our independence. World War II, Americans and Chinese fought side by side to liberate this land from Imperial Japan. We all remember very clearly, Dr. K, when President Nixon came to Beijing to begin a new era of dialogue between our nations. You might remember that yourself. [*Laughter*]

Today, the United States and China have built a strong relationship, rooted in common interests. China has opened its economy and begun to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of its people. America will continue to support China on the path toward a free economy.

We're also cooperating to fight pandemic diseases and respond to natural disasters. And through the six-party talks, we're working together to ensure that the Korean Peninsula is free of nuclear weapons.

The relationship between our nations is constructive and cooperative and candid. We'll continue to be candid about our mutual global responsibilities. We must work together to protect the environment and help people in the developing world, continue to be candid about our belief that all people should have the freedom to say what they think and worship as they choose. We strongly believe societies which allow the free expression of ideas tend to be the most prosperous and the most peaceful.

Candor is the most effective—is most effective where nations have built a relationship of respect and trust. I've worked hard to build that respect and trust. I appreciate the Chinese leadership that have worked hard to build that respect and trust. And I thank all those here at the Embassy who are doing the same thing. The people here who work made sacrifices to serve our country. Serving America is noble, and I hope you found it to be rewarding, just like I have.

I'm honored to be with you. I appreciate the honor of dedicating this new Embassy. And I'm looking forward to going to the games. [*Laughter*] God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to his brother Marvin P. Bush and his sister Dorothy Bush Koch; State Councilor Dai Bingguo, Minister of Finance Xie Xuren, and Ambassador to the U.S. Zhou Wenzhong of China; former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger; and entertainers Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers and the Red Poppy Ladies Percussion Ensemble. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President George H.W. Bush. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the 2008 United States Summer Olympic Team in Beijing
August 8, 2008

Congratulations for representing the finest nation on the face of the Earth. The honorary captain and I are proud to be with you. We're here to wish you all the very best.

First, I want to say thanks to the U.S. Olympic Committee, chaired by Peter Ueberroth, CEO Jim Scherr, Judge Charles Lee. I wasn't exactly sure what to say to you, except to start with, God, I love our country, and I love what we stand for, and I love being with you.

Laura and I and a lot of our family are here to cheer you on. We're just a handful of a lot of folks who care about you a lot. There are going to be a lot of people pulling for you. We want you to win as many golds as you possibly can.

We appreciate all the hard work you've put in to get to this spot. It's got to be really exciting, thinking about marching in that stadium and representing our country. So I guess all I've got to say is, go for it, give it all you've got, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:44 p.m. in the Fencing Hall. In his remarks, he referred to former President George H.W. Bush, honorary captain, and Charles Lee, chef de mission, 2008 U.S. summer Olympic team. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in Beijing
August 9, 2008

Situation in Georgia

I'm deeply concerned about the situation in Georgia. The United States takes this matter very seriously.

The attacks are occurring in regions of Georgia far from the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. They mark a dangerous escalation in the crisis. The violence is endangering regional peace. Civilian lives have been lost, and others are endangered.

This situation can be resolved peacefully. We've been in contact with leaders in both Georgia and Russia at all levels of government. Georgia is a sovereign nation, and its territorial integrity must be respected. We have urged an immediate halt to the violence and a standdown by all troops. We call for an end to the Russian bombings and a return by the parties to the status quo of August the 6th.

The United States is working with our European partners to launch international mediation and with the parties to restart their dialogue. Russia needs to support these efforts so that peace can be restored as quickly as possible.

Attack on American Tourists

Laura and I were also saddened by the attack on an American family and their Chinese tour guide today in Beijing. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. And the United States Government has offered to provide any assistance the family needs.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Todd and Barbara Bachman, who were attacked while touring the Drum Tower in Beijing.

The President's Radio Address
August 9, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Beijing, where I've come to support American athletes participating in the Olympic Games. This is a moment of pride for our Olympians and the great Nation they represent, and Laura and I are honored to share it with them.

In addition to attending the Olympics, my schedule includes meeting with China's President, dedicating a new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and worshiping at a local church. During my time here, I'm expressing America's deep concerns about freedom and human rights in China. This trip has reaffirmed my belief that men and women who aspire to speak their conscience and worship their God are no threat to the future of China; they are the people who will make China a great nation in the 21st century.

One of the most striking parts of this trip is seeing how much China has changed. I first visited the country more than three decades ago, when my dad was America's representative in Beijing. Poverty was rampant, and the streets swarmed with bicycles. Today, China is sprinting into the modern era. Beijing is covered in skyscrapers and filled with cars, and the people of China have more connections to the world than ever before.

These changes present the Chinese people, the American people, and the world with tremendous opportunities. So over the past 8 years, America has sought to put our relationship with China on a more solid and principled footing. We have advanced both our nations' interests by expanding free and fair trade and encouraging the rise of a Chinese middle class, which can be an enormous market for American exports. We have also cooperated on other shared challenges, from fighting pandemic disease to opposing North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.

At the same time, America has spoken candidly and consistently about our concerns over the Chinese Government's behavior. We have made it clear that trusting their people with greater freedom is necessary for China to reach its full potential. We have emphasized that being a global economic leader carries with it the duty to act responsibly on matters from energy to the environment to development and Africa.

Only China can decide what course it will follow, but I'm optimistic about the prospects. Young people who grow up with freedom in one area of their lives will ultimately demand freedom in other areas. The China of the future will reflect its own culture and traditions, but it will also reflect the universal aspirations of mankind. And there's no deeper human desire than liberty.

America's relationship with China is one element of our broader strategy for the region. When I took office, I brought a clear conviction that America is a Pacific nation, and our engagement with Asia should be stronger than ever before. We've acted on that conviction by pursuing four broad objectives.

We bolstered all five of our treaty alliances in the Asia-Pacific region: Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and two countries I visited this week, South Korea and Thailand. We have strengthened our relationships with other free societies in Asia, including India, the world's largest democracy, and Indonesia, a democratic nation that is home to more Muslims than any other nation on Earth. We have seized opportunities for prosperity by negotiating new free trade agreements, including an historic agreement with South Korea, an agreement which our United States Congress must pass. And we helped bring together nations throughout the Asia-Pacific to fight terrorism, seek an end to tyranny in Burma, respond to natural disasters, and address other challenges to our people and our prosperity.

My trips to Asia as President have brought many uplifting moments. One of the most moving came this week in Seoul, when I spoke to American troops at the Yongsan Garrison. These men and women are carrying the burdens of military life far from home. Yet in their faces you can see a quiet pride that comes from having an important job and doing it right. These brave Americans are preserving peace, and they're sending a broader message about our approach toward Asia. Now and always, the United States will keep our word to our friends. We will stand confidently for liberty. And we will advance our Nation's interests and ideals by staying engaged in this pivotal part of the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:20 p.m. on August 7 at the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel in Beijing, China, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on August 9. In his address, the President referred to President Hu Jintao of

China. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 12-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Beijing. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Visit to the Beijing Kuanjie Protestant Christian Church in Beijing
August 10, 2008

You know, I've just—Laura and I just had the great joy and privilege of worshiping here in Beijing, China. You know, it just goes to show that God is universal and God is love and no state, man, or woman should fear the influence of loving religion.

And I want to thank the pastor for his hospitality. And I want to thank this beautiful choir for singing "Amazing Grace" and "Edelweiss." It was a touching moment. It's been a joy to worship here. Again, I want to thank you, sir, and God bless you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Pastor Li Jian'an, senior pastor, Beijing Kuanjie Protestant Christian Church.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Hu Jintao of China in Beijing
August 10, 2008

President Hu. I'm very happy to meet you again, President Bush. And I would like to welcome you and your family members to Beijing for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games and also to watch the games. This is already your fourth visit to China, and this has certainly made you a American President that visited China more than any other U.S. President while in office. This is a good test to the importance you've placed on U.S. relations with China.

I know that the day before yesterday, you attended the inauguration of the U.S. Embassy in China, and the new Chinese Embassy in the United States was inaugurated at the end of July. And all this must further growth of China-U.S. relationship.

Now the various events of the Beijing Olympic Games are underway smoothly. And I know you just came here from swimming center, and I would like to offer you my sincere congratulations on the excellent performance of Mr. Phelps.

President Bush. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

President Hu. We are confident that he will score even better achievements in the coming games.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Hu. I would also like to mention the unfortunate happening yesterday. Yesterday two American tourists were attacked and one was killed; the another was injured. And I would like to take the opportunity—please accept my profound sympathy to you, Mr. President, and the family members of the victims. The Chinese side takes this unfortunate incident very seriously. Yesterday I already instructed the competent official in charge of the Chinese

Foreign Ministry to go to the hospital to see the injured. We take this case very seriously, and we have already instructed the competent authorities to carry out a very serious investigation and handle the case in accordance with law. We'll keep in touch with the U.S. side on the latest developments.

We're now willing to listen to your views, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. First, Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. I am so honored that you would invite my wife, my daughter, my father, my brother, my sister, and sister-in-law to lunch. And I congratulate you on the opening ceremonies. I'm not sure what it looked like on TV, but I can tell you what it looked in person, and it was spectacular.

And we are enjoying the games and, matter of fact, looking forward to tonight's big game, U.S. men's versus China men's basketball. [*Laughter*] Somebody asked me if we were going to make a bet on the game. I said, I don't think so.

I do want to thank you very much for how you handled—I do want to thank you very much, Mr. President, for how you handled the situation with the Bachman family. And I thank you for your expressions of sympathy. And the Ambassador informs me that your Government has been very attentive and very sympathetic, and I appreciate that a lot.

Today—I mean, every time I come to China, I have memorable experiences. I enjoy our conversations that we have. As you know, our relationship is constructive and it's important. And it's also very candid, and I thank you for that.

And once again, I had a very uplifting experience by going to a church, and I want to thank you for arranging that as well. It was a spirit-filled, good feeling. And as you know, I feel very strongly about religion, and I am so appreciative of the chance to go to church here in your society.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in Han Yuan Dian Hall at the Zhongnanhai. In his remarks, he referred to Todd and Barbara Bachman, who were attacked on August 9 while touring the Drum Tower in Beijing; and U.S. Ambassador to China Clark T. Randt, Jr. He also referred to his daughter Barbara P. Bush; his brother Marvin P. Bush and his sister-in-law Margaret Bush; and his sister Dorothy Bush Koch. President Hu referred to Michael Phelps, swimmer, U.S. Olympic team; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi of China. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Vice President Xi Jinping of China in Beijing

August 10, 2008

Vice President Xi. I very much welcome you, Mr. President, and your family members to Beijing for the opening ceremony and for the different events and for this visit to Beijing. To my knowledge—that you have a quite rich and full and interesting program here in Beijing, and I hope you like the program.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Vice President Xi. I'm very familiar with you, Mr. President, because you are always in the limelight of international media. [*Laughter*] And I'm very happy to have this opportunity to meet you and get acquainted with you.

President Bush. Thank you.

Vice President Xi. That's why the fact that you've come to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games shows your support for the Chinese efforts to host this Olympiad, and it also shows your understanding and respect for the Chinese people to host these games.

The U.S. delegation is a very powerful and strong delegation, and you still have a overwhelming and very obvious edge in athletic sports. And I would like to wish American athletes every success and you good performance at the Beijing Olympic Games.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Vice President Xi. Just now you had a friendly meeting with President Hu Jintao, and I know later on you are going to have a meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao. I'm very happy to have this opportunity to learn about your views and opinions.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Well, thank you very much for your hospitality. We've just had a fabulous lunch, and I'm looking forward to this meeting as well.

I thank you for the warm hospitality. The opening day celebration was unbelievable. And I appreciate the beautiful venues, and I'm looking forward to seeing some of our teams compete.

So we thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in Building 202 at the Zhongnanhai. Vice President Xi referred to President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao of China. Vice President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Premier Wen Jiabao of China in Beijing
August 10, 2008

Premier Wen. Mr. President, welcome to Beijing. I also welcome your family members and other friends from the United States to the Beijing Olympic Games.

I already learned that yesterday you went to see the American athletes in Beijing and you also watched a match played by the U.S. women's basketball team.

President Bush. Right.

Premier Wen. You also spent some time with the beach volleyball players. [*Laughter*]

I think this evening the match between the Chinese men's basketball team and the American men's basketball team will captivate the attention of people from all over the world.

President Bush. That's right.

Premier Wen. I'm very happy that you're going to watch the match.

President Bush. Yes, sir. I'm going with the Foreign Minister. [*Laughter*] He's going—he told me he's going to be yelling at the top of his lungs. [*Laughter*]

Thank you for your hospitality. It's been a wonderful experience being here. I didn't see if you were at the opening ceremonies.

Premier Wen. Yes, I was there.

President Bush. Well, it was fantastic—really well done. But thank you.

Premier Wen. Yes, the opening ceremony is spectacular.

President Bush. Unbelievable.

Premier Wen. When the U.S. team marched into the stadium, I saw that you put back your coat and your suit and then you stood up and cheered for your team.

President Bush. Yes, sir. I was proud to see them. But I bet you did the same thing when the Chinese team came. [*Laughter*]

Premier Wen. Yes, yes. I did the same.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in Ziguangge Hall at the Zhongnanhai. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi of China. Premier Wen spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Interview With Bob Costas of NBC Sports in Beijing
August 11, 2008

2008 Beijing Olympics

Mr. Costas. All right, Al, we thank you. In a few minutes, we'll have more of the women's team qualifying from Sunday afternoon here in Beijing. But now, live, we're joined by President George W. Bush, who has been at these games since the opening ceremony.

You saw the opening ceremony. You've seen Michael Phelps and company at the pool. You went to beach volleyball, the USA's win over China in basketball last night. What are your impressions so far?

The President. First of all, I think the Chinese are being great hosts. The venues are fantastic. And our team's fired up, and so am I. I'm excited to be here. It's such a thrill to watch our men and women compete.

U.S. Olympic Men's Basketball Team

Mr. Costas. You met with the ballplayers before the basketball game last night.

The President. I did. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Costas. What was their response to you?

The President. Their response was—well, first of all, obviously, these are great stars. And their response was, "Thanks for coming. We are really, really honored to represent America." And I was impressed by them. And of course, they go out and put on a great performance.

China-U.S. Relations

Mr. Costas. And winning 101 to 70. All right, our time here is limited. We'll get to as much as we can.

The President. Okay.

Mr. Costas. The opening ceremonies were glorious. There's much to admire about China's people, China's culture, and its present accomplishments. But this remains an authoritarian state——

The President. That's true.

Mr. Costas. ——with an abysmal human rights record. In the long run, is China's rise irreconcilable with America's interests?

The President. No. In the long run, America better remain engaged with China and understand that we can have a cooperative and constructive, yet candid, relationship. It's really important for future Presidents to understand the relationship between China and the region, and it's important to make sure that America is engaged with China, even though we may have some disagreements.

China-U.S. Relations/U.S. Foreign Policy

Mr. Costas. You met with President Hu Jintao, not just at the opening ceremony——

The President. Right.

Mr. Costas. ——but privately since then. Did you press him on the full array of American concerns: human rights; press freedom; Tibet; China's support of rogue regimes like Sudan and Myanmar?

The President. Yes—and North Korea and Iran.

Mr. Costas. It was all on the table?

The President. Oh, absolutely, every time, every time. And you got to understand something, Bob, I don't need the Olympics to advance America's agenda. I've met with Hu Jintao a lot since I have been the President. And yes, I had a full range—hey,

listen, we agree with them on a lot of things, and we disagree with them on things. And that's the way the relationship is going to be. It needs to be, as I mentioned, constructive and cooperative.

U.S. Foreign Policy

Mr. Costas. This past week, you restated America's fundamental differences with China.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. But given China's growing strength and America's own problems, realistically how much leverage and influence does the U.S. have here?

The President. First of all, I don't see America having problems. I see America as a nation that is a world leader, that has got great values. And leverage is—I don't think you should look at the relationship as one of leverage. I think you ought to look at the relationship of one of constructive engagement where you can find common areas, like North Korea and Iran, but also be in a position where they respect you enough to listen to your views on religious freedom and political liberty.

2008 Beijing Olympics/China

Mr. Costas. If these Olympics are as successful as they are shaping up to be, most people believe this only further legitimizes the ruling party in the minds of most Chinese——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. ——citizens. And even absent true liberty as we understand it, the lives of hundreds of millions of Chinese people are much better than they once were. Therefore, what's the party's incentive to reform?

The President. Well, first of all, if you're a religious person, you understand that once religion takes hold in a society, it can't be stopped. And secondly, I think it—the Olympics are going to serve as a chance for people to come and see China the way it is and let the Chinese see the world and interface and have the opportunity to converse with people from around the world. And this is a very positive development, in my view, for peace.

And who knows what—how China is going to progress? They've been through some very difficult political times—the Cultural Revolution, where the leadership actually created violent anarchy as the society turned on itself. All I can tell you is, is that it's important for the United States to be active in this part of the world with all countries and to stay engaged with China.

Situation in Georgia

Mr. Costas. Moving away from China for just a second, during the opening ceremony, we saw you conferring with Vladimir Putin.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. We now know you were talking about the conflict that had erupted that day——

The President. That's true.

Mr. Costas. ——between Russia and Georgia. Now, Georgia is a former Soviet republic that is sympathetic to the West——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. ——and that is attempting to embody many Western values. But just as you need China, you need Russia strategically around the globe.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. You got to walk a fine line. What did you say to Putin?

The President. I said, this violence is unacceptable. I not only said it to Vladimir Putin, I said it to the President of the country, Dmitry Medvedev. And my administration has been engaged with both sides in this, trying to get a cease-fire, and saying that the status quo ante of—for all troops should be August 6. And, look, my—I expressed my grave concern about the disproportionate response of Russia and that we strongly condemn bombing outside of South Ossetia.

It was just interesting to me that here we are trying to promote peace and harmony, and we're witnessing a conflict take place.

Mr. Costas. Right, no Olympic truce in this case.

The President. There wasn't. And I was very firm with Vladimir Putin—and he and I have got a good relationship—just like I was firm with the Russian President. And hopefully, this will get resolved peacefully. There needs to be a international mediation there for South—the South Ossetia issue.

Darfur

Mr. Costas. A couple more quick things.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Costas. China is a nation that warmly received Umar al-Bashir of Sudan, who has since been indicted by the International Court on charges of genocide.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. Then this past week, they revoke the visa of Joey Cheek, an exemplary Olympian who had planned to come here not to directly protest China's Government, but to call attention to the humanitarian——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. ——crisis in Darfur.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. What's your reaction?

The President. My reaction is, I'm sorry Joey Cheek didn't come; he's a good man. Joey Cheek's just got to know that I took the Sudanese message for him. My attitude is, is if you got relations with Mr. Bashir, think about helping us solve the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. That was my message to the Chinese Government.

China-U.S. Relations/Freedom Agenda

Mr. Costas. As you attempt to press these points with them, do you find Hu Jintao not just warm toward you personally, but is he receptive? Do you sense any movement?

The President. It's hard to tell. I mean, it's—all I can tell you is, is that it is best to be in the position where a leader will listen to you. Hey, I went to church here, and I'm sure the cynics say, "Well, you know, it was just a state-sponsored church." On the other hand—and that's true. On the other hand, it gave me a chance to say to the Chinese people, religion won't hurt you; you ought to welcome religious people. And it gave me a chance to say to the Government, why don't you register the underground churches and give them a chance to flourish? And he listened politely. And I can't read his mind, but I do know that every time I met with him, I pressed the point.

President's Visit to China

Mr. Costas. Your father has longstanding connections to China. He was an envoy here even before we established an official ambassador's position, during the 1970s, and he is here with you on this trip. So there's a connection, a family connection.

The President. Absolutely. Yes, there's a great connection. You know, I can remember riding my bike around Beijing in 1975, and it is——

Mr. Costas. Only bikes then, just about.

The President. ——unbelievable how far this has changed. I mean, it is—and he feels the same way. And we were honored yesterday when the President, Hu Jintao, invited my dad and me and Laura and my sister and my daughter, my brother for dinner. It was a—lunch. It was just a great gesture of kindness.

Bob, it's very important for the American people to know that coming here gave me a chance obviously to root for our team, and you've captured that, but it's also—coming here is a sign of respect for the Chinese people. And this is a big, important nation. We'll have our differences; we'll have our agreements. But in order to find common ground and to move the world toward peace, it is important for this country to show respect for the people of the country.

Major League Baseball

Mr. Costas. Briefly, one more sports question.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Costas. You have been outspoken—your past connections to baseball—you used a State of the Union speech to do it, to talk about performance-enhancing drugs in sports. Marion Jones recently petitioned you for clemency.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Costas. She's serving time because of involvement in the BALCO case—one-time Olympic hero. We know many Olympians, and in your favorite sport and mine, baseball, big names: Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens. What's your feeling about this? And how much do you, as an American, trust the integrity of the sports you watch?

The President. Yes, well, you know, let's just talk about baseball. Obviously, one of the great things about baseball is we can compare the records of the players of the fifties to the sixties and the seventies and, obviously, the 1990s. And it is very important for there to be a—for the sport to be clean so that the great continuity of and the history of baseball is real. And secondly, we don't want adults sending mixed messages to children that it's okay to shoot up drugs in order to become a star, because it's not okay.

2008 Beijing Olympics

Mr. Costas. You going to go to a few more events before you leave?

The President. I'm going to swimming here—if you'd ever let me off this set. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Costas. All right. You are dismissed.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Costas. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:55 a.m. at the International Broadcasting Center. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hu Jintao of China; President Dmitry A. Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; former U.S. Olympic athlete Joey Cheek; and President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan. He also referred to his sister Dorothy Bush Koch; his daughter Barbara P. Bush; and his brother Marvin P. Bush. Bob Costas referred to Alan Michaels, reporter, NBC Sports; former U.S. Olympic athlete Marion Jones-Thompson; and former Major League Baseball players Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens.

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia
August 11, 2008

I just met with my national security team to discuss the situation in Georgia.

I am deeply concerned by reports that Russian troops have moved beyond the zone of conflict, attacked the Georgian town of Gori, and are threatening the—Georgia's capital of Tbilisi. There's evidence that Russian forces may soon begin bombing the civilian airport in the capital city.

If these reports are accurate, these Russian actions would represent a dramatic and brutal escalation of the conflict in Georgia. And these actions would be inconsistent with assurances we have received from Russia that its objectives were limited to restoring the status quo in South Ossetia that existed before fighting began on August the 6th.

It now appears that an effort may be underway to depose Russia's [Georgia's]* duly elected Government. Russia has invaded a sovereign neighboring state and threatens a democratic government elected

* White House correction.

by its people. Such an action is unacceptable in the 21st century.

The Georgian Government has accepted the elements of a peace agreement that the Russian Government previously said it would be willing to accept: an immediate cease-fire, the withdrawal of forces from the zone of conflict, a return to the military status quo as of August 6, and a commitment to refrain from using force. There are representatives of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe currently in Moscow seeking Russia's agreement to this peace plan.

Russia's Government must respect Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Russian Government must reverse the course it appears to be on and accept this peace agreement as a first step toward resolving this conflict.

Russia's actions this week have raised serious questions about its intentions in Georgia and the region. These actions have substantially damaged Russia's standing in the world, and these actions jeopardize Russians' relations—Russia's relations with the United States and Europe. It is time for Russia to be true to its word and to act to end this crisis.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:21 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the Coalition for Affordable American Energy
August 12, 2008

I want to thank members of the Coalition for Affordable American Energy for joining me today. We just had a very interesting and informative discussion. I heard from businesses, large and small. They—these folks are representing a lot of workers, people who are really concerned about the energy situation here in America, a lot of people wondering why their Government is not doing something about the supply of crude oil.

One of the things that came out in this discussion was, there's a lot of folks in our country who understand we could be doing something about the high price of gasoline, and we're not. Obviously, we need to be wise about conservation, but we've got to be wise about increasing the supply of oil here in America. If you're concerned about the price of gasoline, one way to affect that price of gasoline is to increase oil supplies.

And one of these things these workers know, that I fully understand as well, I'd rather our consumers be buying gasoline made from oil here in America than gasoline from oil being made overseas. We want our dollars, to the extent possible, to be here at home, staying here at home.

And so we discussed a variety of strategies about how to affect the supply of oil, and one way that we can affect the supply of oil is to increase access to offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Congress has restricted access to key parts of the Outer Continental Shelf since the early 1980s. Experts believe that these restricted areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current oil production. People have analyzed what's possible there, and they believe that it's—we can find a lot of oil, American-produced oil, oil that will mean our dollars are staying here and not going overseas. Advances in

technology have made it possible to conduct oil exploration in the Outer Continental Shelf that is out of sight, that protects coral reefs, and protects against oil spills.

Last month, I acted, and I lifted an executive branch restriction on offshore oil exploration. And then I called on Congress to join me and to lift the legislative ban—to end the legislative ban. Unfortunately, the Democratic leadership in Congress decided to go on a 5-week vacation, a recess, rather than act on behalf of the American consumer, the American small-business owner.

Members have now had an opportunity to hear from their constituents, and if they listen carefully, I think they'll hear what I heard today, and that is, a lot of Americans from all walks of life wonder why we can't come together and get legislation necessary to end the ban on offshore drilling. And so today I join House Republicans in urging the Speaker of the House to schedule a vote on offshore oil exploration as soon as possible.

Now, the way ahead is this: The moratorium on offshore drilling is included in the provisions of the Interior appropriations bill. When Congress returns, they should immediately bring this bill to the House floor and schedule an up-or-down vote on whether to lift the moratorium on offshore drilling. Our goal should be to enact a law that reflects the will of the overwhelming majority of Americans who want to open up oil resources on the Outer Continental Shelf.

And so the Democratic leadership should bring up a clean bill, give the Members a chance to vote up or down on whether or not we should proceed with offshore drilling, and not insert any legislative poison pills. Those would be provisions that they know will never be enacted and are added only for the purpose of killing the effort to open up the off—the Outer Continental Shelf to drilling.

Congress can do some more. Once they solve this problem, they can allow us to drill in northern Alaska, which we can do in environmentally friendly ways. They should allow us to tap into the extraordinary potential of oil shale. And we need to expand our refining capacity here in America. These are all steps that the Congress can take to show the American people that we can move forward in a positive way to affect the price of gasoline. And there's a lot of Members of Congress who want a up-or-down vote. And the Democratic leadership has got to listen to the people on this issue.

Now, this is part of a comprehensive strategy. Everybody in this room understands that expanding oil and gas production is a part of a comprehensive strategy. Obviously, we need to expand conservation measures. We need to develop alternative energy technologies such as advanced batteries, plug-in hybrids, hydrogen fuel cells. We need to expand clean, safe, nuclear power, clean coal technology, solar and wind power. There's not a single answer to our energy problems, but a part of solving the dilemma that our consumers are facing, that the hard-working Americans face, and that is high price of gasoline, we need to get after exploration here in America. And we can do it in a way that protects the environment.

So when Congress comes back, they need to act. And they don't need to gimmick up the legislation; they need to allow there to be an up-or-down vote and let the Members express the will of their constituents.

I appreciate the—your work on this issue. I appreciate you represent a lot of hard-working people, people who simply want to put food on the table and be able to make it to work; people who are concerned about the price of gasoline; people who have told you to tell me that they want to see more oil drilled, more exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf; people who told you to tell me they want to

see us drilling in Alaska; people who told you to tell me they want a commonsense energy policy right here in Washington, DC. And I agree with them.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for our conversation. Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia
August 13, 2008

Good morning. I've just met with my national security team to discuss the crisis in Georgia. I've spoken with President Saakashvili of Georgia and President Sarkozy of France this morning. The United States strongly supports France's efforts, as President of the European Union, to broker an agreement that will end this conflict.

The United States of America stands with the democratically elected Government of Georgia. We insist that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia be respected.

Russia has stated that changing the Government of Georgia is not its goal. The United States and the world expect Russia to honor that commitment. Russia has also stated that it has halted military operations and agreed to a provisional cease-fire. Unfortunately, we're receiving reports of Russian actions that are inconsistent with these statements. We're concerned about reports that Russian units have taken up positions on the east side of the city of Gori, which allows them to block the east-west highway, divide the country, and threaten the capital of Tbilisi.

We're concerned about reports that Russian forces have entered and taken positions in the port city of Poti, that Russian armored vehicles are blocking access to that port, and that Russia is blowing up Georgian vessels. We're concerned about reports that Georgian citizens of all ethnic origins are not being protected. All forces, including Russian forces, have an obligation to protect innocent civilians from attack.

With these concerns in mind, I have directed a series of steps to demonstrate our solidarity with the Georgian people and bring about a peaceful resolution to this conflict. I'm sending Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to France, where she will confer with President Sarkozy. She will then travel to Tbilisi, where she will personally convey America's unwavering support for Georgia's democratic Government. On this trip, she will continue our efforts to rally the free world in the defense of a free Georgia.

I've also directed Secretary of Defense Bob Gates to begin a humanitarian mission to the people of Georgia, headed by the United States military. This mission will be vigorous and ongoing. A U.S. C–17 aircraft with humanitarian supplies is on its way. And in the days ahead, we will use U.S. aircraft as well as naval forces to deliver humanitarian and medical supplies.

We expect Russia to honor its commitment to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance. We expect Russia to ensure that all lines of communication and transport, including seaports, airports, roads, and airspace, remain open for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for civilian transit. We expect Russia to meet its commitment to cease all military activities in Georgia.

And we expect all Russian forces that entered Georgia in recent days to withdraw from that country.

As I have made clear, Russia's ongoing action raise serious questions about its intentions in Georgia and the region. In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the 21st century. The United States has supported those efforts. Now Russia is putting its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions. To begin to repair the damage to its relations with the United States, Europe, and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must keep its word and act to end this crisis.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following Briefings at the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia

August 14, 2008

I want to thank the Director, Mike Hayden, and DO Steve Kappes for hosting me out here at the CIA. I get a chance to thank a lot of the folks who work out here for their service to the country.

It's really important for the people who work here to understand the significant—the significance of the contributions they're making to secure the homeland. The people here work long and hard hours. And they're smart, capable, and they deserve the Nation's thanks.

We also had a couple of briefings, one on the war on terror and the other on the situation in Georgia. Got a lot of folks, smart folks analyzing the situation on the ground and, of course, briefing us on different possibilities that could develop in the area and the region.

I sent Condi Rice, Secretary of State Rice over there. She'll be coming back to brief me Saturday. I'm looking forward to hearing firsthand what she has seen, what she has heard. And my call, of course, is for the territorial integrity of Georgia to be respected and for the cease-fire agreement to be honored.

And we will be working this issue throughout the coming weeks, and people out here at the Agency have been incredibly helpful. And I want to thank you very much for your hospitality. Thank you, Michael. I appreciate you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen R. Kappes, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency.

Remarks on the Situation in Georgia
August 15, 2008

Good morning. I've just received an update from my national security team on the situation in Georgia. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is in Tbilisi. She's conferring with President Saakashvili and expressing America's wholehearted support for Georgia's democracy.

She will be traveling to Crawford, where I will meet her, and she will bring me up to date on what she has seen and what she heard in Georgia as well as in Paris—I mean, in France; she did not go to Paris. Secretary of Defense Gates will keep me briefed on the humanitarian assistance to the people of Georgia. We're working closely with our partners in Europe and other members of the G–7 to bring a resolution to this crisis.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. Moscow must honor its commitment to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Some Americans listening today may wonder why events taking place in a small country halfway around the world matter to the United States. In the years since it's gained independence after the Soviet Union's collapse, Georgia's become a courageous democracy. Its people are making the tough choices that are required of free societies. Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy.

Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. Every administration since the end of the cold war has worked with European partners to extend the reach of liberty and prosperity. And now, for the first time in memory, Europe is becoming a continent that is whole, free, and at peace.

Unfortunately, Russia has tended to view the expansion of freedom and democracy as a threat to its interests. The opposite is true. Free and prosperous societies on Russia's borders will advance Russia's interests by serving as sources of stability and economic opportunity.

We hope Russia's leaders will recognize that a future of cooperation and peace will benefit all parties. The cold war is over. The days of satellite states and spheres of influence are behind us. A contentious relationship with Russia is not in America's interest, and a contentious relationship with America is not in Russia's interest.

With its actions in recent days, Russia has damaged its credibility and its relations with the nations of the free world. Bullying and intimidation are not acceptable ways to conduct foreign policy in the 21st century. Only Russia can decide whether it will now put itself back on the path of responsible nations or continue to pursue a policy that promises only confrontation and isolation. To begin to repair its relations with the United States and Europe and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must respect the freedom of its neighbors.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address
August 15, 2008

Good morning. For more than a week, the people of the nation of Georgia have withstood assault from the Russian military. The world has watched with alarm as Russia invaded a sovereign, neighboring state and threatened a democratic government elected by its people. This act is completely unacceptable to the free nations of the world.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. We insist that Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected. And Moscow must honor its pledge to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Earlier this week, I directed a series of steps to demonstrate America's solidarity with the Georgian people and to help bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. On Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in France, where she conferred with President Sarkozy about the diplomatic effort that the French Government is leading on behalf of the European Union.

Yesterday she was in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where she conveyed America's support for Georgia's democratic Government. And next week, Secretary Rice will travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue our efforts to rally the free world in defense of a free Georgia.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is overseeing a mission by the United States military to provide humanitarian aid for the people of Georgia. In recent days, U.S. cargo planes carrying humanitarian supplies have arrived in Georgia. In the days ahead, we will continue using U.S. aircraft and other assets as needed to deliver more humanitarian and medical supplies. Russia has agreed to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance, and Russia must keep open all lines of communication and transport, including seaports, airports, roads, and airspace for civilian transit and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Some Americans listening today may wonder why events taking place in a small country halfway around the world matter to the United States. In the years since it gained independence after the Soviet Union's collapse, Georgia has become a courageous democracy whose people are making the tough choices that are required of free societies.

Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy. Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. For the first time in memory,

Europe is becoming a continent that is whole, free, and at peace. And it is essential that America and other free nations ensure that an embattled democracy seeking to stand with us remains sovereign, secure, and undivided.

Russia's actions in Georgia raise serious questions about its role and its intentions in the Europe of the 21st century. In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the West. The United States has supported those efforts. Now Russia has put its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions.

To begin to repair the damage to its relations with the United States, Europe, and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must act to end this crisis.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on August 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 15. In his address, the President referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Crawford, Texas
August 16, 2008

Situation in Georgia

Good morning. I just had a briefing by my national security team on the latest updates—on the latest developments in Georgia, and there is some progress to report.

First of all, I want to thank Secretary of State Rice for her trip, and thank you for coming back here to Crawford to give me a firsthand briefing.

She went to Tbilisi, met with President Saakashvili and his team. And during that time, the President signed the six-point peace plan negotiated by President Sarkozy on behalf of the European Union. President Medvedev of Russia has now signed on to the terms of this agreement. And that's an important development; it's a hopeful step.

Now Russia needs to honor the agreement and withdraw its forces and, of course, end military operations.

Secretary Rice will soon travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies, EU officials to continue to rally the free world in the defense of a free Georgia.

This morning, also, I was briefed by Secretary Gates on the U.S. military's humanitarian mission to help the Georgian people recover from the trauma they have suffered. In recent days of—military flights have landed in Georgia to provide relief supplies, and more will be arriving in the days ahead.

A major issue is Russia's contention that the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia may not be a part of Georgia's future. But these regions are a part of Georgia, and the international community has repeatedly made clear that they will remain so. Georgia is a member of the United Nations, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia lie within its internationally recognized borders. Georgia's borders should command the same respect as every other nation's.

There's no room for debate on this matter. The United Nations Security Council

has adopted numerous resolutions concerning Georgia. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain within the borders of Georgia and that their underlying conflicts will be resolved through international negotiations. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are to be considered a part of the Georgian territory, and that to the extent that there's conflicts, they will be resolved peacefully.

These resolutions reaffirm Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity. Russia itself has endorsed these resolutions. The international community is clear that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia, and the United States fully recognizes this reality.

We will continue to stand behind Georgia's democracy; we will continue to insist that Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity be respected.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia; and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council.

Memorandum on Assignment of Function Under Sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act To Convene a National Science and Technology Summit and Submit a Report to the Congress Detailing the Results of the Summit

August 18, 2008

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

Subject: Assignment of Function Under Sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act To Convene a National Science and Technology Summit and Submit a Report to the Congress Detailing the Results of the Summit

By the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to you the function of the President under sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act (Public Law 110–69).

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 19, and it was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Statement on the Death of President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa of Zambia

August 19, 2008

Laura and I are saddened to hear of the passing of Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa. President Mwanawasa was a champion of democracy in his own country and throughout Africa. As President of Zambia, President Mwanawasa launched a sweeping anticorruption campaign and dedicated himself to improving the welfare

of all Zambians. As Chairman of the Southern African Development Community, President Mwanawasa worked tirelessly to uphold the values of good governance, speaking out against human rights abuses and threats to democracy when many others were silent.

On behalf of the United States, we extend our sincere condolences to President Mwanawasa's wife, his family, and all Zambians during this difficult time.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Orlando, Florida

August 20, 2008

Thank you all very much. Thank you for the warm welcome. And I am proud to address the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I spoke to you when I was a Presidential candidate, and this is the fifth time that I have spoken to your national convention as your President. And every time I've been honored to meet with members of the VFW, I come away from these meetings with my—inspired by your love of country, by your devotion for duty, and for the example you set for those who wear the uniform today.

I also appreciate the fact that you're here in spite of the weather. [*Laughter*] Tropical Storm Fay set a challenge for this convention, but your members were wise enough to hang around. I do want to thank the citizens of—the officials of the State of Florida for working hard to make sure that people were ready to address the storm. We watched this very carefully, and I must say that the people of this State worked hard to make sure that this convention and other lives were saved. We appreciate the work of the local officials. And of course, we'll continue to monitor the storm as it moves through the area.

I do want to thank my friend George Lisicki for his leadership as your national commander. He's done a fine job on behalf of the VFW. I know firsthand; I've had him to the Oval Office. He's not afraid to speak his mind; I listen. And I know you're proud of the job he has done. And I'm also—[*applause*]. And I want to thank his wife Gloria for putting up with him. [*Laughter*]

I do want to thank Bob Wallace, the executive director of the VFW. He has worked very hard to represent you, and he's done so in fine fashion.

I'm proud to be here with Glen Gardner, incoming national commander-in-chief of the VFW, and his wife Jean. I've known Glen for a long time; I admire him. I told him I'm fixing to retire, so I'm not going to be around to work with him. But no doubt in my mind he'll do a fine job on behalf of the VFW.

I want to thank Virginia Carman, national president of the Ladies Auxiliary. Dixie Hild is the incoming national president of the Ladies Auxiliary. I want to thank the rest of the leadership for letting me come by to visit with you.

I met an interesting person here today, a woman named Keela Carr. When I go to a city, I like to herald people who are volunteering on behalf of the country. Keela has walked from California to Washington, DC, to thank the veterans for their service to the United States of America. And I'm proud to have met Keela Carr. And I want to thank you for doing what you're doing, Keela.

And I want to thank the members of the Armed Forces that are here today. There is no greater honor than being the Commander in Chief of the United States

military, and I'm proud to be in your presence.

America owes the men and women of the VFW a debt that can really never be repaid. You fought for our freedoms, and then when you came home, you volunteered to continue to serve this Nation. Together with your Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries, members of this organization donate 13 million hours of community service every year. You mentor youth groups; you sponsor blood drives. You send packages to the military units deployed overseas; you provide vital services to your fellow veterans at home. In the VFW, we see the best of the American spirit, and America honors your service in and out of uniform.

When the history of the last 8 years is finally written, it will show how closely and effectively my administration and the VFW have worked together on behalf of Americans' veterans. My budget includes nearly $94 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which means we have nearly doubled the funding for veterans since I took office.

We've worked together to modernize and expand VA facilities and got $5.5 billion of taxpayers' monies in the budget to do so. The VFW and my administration have worked hard to expand grants to help homeless veterans in all 50 States and the District of Columbia because we strongly believe no veteran who served in distant lands should have to live without shelter in the land they fought to defend.

We believe that combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve to receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. I was the first President in more than 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation.

We have worked effectively and diligently to provide for those returning home from the frontlines today. My administration implemented recommendations from Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala to help our wounded warriors build lives of hope and promise and dignity. We're investing hundreds of millions of dollars to develop new treatments for conditions like traumatic brain injuries and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to sign a piece of legislation that the VFW has long championed, a GI bill for the 21st century.

We also owe something to your brothers-in-arms who never returned home. We will always cherish the memories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will never stop searching until we can account for every missing soldier, sailor, airman, coastguardsman, and marine.

Over the past 7½ years, I have seen the VFW's devotion to our men and women in uniform. I have been impressed, I have been inspired by your support of the military. You understand that our men and women in uniform deserve our full support because they are defending America in our Nation's first war in the 21st century. That war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001, a day that you have not forgotten, and neither have I. On that day, 19 men armed with box cutters brought killing and carnage to our homeland. We're at war against determined enemies, and we must not rest until that war is won.

This war cannot be won, however, if we treat terrorism primarily as a matter of law enforcement. Law enforcement is an essential part of our strategy, but our strategy cannot be limited to law enforcement alone. After the world—first World Trade Center attack in 1993, our law enforcement community succeeded in tracking down several of the killers, prosecuting them, and putting them into jail. But 8 years later, Al Qaida terrorists came back to finish the job. The lesson is this: In order to do our duty, our solemn duty, which is to protect the homeland from further harm, we must keep the pressure on the enemy, we must keep the extremists on the run. In order to do so, we must use all assets of national power, including the United States military.

So in this war, with your strong support, we are taking the fight to the enemy. Over the past 7 years, America and our allies have captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida leaders and operatives in more than two dozen countries. We'll continue to battle the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're on several fronts in this war on terror. A major front is Afghanistan, where we removed a dangerous regime that harbored the terrorists who plotted the September the 11th attacks. Because we acted, the Afghan people have been liberated, a nation that was once a training ground for terrorists has become an ally in the war on terror. We built a strong coalition of nations including every member of the NATO alliance to help the Afghan people defend their young democracy. And we will ensure that that country never becomes a safe haven again for terrorists who seek to launch attacks on America or our allies.

Another front in the same war against the extremists is Iraq. We removed a brutal dictator who murdered his own people, who paid the families of suiciders, who invaded his neighbors, who was an enemy of the United States, who repeatedly defied the United Nations. Because we acted, the dictator is gone, 25 million Iraqis are free. Removing Saddam Hussein was right then, and it is right today.

In 2006, as you well know, the situation in Iraq was deteriorating. Some back in Washington said the war was lost. They were willing to give up on the mission; they were willing to leave a struggling democracy to its own fate. But failure in Iraq could have spread chaos across the region, emboldened Iran, emboldened the terrorists, and given them a new base from which to launch operations against America and allies. I believe this would have been a disaster for America, and so do the men and women of the VFW.

Early last year, after consultations with our commanders—and the Commander in Chief must always listen to the commanders and not the latest opinion poll—I ordered a surge of forces into Iraq. I remember briefing the leaders of the VFW on my decision. Since the surge began, violence in Iraq has dropped; civilian deaths and sectarian killings are down. Slowly but steadily, political and economic progress is taking place. Iraq's a rising democracy; Iraq's an ally against these extremists. And our troops have become home—begun to come home under our policy of return on success. We all look forward to the day when even more of our troops come home. And the VFW understands that the only way to bring them home is with victory.

To ensure that we have the capabilities to prevail in Iraq and Afghanistan, or wherever the terrorists make their stand, we've transformed the United States military. Our branches of the military are working together better than ever. We've more than doubled funding for our Special Operations Command so our forces can hunt the terrorists no matter where they hide. We've increased the number of unmanned aerial vehicles in our arsenal. We're moving American forces from cold war garrisons in Europe and Asia so they can deploy rapidly anywhere in the world. We're going to increase the size of our ground forces. We'll make our troops more lethal and more agile so they can remain on the offense against the enemy. America's future leaders must remember that the war on terror will be won on the offense, and that's where our military must stay.

We're keeping the pressure on the enemy. And as we've done so, we've defended this homeland. Nearly 7 years have passed without another attack on our soil. This is not for the lack of trying by the terrorists. Our intelligence and law enforcement professionals have worked with our allies to stop major Al Qaida attacks, including a plot to blow up transatlantic flights from London and a plan to strike the tallest skyscraper in Los Angeles. We owe these fine professionals our thanks, and

we owe them something more: the tools necessary to be able to do their job.

Since 9/11, we've given American defenders what they need. We formed a new Department of Homeland Security. We overhauled the Nation's intelligence community. We shifted the FBI's focus from investigating terrorist attacks to preventing terrorist attacks. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which tore down the wall that once prevented law enforcement and intelligence officers from sharing vital information. We created a new National Counterterrorism Center. We established a program at the CIA to interrogate key terrorist leaders captured in the war on terror. We worked with Congress to pass legislation that allows our intelligence professionals to quickly and effectively monitor terrorist communications.

We have used all these tools to stop new attacks. And I'm pleased to report to the American people that these tools will be available for future administrations to protect the American people for years to come.

And in this war, we're countering the terrorists' dark and hateful ideology by offering a more hopeful vision, and that's one based on freedom. On September the 11th, we saw how the terrorists exploit hopelessness and despair to recruit young men for their evil plots against America. We learned that our Nation's security depends on combating the conditions that give rise to terror by aiding the rise of free societies. We're engaged in the great ideological struggle of our time, between the forces of freedom and the forces of tyranny. So we, America and our allies, will support young democracies. We're standing with brave democratic reformers.

Over the past 7 years, we've seen liberty on the march; seen citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq establish representative governments after decades of tyranny. We've seen the people of Lebanon take to the streets and demand their independence. We've seen citizens of the former Soviet republicans—republics stand up for their right for free and fair elections.

One of the most inspiring chapters of history was written by the Georgian people during the Rose Revolution of 2003. In the years that followed, the Georgian people have held free elections, they've established a democratic form of government. Georgia's also sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others realize the blessings of liberty. Georgia has stood for freedom around the world; now the world must stand for freedom in Georgia.

For nearly 2 weeks, the world has watched Georgia's young democracy come under siege. Russian forces invaded the country in a disproportionate response to a long-simmering conflict in Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The world has come together to condemn this assault. Yesterday Secretary Rice met with members of the NATO alliance to discuss the ongoing situation. Our countries agreed that Russia must honor its commitment to withdraw its troops from Georgia and to return to the status quo before the hostilities began on August the 6th.

The alliance is considering seriously the implications of Russia's actions for the NATO-Russia relationship. The alliance determined that business as usual cannot continue with Russia. And the alliance agreed to help Georgia by sending NATO teams to assess the country's needs and by forming a new NATO-Georgia Commission.

The United States of America will continue to support Georgia's democracy. Our military will continue to provide needed humanitarian aid to the Georgian people. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia. And the United States will work with our allies to ensure Georgia's independence and territorial integrity.

The people in this room understand the benefits of liberty because you fought to defend it and bring it to others. As young men, many of you battled the forces of Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan on the battlefields of World War II. In

those days, it would have been hard for you to imagine that the enemies you were fighting would become some of America's closest allies. Six decades later, Germany and Japan are strong democracies; they are two of our closest allies.

In your own lifetimes, you have seen firsthand the power of liberty to transform societies and yield the peace we all want. I believe, and people in this hall believe, that the power of freedom is unstoppable. I believe it because I believe in an Almighty that has given every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth freedom. And I know freedom yields the peace we want. If America maintains our confidence in our ideals, is willing to take the lead, freedom will once again prevail. And we'll be able to look at a generation of Americans coming up and say, "We did our duty; we defended America and laid the foundation of peace for generations to come."

We can also be confident, in every generation, freedom has found brave defenders in the men and women of our Armed Forces. You know, through the years, I've received a lot of heartfelt letters from our military families. One of them was from a woman in Texas named Sue Stoner. Sue's husband is a decorated Air Force veteran of Vietnam and the Gulf war. Last year during a trip to Fort Hood, the couple witnessed their 6-year-old granddaughter Mikayla do something that every American should do as well. The little girl bounded over to a wounded stranger in Army fatigues and said, "I just wanted to say thank you for serving our country." As Mikayla's proud grandmother tells it, the soldier leaned forward on his walker and said, "Sweetheart, I did it for you."

Every one of you put on the uniform for the same reason. You risked your life, you sacrificed so Americans like Mikayla could grow up in freedom. We will always honor your service. We will never forget your sacrifice.

This is the last time I will address a veterans convention as the Commander in Chief. Over the past 70 years—7½ years, I've been honored to get to know many of your members. I've relied on your counsel. I have benefited from your wisdom. I have been extremely grateful for your prayers.

I know you share with me a deep love for America and an awesome pride in those who defend her. When I meet with our troops, they always inspire me with their sense of duty and honor. They are America's finest citizens. I am confident that our troops will always be able to count on the fellowship and the support and the love of the men and women of the VFW. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Orange County Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Co-chairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on Gulf Coast Reconstruction in New Orleans, Louisiana
August 20, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. General, thank you for the kind introduction. Who would have thought that 3 years after the storm, the President can come and say, New Orleans, Louisiana, is on its way back as a stronger and better city.

I'm proud to be here at Jackson Barracks, built by my predecessor, President Andrew Jackson. [*Laughter*] He built it to protect the city of New Orleans. And that's exactly what the folks housed in this facility have done and will continue to do. So first, I want to pay homage to the Louisiana National Guard. I thank you for what you did during the rescue efforts. Even though your own homes were destroyed, you went out to save people and their homes. And the people of Louisiana—[*applause*].

I think the message here today is, hope is being restored, hope is coming back. I'm going to spend some time here in New Orleans, and then I'm heading over to Gulfport, Mississippi—same message. And I'm, frankly, not surprised. I'm not surprised that hope is marching in because I understand the nature of the people who live here in this community and these communities. I have seen people when their spirits were at a low ebb, but never did they give up. And now I've seen incredible progress is being made.

Oh, there's still work to be done. This isn't, like, a farewell address, you know, George Bush came and he said he's through. No, we're—there's still more work to be done. But I do think it's important to take stock of the moment and to remind people how far this community has come.

Laura Bush sends her best. She's spent a lot of time down here, and so have I. The librarians in this part of the world are especially grateful; after all, the Laura Bush Foundation has helped refurbish a lot of school libraries up and down the Gulf Coast. She sends her very best. I know she would say what I'm about to say: It's amazing to come into a crowd like this, and look around and see so many familiar faces, people that we have come to admire and, frankly, after all this business is over, people that we'll say are our friends. Maybe it's because of the tragedy that struck that we formed a close bond, I don't know. But I can tell you that we have made a lot of good friends in the Gulf Coast region. And even though I'm headed for retirement in about 6 months, that's not to say I'm going to forget who my friends are in this part of the world.

I do want to thank the Governor for joining us, Governor Bobby Jindal. He's a—[*applause*]. It should not surprise you that on the helicopter ride here, Jindal had a few agenda items. [*Laughter*] That's what Presidents have come to expect. And I appreciate the way he laid them out in logical form with a—in a very respectful tone.

I'm also proud to be here with the mayor of this great city. The mayor and I have had some quality time. [*Laughter*] We have come to know each other. I remember when I first flew down here, there was the mayor at the end of the steps of Air Force One. I said, "How you doing, Mayor?" He said, "I'm hungry, and I haven't had a bath." I said to the steward on Air Force One, "Fix the man up with a meal, and turn on the hot water in the shower."

And I appreciate you, Mayor. I appreciate the fact that you decided to run for office again. You said to the people of this part of the world, "There is unfinished business, and I intend to be a part of the finished business." And the people listened, and they put you back in office. And I'm proud to be with you, Ray. Thanks for coming.

We've got a lot of people from the delegations, the Federal delegations. William Jefferson is with us. Congressman, I'm proud you're here. Thank you for coming.

The one thing you learn when you're in this part of the world is you better pay attention to the parish presidents. [*Laughter*] Right, Ray? You are one. But so is Aaron Broussard of Jefferson Parish. I'm proud to see you, Aaron. I'll never forget my first time when we came to see you. We were in, like, a community center or something. And I think you were in Bermuda shorts. [*Laughter*] Or they may have

been spandex shorts. [*Laughter*] But nevertheless, you were focused, you were intense, and you got the job done for the people of your parish. I really appreciate you coming.

Billy Nungesser of Plaquemines Parish is here. Billy, thanks for working hard. Now, the Governor says that Billy says, "We're through with the recovery. We're moving on. There's still projects to be done, but Plaquemines Parish is heading into the future with confidence."

I'm proud to be here with the parish president from St. Bernard's Parish, Craig Taffaro. Craig, I'm honored you're here. He's the first to admit he's got his hands full. But I want to thank you for your leadership, and thank you for agreeing to take on the issues and the problems. You could have easily have ducked the responsibility that comes with elected office. It would have been much easier to say, "We'll just let somebody deal with the next 4 years; I think I'll show up later on." But you came in and you've taken the lead, and we appreciate it.

I want—proud to be here with General Landreneau. General, it's good to see you again. Thank you for your time. I said thanks to Hunt Downer; that would be General Downer. I appreciate—[*applause*].

Don Powell was the first man down here to work with the local officials to try to make sure this recovery was coordinated, that the money was well spent, that the money was focused in the proper direction. He did a fine job. He decided he wanted to go back to the promised land; that would be the State of Texas. [*Laughter*] And so I asked General Doug O'Dell to take his place. He's a tough-nosed, no-nonsense guy who cares deeply about the people down here. General, thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here.

So the next two men I'm going to introduce are people that you came to know well, and people I came to know well too, people I admire a lot. First, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen. And the man who came up with a new phrase in American lexicon, which was, "Don't stay stuck on stupid"—General Russ Honore; thank you. U.S. Army, retired—what's it like? [*Laughter*] Yes.

At the airport, I had the honor of saying hello to the Saints quarterback, Drew Brees, and running back Deuce McAllister. By the way, as you may know, Laura and I were at the Olympics; no finer citizen of the United States and of this part of the world than Chris Paul of the Hornets.

And thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here a lot. It's hard to believe that it was 3 years ago that Katrina, in essence, wiped out a lot of this city. I mean, just flooded it and just destroyed a lot of hopes and a lot of dreams. Eight hundred thousand people across the Gulf Coast area left their homes; that's a lot. Eight hundred thousand people figured out how to leave and headed into—all across America. Never before has our Nation seen such destruction by nature—never before. And a lot of folks, I'm confident, wondered whether or not there would be a brighter tomorrow.

In the midst of all the flood water, people were saying, "Oh man, can we possibly have a good future here?" And yet the good future is here. I'm—not to be a "told you so," but I was in Jackson Square, and I predicted that New Orleans would come back as a stronger and better city. That's the prediction I made. I also pledged that we'd help. And $126 billion later, 3 years after the storm, we've helped deliver $126 billion of U.S. taxpayers' money. [*Applause*] And I thank you for applauding on that statement, but I know you're applauding the American taxpayer. A lot of people around the country care deeply about the people down here. And so it was—you know, it was money that we were happy to spend.

The money is mainly in the hands of State and local governments, helping to rebuild. And there's a lot of work to be done;

I fully understand that. And as Bobby made clear and the mayor made clear, there's some ongoing projects that they want to make sure the Federal Government pays attention to, and we will. I make no promises; this isn't a chance for me to come and try to be a typical politician and make you a promise I don't intend to keep. I hope by now people understand that when I say something, we're going to get it done, but I am judicious about saying things. And so I told Bobby and told the mayor, we're open minded, and we'll listen very carefully to make sure that this recovery continues on.

There are people hurting—I fully understand that—people waiting to get back in their home, wondering whether a brighter day is possible. Yet a brighter day is coming. And I want to talk about some of the hopeful progress that's being made. I think it's important for our citizens around the country to understand, there is hopeful progress here. We see hopeful signs in the work to protect New Orleans from future storms. The Army Corps of Engineer [Engineers] * has repaired 220 miles of levees. That's important. You cannot rebuild these communities unless you're confident that the levee system will work in the future. The corps is upgrading the flood walls so they're stronger than before Katrina.

We're on track to meet our goal of a 100-year flood plain protection by the year 2011. I know there were some doubts about whether or not the corps would be able to get the job done. I can remember clearly, on one of my visits—maybe it was the year after the storm—people say, "Oh yeah, sure, he's just saying this, and they don't intend to do it." Well, we intended to do it, and the corps is working hard.

Governor Jindal requested that Louisiana be allowed to pay the State's share of the levee improvement costs over 30 years, instead of 3. I listened very carefully to what he had to say. I didn't think Louisiana ought to choose between rebuilding flood walls and completing other projects that are vital to recovery, so I granted the Governor's request. [*Applause*]

Thank you. This is not supposed to be self-congratulatory. [*Laughter*] I'm congratulating you.

There is hopeful signs of progress as housing is restored. Louisiana's Road Home program has put nearly $7 billion into the hands of more than 115,000 homeowners. Federal dollars are increasing affordable housing throughout New Orleans. And as we rebuild, the strategy is not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to move toward a vibrant mixed-income neighborhood system. Each week, hundreds of families are moving out of their temporary housing, and they're heading into permanent, long-term structures. And that's hopeful. Do more people need to move out? Absolutely. But has progress been made? Absolutely.

We see hopeful signs of progress in the growth of the economy. New Orleans sales tax revenues are at nearly 90 percent of their prestorm levels. Think about that. Three years after the devastating storm, sales tax are at 90 percent of where they were prior to the storm. Employment increased by 8,000 jobs last year. The Port of New Orleans is a bustling center of commerce and trade; Louisiana exports now exceed pre-Katrina levels.

The present city's tourism industry is on the rebound. The mayor was telling me tourism is back. People are coming here with confidence that they're going to have a good experience. That's the reason why we had the North Americans' Leaders' summit here; I wanted the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada to get a flavor, a taste of what New Orleans is all about. And they did.

The health care system is improving. The Department of Health and Human Services has provided more than $2.6 billion to care for the poor and uninsured, to offer mental health services, and to support primary care

* White House correction.

clinics and hospitals. The Federal Government is helping to recruit doctors and nurses and other health care professionals. We want to make sure the people of New Orleans have the care that is necessary for this population to grow. And we're working with the Governor to build a system of community-based clinics that encourages good preventative care and eases the strain on the city's emergency rooms.

There's hopeful progress when it comes to reducing crime. No question about it, there needs to be a lot of effort, Chief, and I know you're working hard to reduce crime. It's essential that folks get after the crime problem here in New Orleans. Everybody knows that. And we want to help. There is a role for the Federal Government to help the local police force deal with crime. And so there's—Federal funds are given to local police and sheriffs, essential equipment like cars, computers, and radios. Agents—Federal agents are working the streets alongside the New Orleans police. Federal resources are helping the police department rebuild its crime lab and resolve its forensics backlog.

Violent crime is a problem. But I was told, over the last 6 months, there is notable improvements. My only point to the people of New Orleans is we'll continue to help you solve your crime problem.

We're seeing hopeful signs of progress when it comes to education in New Orleans. More than 80 public schools in the city have reopened. That's good; that's really good. You can't have a vibrant city unless you got your schools up and running. About half now are charter schools, to give greater access to—give parents better options. High schools that once struggled are being transformed into career-oriented academies. In other words, there's a lot of innovation here in New Orleans. Rather than repeat mistakes of the past, people said: "Let's come together and let's innovate. Let's make this school system"—[*applause*].

I find it interesting that Teach for America is focused on New Orleans, that they're recruiting a lot of really bright kids from around the country to come here and help the youngsters of this part of the world achieve educational excellence. By the way, because of—accountability measures have been put in place, I'm able to report to the people in Louisiana and around the country that test scores across this city have improved significantly.

More restaurants are now open in New Orleans than before the storm. Isn't that interesting? [*Laughter*] You can get some good food here too. As I mentioned, I saw the Saints football stars; they're now going to start a new season in a refurbished Super Dome.

Religious institutions are opening up. Places of worship that were closed are now opening their doors. Musicians are returning this season to Mahalia Jackson Theatre. Earlier this year, New Orleans celebrated the return of another sweet sound, the streetcars on St. Charles Avenue. This city is coming back.

As we think about the future, it's important to remember some of the great acts of compassion that took place. I think about the folks who came from across the country here to volunteer, 14 million hours. Isn't that amazing? Brothers and sisters in need, and total strangers came to say, "What can I do to help you?"

I think about the citizens across the country who donated $3.5 billion to total strangers to help. I think about the people here in Jackson Barracks that went out of their way to serve. And I think about all the citizens we've met, and I'm just going to cite three, but they're extraordinary examples of what took place.

First, Daryn Dodson. See, he was studying at Stanford Business School. Like, what would be a natural thing, being at Stanford Business School, is stay out there in Silicon Valley and try to be a part of the high-tech boom, the next wave of technology. That would have been very tempting for—but he felt the need to come back to New Orleans to help—or come to New Orleans

to help. And so he joined what's called the Idea Village. It's a program to support the city's entrepreneurs, to help stimulate economic growth. It's a incubator for good ideas. This bright man decided, instead of trying to seek his own personal wealth, to come here and help people realize the blessings of entrepreneurship, all aiming to add value and to create jobs here in New Orleans.

I appreciate so very much, Daryn, the briefings that you gave me and Laura. And I appreciate the fact that you're back here in New Orleans, serving. Thanks for coming.

Okay. Then there's Leah Chase. Some of you might have heard of Dooky Chase. Dooky Chase, for those people listening, is a New Orleans institution. It's been around for several decades, as has Leah. [*Laughter*] The flood waters left her restaurant completely ruined. She saw her whole life washed away, and she wasn't sure where she was going to find the strength to go on. And she found that strength, though, in her faith, in her family, and her friends and neighbors. The community held fundraisers here in New Orleans to help her rebuild. I found it interesting that high school students from all over the country came to help her rebuild. I found it amazing that friends in Indiana donated new chairs for a dining room. And I'm here to testify the food is awesome. [*Laughter*]

And finally, Doris Hicks. She is the principal of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Science and Technology of the Lower Ninth Ward. We had a chance to visit her school. After Katrina, the flooding at MLK was so bad that they found fish on the second floor of the high school. That's high water. She was told she couldn't open until 2010. Somebody said, "We're pessimistic." I guess they didn't understand her spirit. They said, "You won't be open until 2010." She didn't appreciate that. She said that this community needed this school up and running. It's open today. I'm told families are moving into the community so they can return to that school, and she puts it, "There's no other place like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and there's no other place like New Orleans." Well, first of all, there's not many—[*applause*]—and there is no other place like New Orleans and its surrounding parishes.

This is an important part of our country. This is a part of our country that was flat on its back and is now standing up and headed for the future. I have been so honored to work with you. As I told you, I'm sprinting to the finish, and so I'm not through, but I thought around this third anniversary of a tragic event, it makes sense to come by and say, here's what's happened; here's where you're headed. It's an awesome example of courage and determination, desire, and I am here to honor you all.

I appreciate the citizens of New Orleans and the citizens of south Louisiana showing what is possible in the face of unspeakable tragedy. I thank you for staying with it. I thank you for allowing me to come by and see you once again. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at Jackson Barracks. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Huntington B. Downer, Jr., assistant adjutant general, Louisiana National Guard, who introduced the President; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Billy Nungesser, president, Plaquemines Parish; Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, adjutant general, Louisiana National Guard; former Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Region Recovery and Rebuilding Donald E. Powell; Maj. Gen. Douglas V. O'Dell, Jr., USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding; Chris Paul, point guard, National Basketball Association's New Orleans Hornets; President

Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada; and Warren J. Riley, superintendent, New Orleans Police Department.

Statement on the Death of Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones
August 20, 2008

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Chairwoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

As a proud lifelong resident of Ohio's 11th District, she devoted her career to serving her community at both the State and national levels. She was an effective legislator who was dedicated to helping small businesses, improving local schools, expanding job opportunities for Ohioans, and ensuring that more of them have access to health care. After making history as the first African American woman elected to Congress from Ohio, the Congresswoman worked to expand the rights of all Americans. Our Nation is grateful for her service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her son Mervyn Leroy Jones II and the rest of her family.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Gulfport, Mississippi
August 20, 2008

The President. Governor, thank you for coming.

Governor Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi. Thank you, sir.

The President. I thank the United States Senators—Senator Wicker, Senator Cochran—Congressman Taylor, mayors, supervisors—county supervisors, small-business owners, high school teacher. Thank you all very much for giving me a chance to come and visit with you.

I have brought—you know, a member of my administration, United States Marine General—retired—O'Dell is here to listen to people. We still understand there are issues, but I do want to say something about the progress. I remember what it looked like right after the storm. I remember what it looked like in the first anniversary right after the storm. I remember what it looked like last year, Governor. And things have improved a lot.

Are there still people wondering about their future? Absolutely. Do they still have other issues to deal with, like cleaning out some of the bureaucracy so that the housing issue can get solved quicker? Absolutely. But things are better here on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

And one reason they're better is because you've had strong leadership, and the other reason—at the State and local level. And the other reason is because people refused to give in to the storm. People picked up their lives and decided that this is where their home was going to be and made something out of these communities.

I remember going to the schools right after the storm hit and seeing the determination of the teachers and principals about how—whether they had to be in a trailer or in a old building, they were going to teach these kids. And the spirit of southern Mississippi is real, and it's alive. And

the leaders here around the table know better than me what I'm talking about.

So I appreciate you giving me a chance to come. I told people that I'm almost through, but I'm sprinting to the finish. This is the not the farewell dinner. [*Laughter*] But this is an opportunity to come and listen to what's on people's minds, with the idea of continuing to work with the elected officials to solve problems and make sure this is even better 6 months from now than it is today.

At any rate, I want to thank you. Food's good here too. [*Laughter*] I appreciate your time, Governor. Thank you.

Gov. Barbour. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:28 p.m. at Vrazel's Fine Food. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Douglas V. O'Dell, Jr., USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding.

The President's Radio Address
August 23, 2008

Good morning. Before they left Washington for their August recess, Congress failed to take action on an issue that is currently of great concern to Americans: high prices at the gas pump.

The fundamental reason for high gasoline prices is that the supply of oil is not keeping pace with demand. To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially oil produced here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to open up more of America's domestic oil resources for exploration, including offshore exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. The American people overwhelmingly support this proposal. But throughout the summer, the leaders of the Democratic Congress have refused to allow it to come to a vote.

Now that the pressure to take action has become overwhelming, Democratic leaders in Congress have changed their strategy. Rather than attempting to block expanded drilling by preventing a vote, they are now attempting to block it by bringing up a bill that is designed to fail.

News reports indicate that Democratic leaders in Congress may plan to hold a vote on a bill that would make us more dependent on foreign oil and would likely make energy costs go up, not down. This bill would raise taxes on energy companies, which would reduce domestic production. This bill would make the Nation more vulnerable to supply shocks by tapping into our emergency supply of oil, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And it would impose a rigid national mandate that would increase electricity costs in States where there are few renewable resources.

Democratic leaders know that these counterproductive proposals will not become law. Yet they seem ready to push this legislation as a way to block offshore drilling while appearing to be in favor of it. They need to stop standing in the way of expanding domestic production and take meaningful steps now to address the pain caused by high energy prices.

I've proposed a comprehensive approach to our energy problems that would permit a range of new drilling options and encourage the development of alternative resources. If Democratic leaders will not approve this comprehensive approach, the very least they should do when they return in September is to take action on three commonsense energy solutions that enjoy bipartisan support.

First, Congress should open the way for environmentally responsible offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Experts believe that these areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. This exploration is now banned by a provision included in the annual interior appropriations bill. When Congress returns, they should remove this restriction so we can get these vast oil resources from the ocean floor to your gas tank.

Second, Congress should expand access to oil shale, a resource right here in America that could produce the equivalent of more than a century's worth of imports at current levels. Last year, however, Democratic leaders pushed through legislation blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands. They should lift that ban as soon as they return.

Third, Congress should extend renewable power tax credits to spur the development of alternative sources of energy like wind and solar. They should make these credits long-term and expand them to cover all forms of low-emission power generation, including nuclear power. Increasing production of low-carbon electricity will help us reduce our addiction to oil by allowing us to power a new generation of plug-in hybrid and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

There is bipartisan support in Congress for all three of these measures. So instead of spending the next month deadlocked on matters where Republicans and Democrats disagree, Members of Congress should come together to pass legislation in these areas where there is agreement.

This Congress has been one of the most unproductive on record. They've failed to address the challenge of high gas prices. Members still have time to take action on this vital priority for the American people. They need to send me a bill next month that I can sign, so we can bring relief to drivers, small-business owners, farmers and ranchers, and every American affected by high prices at the pump.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on August 22 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 22, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Situation in Georgia
August 25, 2008

I am deeply concerned by today's appeal to President Medvedev by Russia's Federation Council and Duma, the upper and lower houses of Russia's parliament, to recognize the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries. I call on Russia's leadership to meet its commitments and not recognize these separatist regions.

Georgia's territorial integrity and borders must command the same respect as every other nation's, including Russia's. Russia agreed, when President Medvedev signed the French-brokered cease-fire agreement, to the opening of international discussions on security and stability modalities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This represents an internationally endorsed approach to these issues, which recognition would undercut. Recognition would also be inconsistent with unanimously approved United Nations Security resolutions that Russia has consistently voted for in the past.

The United States will continue to stand with the people of Georgia and their democracy and to support its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia.

Memorandum on Potential Marine Conservation Management Areas
August 25, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality

Subject: Potential Marine Conservation Management Areas

The Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality has advised me there are objects of historic and scientific interest in areas under the jurisdiction of the United States that may be appropriate for recognition, protection, or improved conservation and management under available authorities including by executive order or action under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*), National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431, *et seq.*), or the Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 431). These objects include:

> In the central Pacific, coral reefs, pinnacles, sea mounts, islands and surrounding waters of Johnston Atoll, Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands, Kingman Reef, Palmyra Atoll, Wake Island, and Rose Atoll that are isolated from population centers, mostly uninhabited, and support endemic, depleted, migratory, endangered and threatened species of fish, giant clams, crabs, marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds, migratory shorebirds and corals that are rapidly vanishing elsewhere in the world. The reefs in these areas support unique localized upwelling-based productivity, and two of the atolls are repositories of the larvae of many marine species transported from the biodiversity-rich western Pacific.
>
> In the western Pacific Ocean, the marine waters around the northern islands of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, including the Mariana Trench, that offer an exceptional and diverse collection of marine life and habitat.

Please provide to me your assessment, with relevant supporting information, including the views of the territorial and local governments and other interested parties, of the advisability of providing additional recognition, protection or improved conservation and management for objects of historic or scientific interest at these islands, coral reefs, geologic features and surrounding marine waters.

Because Johnston Atoll and Wake Island have supported active military bases, and the other areas in the Pacific include areas of strategic importance to the United States, any measures your assessment recommends should not limit the Department of Defense from carrying out the mission of the various branches of the military stationed or operating within the Pacific and shall be consistent with freedom of navigation and international law. Please also consider cultural, environmental, economic, and multiple use implications of any measures you recommend, including the extent to which they are compatible, if applicable, with sustaining access to: (1) recreational and commercial fishing; (2) energy and

mineral resources; and (3) opportunities for scientific study.

With respect to each of these areas, your assessment should further identify whether there are opportunities and mechanisms for improved coordination of management among relevant agencies in accordance with Executive Order 13366 of December 17, 2004.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Statement on the Situation in Georgia
August 26, 2008

The United States condemns the decision by the Russian President to recognize as independent states the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. This decision is inconsistent with numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions that Russia has voted for in the past and is also inconsistent with the French-brokered, six-point cease-fire agreement which President Medvedev signed on August 12 [16],* 2008. The six-point agreement offered a peaceful way forward to resolve the conflict. We expect Russia to live up to its international commitments, reconsider this irresponsible decision, and follow the approach set out in the six-point agreement.

The territorial integrity and borders of Georgia must be respected, just as those of Russia or any other country. Russia's action only exacerbates tensions and complicates diplomatic negotiations. In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions that remain in force, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia, and they must remain so.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks
August 28, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14,

* White House correction.

2008, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China
August 28, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of one two-inch fluid energy mill for the research and development of pharmaceutical powders and ten accelerometers for incorporation into railway geometry measurement systems is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania
August 29, 2008

President Bush. It is such an honor to welcome a man I've come to admire a lot to the Oval Office, President Kikwete of Tanzania. He comes representing a great country; he also comes representing the African Union. And therefore, we've had a wide-ranging discussion about our bilateral relations, as well as the President's kindly giving me a briefing on how he sees the different situations and opportunities on the continent of Africa.

Laura and I will never forget our trip to your country. First of all, it's a beautiful country. The people were so gracious and so friendly. And I came back to America telling our fellow citizens how proud they would have been to have seen the outpouring of affection for the American people, as a result of the American people's generosity in such matters as education or HIV/AIDS or the President's Malaria Initiative.

I am confident in saying to the American people that your money is being spent wisely and compassionately in Tanzania. And a lot of it has to do with the leadership of the President. He stood up and said, "We've got a problem, and I'm going to take the lead." And his Government has been responsive to the needs of the people.

And, Mr. President, I can't thank you enough, on behalf of the American people, for your compassion and your leadership.

I also am looking forward to continuing our discussions on issues like Zimbabwe or Darfur. These are issues that the President is most familiar with. It's the President—issues in which he has got good judgment about how to proceed on these matters.

And so, Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you here to the Oval Office.

President Kikwete. Thank you. Well, thank you, President. First, I thank you for the invitation. It's an honor for me, it's an honor for Tanzania, it's an honor for Africa. Well, I came here to say thank you very much on behalf of the people of Africa, on behalf of the people of Tanzania. You have done so much for Africa——

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kikwete. ——so much for Tanzania. When you compare, no U.S. President has done so much for Africa and for Tanzania as you have done.

AGOA has been extended. It extends the horizons of the possibilities of economic growth in Africa. PEPFAR is helping us tackle the HIV/AIDS scourge. Many lives—many, many children now who were—who would have been orphaned are no longer orphaned because of that. PMI has helped us so much in the fight against malaria. Many innocent lives of children—women and children are being saved. And Tanzania is one of those examples of the great successes of PMI.

Malaria in Zanzibar has almost been—is being eliminated now. In the past, there used to be 50 percent cases being reported in hospital; now it's only 1 percent that's been reported in hospital, thanks to PMI.

And there are a number—of course, our biggest challenge now in Zanzibar is how to sustain that success, because only 20 miles on the mainland, in Dar es Salaam, malaria is still there. So if people go to Zanzibar with malaria, then the problem is—our biggest challenge is how to sustain it. And we are working together with the PMI and CDC on how to respond to this kind of situations.

Of course, with the MCA, again, the support you've given us to infrastructure development in the country, it's again—it helps us build the capacity to tackle poverty and inland development in the country.

So all that I can say really—I came here to say thank you so much for the support. Well, of course, you saw it yourself when you came home, how the people came in huge numbers——

President Bush. They were.

President Kikwete. ——huge numbers. I was even amazed when they poured in the streets. There the issue was really to express their appreciation to you and to the people of the United States for the generous support that you have been extending to our country.

Of course, we discussed the issues on the continent. We again—we thank you for your leadership. We'll continue to work together. Zimbabwe is a common problem. Darfur is a common problem. We are in the frontline. But of course, when those of us who are on the frontline always look toward—look to the rear—[*laughter*]—to continue to support us. And there has been such extraordinary support of us in the continent. We continue to work together.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kikwete. I thank you, President.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Selection of Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska as Republican Vice Presidential Candidate
August 29, 2008

Today Senator McCain made an exciting decision in choosing Alaska Governor Sarah Palin to join him on his ticket as the Vice Presidential candidate. Governor Palin is a proven reformer who is a wise steward of taxpayer dollars and champion for accountability in government. Governor Palin's success is due to her dedication to principle and her roll-up-your-sleeves work ethic and serves as a wonderful example of the spirit of America. By selecting a working mother with a track record of getting things done, Senator McCain has once again demonstrated his commitment to reforming Washington.

I applaud Senator McCain for selecting Governor Palin. This decision is yet another example of why the American people can trust him to make wise decisions and to confidently lead this country.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Message on the Observance of Labor Day
August 29, 2008

I send greetings to all Americans celebrating Labor Day 2008.

In America, all citizens have an opportunity to forge their own paths forward, and their success is limited only by the size of their dreams. From engineering to health care and from small businesses to education, the American people are the most industrious, enterprising, and productive in the world. These talented and innovative workers provide for their families and play a vital role in building a more prosperous future for our country. By trusting in the ingenuity and creativity of America's risk-takers and dreamers, our country will remain the most vibrant, hopeful, and dynamic around the globe.

Each year on Labor Day, we honor the dedicated men and women of our Nation's workforce. Their determined efforts add to the strength and vitality of our country and build a brighter future for America.

Laura and I send our best wishes.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this message. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of Ramadan
August 29, 2008

I send greetings to Muslims observing Ramadan in America and around the globe.

The holy month of Ramadan is a special time of prayer, fasting, and service. For Muslims, these days commemorate the revelation of God's word to the prophet Muhammad in the form of the Qur'an.

I thank the men and women of the Muslim community for their contributions to America. Your love of family, and gratitude to God have strengthened the moral fabric of our country. Our Nation is stronger and more hopeful because of the generosity, talents, and compassion of our Muslim citizens.

Laura and I send our best wishes. Ramadan Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President's Radio Address
August 30, 2008

Good morning. This weekend, millions of Americans will celebrate Labor Day. This holiday marks the traditional end of the summer season. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of hard-working Americans all across our country, from teachers, farmers, and health care professionals, to firefighters, police officers, small-business owners, and workers on the assembly line.

The American workforce continues to be the marvel of the world, yet many working families have been weathering tough economic times. There are families across our country struggling to make ends meet. There is an understandable concern about the high price of gas and food, and many Americans are worried about the health of our housing and job markets.

I share these concerns about our economy, yet there have been some recent signs that our economy is beginning to improve. While the housing market is continuing to experience difficulty, the decline in home sales has leveled off recently, and sales are rising in some parts of the country. Orders for some durable goods, such as business equipment, are rising. And earlier this week, we received a report that America's economy grew in the second quarter at an annual rate of 3.3 percent, surprising analysts who were predicting an economic recession.

These welcome signs indicate that the economic stimulus package that I signed earlier this year is having its intended effect. The growth package will return more than $150 billion back to American families and businesses this year. Many Americans who received tax rebates are spending them. Businesses are taking advantage of tax incentives to purchase new equipment this year. And there are signs that the stimulus package will continue to have a beneficial impact on the economy in the second half of the year.

Labor Day is also the traditional start of the election season. In the coming months, it will be tempting for some in Congress to try to score political points instead of getting work done for the American people. Our citizens deserve better. We still have time to accomplish important goals for our country. My administration remains hopeful that we can work with Democratic leaders in Congress on bipartisan measures to help Americans cope with this period of economic uncertainty.

We need to work together on a comprehensive approach to our energy problems. I've called on Congress to permit us to tap vast, unused sources of oil and gas, expand domestic refining capacity, and encourage the development of alternative energy sources. Congress continues to stand in the way of this comprehensive approach.

At a minimum, Democratic leaders in Congress should move forward on commonsense energy proposals that have bipartisan support, and it is not too late to do this. They should act responsibly by lifting the ban on offshore drilling, expanding access to oil shale, and implementing long-term tax credits to spur the development of alternative sources of energy like wind, solar, and nuclear power.

We need to work together to open up markets for American goods. Exports account for a greater share of America's gross domestic product than at any time in our history. It is not too late for Congress to approve free trade agreements with strong allies like Colombia, Panama, and South Korea so that we can create more opportunities for American farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs.

We need to work together to keep your taxes low. At a time of economic challenge, the last thing American families need is a massive tax increase. It's not too late for Congress to make the tax relief we passed in 2001 and 2003 permanent.

Despite our economic difficulties, there is every reason to be optimistic about America's future. Our workforce is dynamic and productive, our economy is showing that it is resilient, and our Nation is the most industrious, creative, and prosperous on Earth.

Laura and I wish you a safe and joyous Labor Day weekend. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on August 29 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 29, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency

August 31, 2008

I'm here at the FEMA Headquarters where I just received a briefing, and I've also come to thank the people behind me for working the long hours that they're doing to make sure that we've got the preparations in place for Hurricane Gustav. There's been a lot of work done to get ready for the storm. Across the Gulf Coast, there's Governors and State officials and local leaders that are taking this storm very seriously and are preparing proactively.

Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Administrator Paulison report that the Federal Government has prepositioned teams of emergency managers, doctors, ambulances, search and rescue teams, aircraft, and commodities throughout the region. There are millions of meals and millions of liters of water prestaged, as well as a lot of blankets and cots. In other words, there's a lot of preparations that have gone in, in anticipation of this storm.

We're working with Governors to identify and secure out-of-State shelter for people in the path of the storm. Several States, including Missouri, Texas, and New Mexico, are in the—are preparing to and have accepted a lot of evacuees. People are leaving those areas that are of concern, and we're working hard to make sure that they have a place to go.

The Army Corps of Engineers informs me that while the levees are stronger than they've ever been, people across the Gulf Coast, especially in New Orleans, need to

understand that in a storm of this size, there is serious risk of significant flooding.

The message to the people of the Gulf Coast is, this storm is dangerous. There's a real possibility of flooding, storm surge, and high winds. And therefore, it is very important for you to follow the instructions and direction of State and local officials. Do not put yourself in harm's way or make rescue workers take unnecessary risks. And know that the American people stand with you and that we'll face this emergency together.

In the coming days, I encourage people across our Nation to help their neighbors in need. You can contribute to charities such as the Red Cross. You can volunteer your time to help those in need. And of course, you can pray for those who might be suffering.

In light of these events, I will not be going to Minnesota for the Republican National Convention. I'm going to travel down to Texas tomorrow to visit with the Emergency Operations Center in Austin, where coordination among Federal, State, and local government officials is occurring. I intend to go down to San Antonio, where State and local officials are prepositioning relief materials for Texas and Louisiana. And I'll have a chance to visit with residents of both States who have been evacuated.

I will not be traveling to Louisiana tomorrow because I do not want my visit to impede in any way the response of our emergency personnel. I've been talking to the Governors yesterday and today; I also spoke with Mayor Nagin of New Orleans to make sure that they're getting everything they need from the Federal Government to prepare for what all anticipate will be a difficult situation. I hope to be able to go to Louisiana as soon as conditions permit.

This Nation has come to know the strong and resilient spirit of the people of the Gulf Coast. They've made it through great challenges in the past, and they're going to make it through this one as well. In the meantime, all those preparing for this storm are in our thoughts and our prayers, from me and Laura and our whole Nation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. at the FEMA Operations Center. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Emergency Operations Center in Austin, Texas
September 1, 2008

Governor, thank you; Senator, thank you for coming; Members of Congress.

The coordination on this storm is a lot better than on—than during Katrina. A lot of it had to do with the Governors. Yesterday I was on the video conference with the Governors of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. There was clearly a spirit of sharing assets, of listening to somebody's problems and saying, how can we best address them? The Federal Government is very much involved in helping the States. Our job is to assist. That's why Secretary Paulison is with me today; he heads FEMA.

I do want to thank the State of Texas and other States for welcoming citizens from Louisiana. It's been a huge evacuation. It's hard for a citizen to pull up stakes and move out of their home and face the uncertainty that comes when you're not at home. And I want to thank

those citizens who listened carefully to the local authorities and evacuated. And I want to thank my fellow citizens in Texas and in other States for welcoming these folks in open arms. The State of Texas is a generous State. And, Governor, I wanted to thank you and your team for being so kind to the people.

And it's very important for those who have been evacuated to listen very carefully to the officials in their respective States before they decide to return. This storm is yet to pass. It's a serious event. And as the Governor mentioned, the people of east Texas got to be prepared for a possible flooding event.

All in all, what I look for is to determine whether or not assets are in place to help, whether or not there's coordination, and whether or not there's preparation for recovery. And to that end, I feel good about this event.

And I do want to thank Gail McGovern of the American Red Cross for joining us, and thank a lot of the other organizations that are preparing to go help people in need. These organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, require the support of our citizens.

And if you're interested in how you can help once the storm passes, please call up the different web sites of these organizations and donate your time or your money so that the recovery effort is as compassionate and complete as possible.

Governor, thanks for having me. I want to thank your team for all the hard work they're doing. I'm looking forward to going in with you in the room next door to say thanks to the people that are working the long hours. And we're going to go down to San Antonio and see a staging area there and thank the people there for working so hard, not only on behalf of the citizens of Texas, but on behalf of the people of the region.

Appreciate it. It's good to be home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas; Sen. Kathryn A. "Kay" Bailey Hutchison; Gov. Robert R. Riley of Alabama; Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana; Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi; and Gail J. McGovern, president and chief executive officer, American Red Cross.

Remarks at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
September 1, 2008

The President. You know, one of the great things about our country is the number of people who volunteer during one of these incidents. Here are some Red Cross volunteers. They are—they symbolize the thousands that will help.

And my call to our fellow citizens is that—find out how you can help. You can help by volunteering. You can help by contributing to the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. Somebody is going to say, "Well, I don't know how to." Well, it's pretty easy. You can get on the web page. If you're interested in the Red Cross, just call up Red Cross on your—and they'll steer you to the way to help.

Anyway, America is a great country. It's great because we've got great people. Nobody is happy about these storms; everybody is praying for everybody's safety. But I'm confident that after the storm passes and there's a human need, it will be met because of the generosity of the American people.

And I want to thank you all for setting such a good example.

Volunteer. You're very welcome, very welcome.

The President. Appreciate you.

Volunteer. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. at the Alamo Regional Command Reception Center.

Statement on Military Operations in Iraq
September 1, 2008

Today in Iraq, responsibility for security in Anbar Province was transferred to Iraqi civilian authorities. Iraqi forces will now take the lead in security operations in Anbar, with American troops moving into an overwatch role. Not long ago, Anbar was one of the most dangerous Provinces in Iraq. Al Qaida was in control of almost every major population center, and its leaders intended to turn Anbar Province into a safe haven from which to plan and launch further attacks against Iraqis and others in the region as well as here at home.

Today, Anbar is no longer lost to Al Qaida; it is Al Qaida that lost Anbar. Iraqis, like countless other Muslims across the world, witnessed Al Qaida's brutality firsthand and rejected it. As a result, Anbar has been transformed and reclaimed by the Iraqi people. This achievement is a credit to the courage of our troops, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the brave tribes and other civilians from Anbar who worked alongside them.

Today's ceremony returns the 11th of 18 Provinces to Provincial Iraqi control. Al Qaida and Iranian-backed special groups remain a threat, but the United States and the nations of Multi-National Forces—Iraq continue to stand with the Iraqis as they work to defeat these enemies and build a democracy in the heart of the Middle East. The success of Iraq will make the American people more secure and help yield the peace we all desire.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting
September 2, 2008

Members of my Cabinet have assembled here, and I thank you all for coming. We recognize that the prestorm efforts were important, and so is the followup efforts; in other words, what happens after the storm passes is as important as what happens prior to the storm arriving.

And so our discussion today is about energy. The Gulf Coast region produces a lot of energy for the United States. And we're now in the process of assessing any damage done to the infrastructure and right—a little early right now to come up with a solid assessment. There is some encouraging signs. For example, during Katrina, rigs would be—rigs moved because of the force of the storm, and their anchors drug across pipelines, which caused there to be infrastructure damage. We didn't see much of that this time, although I will tell you that it's a little early to be making any forecasts.

It's not too early, however, for the Federal Government to continue to coordinate with the State and local people. That's why Secretary Bodman was in touch with Governor Jindal. We want to make sure that we're in touch with these energy-producing States, to help assess what took place and what needs to happen.

One thing is for certain: When Congress comes back, they've got to understand that we need more domestic energy, not less, that—and one place to find it is offshore America, lands that have been taken off the books, so to speak, by congressional law. And now they need to give us a chance to find more oil and gas here at home. I'd much rather American consumers be buying gasoline produced from American oil than from foreign oil. I'd rather our dollar stay at home than go overseas.

And I know the Congress has been on recess for a while, but this issue hasn't gone away. And this storm should not cause the Members of Congress to say, "Well, we don't need to address our energy independence." It ought to cause the Congress to step up their need to address our dependence on foreign oil. And one place to do so is to give us a chance to explore in environmentally friendly ways on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request
September 2, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's 2009 Budget Request Act. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed 2009 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For 2009, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $10.1 billion.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Satellite Remarks to the Republican National Convention
September 2, 2008

Thank you, Laura, and good evening. As you know, my duties have me here in Washington tonight to oversee the Federal Government's efforts to help citizens recover from Hurricane Gustav. We are thankful that the damage in New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast was less than many had feared.

I commend the Governors of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas for their sure-handed response and seamless coordination with the Federal Government. I thank all the wonderful volunteers who stepped forward to help their brothers and sisters in need. We know that there is still risk even after the storm has passed, so I ask citizens across the region to listen closely to local officials and follow their instructions before returning to their homes. All of us are keeping the people of the Gulf Coast in our thoughts and our prayers.

As you gather tonight in St. Paul, I want to share some thoughts about our nominee, a great American, and the next President of the United States, John McCain.

Before I do so, I want to say hello to two people in the hall with you tonight. I could have no finer examples of character, decency, and integrity than my mom and dad. And I love you a lot.

I know what it takes to be President. In these past 8 years, I've sat at the Resolute desk and reviewed the daily intelligence briefings, the threat assessments, and the reports from our commanders on the frontlines. I've stood in the ruins of buildings knocked down by killers and promised the survivors I would never let them down. I know the hard choices that fall solely to a President. John McCain's life has prepared him to make those choices. He is ready to lead this Nation.

From the day of his commissioning, John McCain was a respected naval officer who made decisions on which the lives of others depended. As an elected public servant, he earned the respect of colleagues in both parties as a man to follow when there's a tough call to make.

John McCain's life is a story of service above self. Forty years ago, in an enemy prison camp, Lieutenant Commander McCain was offered release ahead of others who had been held longer. His wounds were so severe that anyone would have understood if he'd accepted; John refused. For that selfless decision, he suffered nearly 5 more years of beatings and isolation. When he was released, his arms had been broken, but not his honor.

Fellow citizens, if the Hanoi Hilton could not break John McCain's resolve to do what is best for his country, you can be sure the angry left never will.

As the father of seven sons and daughters, John has the heart of a protector. He and his wonderful wife Cindy are adoptive parents. John is a leader know—who knows that human life is fragile, that human life is precious, that human life must be defended.

We have seen John McCain's commitment to principle in our Nation's Capital. John is a steadfast opponent of wasteful spending. As President, he will stand up to the high-tax crowd in Congress and make the tax relief permanent. He will invest in the energy technologies of tomorrow and lift the ban on drilling for America's offshore oil today.

John is an independent man who thinks for himself. He's not afraid to tell you when he disagrees. Believe me, I know. [*Laughter*] No matter what the issue, this man is honest and speaks straight from the heart.

Last year, John McCain's independence and character helped change history. The Democrats had taken control of Congress and were threatening to cut off funds for

our troops. In the face of calls for retreat, I ordered a surge of forces into Iraq. Many in Congress said it had no chance of working. Yet one Senator above all had faith in our troops and the importance of their mission, and that was John McCain. Some told him that his early and consistent call for more troops would put his Presidential campaign at risk. He told them he would rather lose an election than see his country lose a war. That is the kind of courage and vision we need in our next Commander in Chief.

My fellow citizens, we live in a dangerous world, and we need a President who understands the lessons of September the 11th, 2001: that to protect America, we must stay on the offense, stop attacks before they happen, and not wait to be hit again. The man we need is John McCain.

When he takes office next January, John will have an outstanding leader at his side. America will have a strong and principled Vice President in the Governor of the great State of Alaska, Sarah Palin.

In the time the Oval Office has been in my trust, I've kept near my desk reminders of America's character, including a painting of a west Texas mountain lit by the morning sun. It reminds me that Americans have always lived on the sunrise side of the mountain. We are a nation that looks to the new day with confidence and optimism. And I'm optimistic about our future because I believe in the goodness and wisdom of the American people. I am optimistic because I have faith in freedom's power to lift up all of God's children and lead this world to a future of peace.

And I'm optimistic about something else: When the debates have ended and all the ads have run and it is time to vote, Americans will look closely at the judgment, the experience, and the policies of the candidates, and they will cast their ballots for the McCain-Palin ticket.

While I am not with you in the Twin Cities on this wonderful night for our party, with Laura Bush speaking, you have clearly traded up. [*Laughter*] I am so proud the American people have come to know her gracious presence, her determined spirit, and her loving heart. Laura has been a fantastic First Lady.

Thank you, Laura. And thanks to all of you in the hall tonight. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 9:54 p.m. from the Cross Hall at the White House to convention participants in St. Paul, MN. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Robert R. Riley of Alabama; Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana; Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi; and Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana
September 3, 2008

I'm going to make a quick statement, then I want to come around and say thank you in person to you.

First of all, Governor, thanks for having me down here. Phase one of the response to Gustav went very well. A lot of it had to do with the people in this room. We're much better coordinated this time than we were with Katrina. The State government, the local government, and the Federal Government were able to work effectively together.

There is still more work to be done. One of the key things that needs to happen is

they got to get electricity up here in Louisiana, get moving as fast as possible. The Governor understands it's a problem, his team understands it's a problem, and I understand it's a problem.

There's a lot of folks from this State that are working hard to restring the lines. There are people from out of State coming into Louisiana to help as well, and of course all the citizens of this State want to thank the people from other States that are moving in here to help get the electricity up as soon as possible. And I would ask that if utilities in neighboring States have extra manpower, please coordinate with the State and send the folks in. Part of this recovery is going to require the electricity coming back as quickly as possible.

We talked about the need to make sure that in parts of Louisiana that are getting flooded now—rural Louisiana—that MREs and water and ice get delivered to those communities as quickly as possible.

As a Governor of a neighboring State, I remember often how people would say, "All they care about is the big cities." And I understand there's a lot of focus on New Orleans, and there should be focus on New Orleans. But in the briefings today, it is clear that this State is focused as well as on people who live in rural Louisiana and in the smaller towns of Louisiana. And so the efforts will be aimed at helping people there.

Bobby talked about the need for—to release energy or oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Last night we got a request from a company doing business here in Louisiana, and we met that request. And if—so oil was released from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And we will continue to do that upon requests by companies.

All in all, the response has been excellent, but the people here understand that there is more work to be done. And that's why I came down here with members of the Federal Government to listen and to figure out how to help.

I can't thank you all enough for working as hard as you are. Looking around, I can see that some people may not have had much sleep recently. [*Laughter*] The people of your State care a lot about the fact that you are working as hard as you are. And if this helps you keep going, I want to thank you, and I want to thank all the volunteers in the faith-based community that always rises up in a challenge like this. They listen to that universal call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. And that's happening here in Louisiana again. And I know the people that are—whose lives have been affected appreciate a total stranger coming in to help.

And finally, the people in Louisiana must know that all across our country there's a lot of prayer, prayer for those whose lives have been turned upside down. And I'm one of them.

It's good to come down here. Governor, I can't thank you enough for your leadership and your team's leadership, and we stand ready to help.

And now I'm going to come around and thank every one of you for working. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Situation in Georgia
September 3, 2008

Last month, Russia invaded a sovereign neighbor and violated Georgia's territorial integrity. The people of Georgia withstood the assault from the Russian military, and the international community rallied to stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government.

Early in the crisis, I directed a series of steps to demonstrate America's solidarity with Georgia, including instructing Secretary Gates to oversee a mission by the U.S. military to provide humanitarian aid for the people of Georgia. Since the conflict began, our Nation has provided nearly $30 million in humanitarian assistance to Georgia, including more than 1,200 tons of food and other relief supplies delivered by the U.S. military. While that mission continues, the United States is also prepared to help Georgia rebuild and regain its position as one of the world's fastest growing economies.

On Monday, September 1, European leaders announced that the European Union is prepared to provide aid for reconstruction in Georgia, including the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and would soon convene an international conference to assist Georgia in its reconstruction. The United States applauds the actions taken by the European Union, and we will participate in the EU's reconstruction conference.

As part of America's contribution to this international effort, today I am announcing $1 billion in additional economic assistance to meet Georgia's humanitarian needs and to support its economic recovery. More than half of these funds will be made available in the near term and will support reconstruction efforts in Georgia, assist the Government of Georgia in leading the nation's recovery, and meet ongoing humanitarian needs, including the resettlement of displaced families. The balance of the funds, together with assistance from the European Union and other partners, will help the Government of Georgia rebuild critical infrastructure and help local communities and businesses get back on their feet. My administration looks forward to working with Congress on elements of this package. The Vice President will brief Georgia's leadership on this package when he visits Tbilisi tomorrow.

Today I have also directed a number of Federal agencies to expand their support for Georgia's economic recovery. U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab will take steps to expand trade and investment in Georgia, by negotiating an enhanced bilateral investment treaty and expanding preferential access to the U.S. market for Georgian exports. Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez will assist U.S. firms interested in trade and investment in Georgia and dispatch a trade mission to Georgia in the coming weeks. Secretary of Transportation Peters will make available risk insurance to support U.S. maritime commerce with Georgia. Secretary of the Treasury Paulson will continue to lead our efforts to coordinate assistance efforts with international financial institutions, and Secretaries Rice and Gates will continue to coordinate with our international partners to ensure that our aid is delivered swiftly to those who need it most.

Georgia has a strong economic foundation and leaders with an impressive record of reform. Our additional economic assistance will help the people of Georgia recover from the assault on their country and continue to build a prosperous and competitive economy.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

The President's Radio Address
September 6, 2008

Good morning. Throughout the past week, Americans anxiously watched weather conditions in the Gulf Coast region. The people of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas were well prepared for Hurricane Gustav, and the coordination between these States and the Federal Government was strong.

Now we're focusing on the relief effort. Gustav caused damage to infrastructure, forced tens of thousands into shelters, and left more than a million people without power. The Federal Government is working with State and local officials to repair this damage, to help residents get back home, and to return life in the region to normal as soon as possible.

While these relief efforts have been in progress, we've also been preparing for the arrival of storms like Hanna, Ike, and others that may follow. My administration will continue to provide assistance to those affected by violent weather throughout this hurricane season. And we will continue to work diligently to coordinate our emergency response efforts with State and local governments.

While the Federal Government continues this vital work, there are also important responsibilities awaiting Members of Congress as they return to Washington. In just a few weeks, Members will be back out on the campaign trail, emphasizing the differences between the two parties. But before they leave Washington, they should show that they can work together on bipartisan measures to help strengthen America's economy, measures like approving the Colombia and Korean free trade agreements, extending relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax, and addressing one of the American people's biggest concerns, the high price of gasoline.

The fundamental reason for high gasoline prices is that the supply of oil is not keeping pace with demand. By increasing supply through the use of our domestic resources, we can begin reducing the pressure on prices. So in June, I called on Congress to open up more of America's domestic oil resources for exploration, including offshore exploration of the Outer Continental Shelf. The American people overwhelmingly support this proposal. But throughout the summer, the leaders of the Democratic Congress refused to allow it to come to a vote.

At the very least, Congress should take action on three commonsense energy solutions that enjoy bipartisan support.

First, Congress should open the way for environmentally responsible offshore exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf. Experts believe that these areas could eventually produce nearly 10 years worth of America's current annual oil production. This exploration is now banned by a provision included in the annual Interior appropriations bill. Congress should remove this restriction immediately.

Second, Congress should expand access to oil shale, a domestic resource that could produce the equivalent of more than a century's worth of imports at current levels. Last year, however, Democratic leaders slipped a provision blocking oil shale leasing on Federal lands into an omnibus spending bill. They should lift that ban immediately.

Third, Congress should extend renewable power tax credits to spur the development of alternative sources of energy like wind and solar. They should make these credits long-term and expand them to cover all forms of low-emission power generation, including nuclear power. In the long run, increasing production of low-carbon electricity can help us reduce our addiction to

oil by allowing us to power a new generation of plug-in hybrid and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

This Congress has earned a reputation as one of the least productive in history. Throughout this year, Democratic leaders have ignored the public's demand for relief from high energy prices. This is their final chance to take action before the November elections. If Members of Congress do not support the American people at the gas pump, then they should not expect the American people to support them at the ballot box.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:30 p.m. on September 4 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 5, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Corporations
September 7, 2008

Today the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), the regulator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, determined that these housing mortgage companies cannot continue to operate safely and soundly and fulfill their public mission, posing an unacceptable risk to the broader financial system and our economy. FHFA announced that it will place the companies in conservatorship and appoint new leadership.

The Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve are taking additional steps that complement FHFA's actions and will support market stability, add to mortgage availability, and protect taxpayers. These agencies are taking the necessary steps to prevent a disruption of our financial system.

Putting these companies on sound financial footing and reforming their business practices is critical to the health of our financial system and to making further progress with the housing correction that today is weighing heavily on our economy. Allowing the companies to fail or further deteriorate would damage our home mortgage market and could weaken other credit markets that are unrelated directly to housing. Americans should be confident that the actions taken today will strengthen our ability to weather the housing correction and are critical to returning the economy to stronger sustained growth in the future.

The actions taken today are temporary and will support housing finance in the near term. As we determine the appropriate role for the companies in the future, it is crucial that they not pose similar risks to our economy or the financial system again.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks at a White House Tee-Ball Game
September 7, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to tee-ball on the South Lawn. Laura and I are honored you are here, and we welcome the military families and players from all across the United States of America.

We are really looking forward to seeing you all play, and it gives us a chance to thank your moms and dads for their sacrifice and service to the United States of America.

I'm proud to be here with the honorary commissioner, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen. We are joined today with—by the Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates; General Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force, Rod McKinley.

We welcome Congressman Tom Davis. Welcome, Tom. Thanks for coming, and thanks for bringing Jeannemarie. Glad you all are here.

What an honor it is to have Rascal Flatts not only play the national anthem, but entertain you at the picnic at the South Lawn after the game. Thank you guys for coming.

I do want to thank the Dunbar High School Junior ROTC for carrying the flag. Welcome; thank you all for coming.

Handling the first base coaching duties, former New York Yankee, Bernie Williams; third base, General Pete Pace.

I'm about to—we don't actually throw out the first pitch here at the South Lawn. We have ball presenters: Ambassador Karen Hughes, who helped originate tee-ball at the White House 20 games ago, as well as the CEO and president of Little League International, Steve Keener.

We are especially pleased to have two broadcast giants with us today—first, Tim McCarver, FOX; all-star catcher, 19—on the 1964 Cardinal World Series team; awesome guy. And with him, from FOX and Friends, Brian Kilmeade.

I don't think we could have had a better broadcast team for this, the final game for tee-ball on the South Lawn. I do want to thank all the Little League staff members who have been working with us since 2001: Lance Van Auken, Mac McGlothlin, and Katie [Kathie] * Rosenberg. Appreciate your steadfast support.

And now, before we begin the game—I know anticipation is rising here—we will have the Little League Pledge. Are the players ready? You are ready? You repeat after me.

[*At this point, the pledge was recited.*]

Play ball!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jeannemarie A. Devolites-Davis, wife of Rep. Thomas M. Davis III; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.), former Chariman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen P. Hughes; Lance Van Auken, senior communication executive, and Mac McGlothlin, maintenance supervisor, Little League International; and Kathie Rosenberg, who performed as Dugout, mascot of Little League International. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 8.

* White House correction.

Remarks on Voluntarism
September 8, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the south ground of the White House. It is a joy to be here with members of the armies of compassion. I'm really glad you're here. I appreciate your inspiration to our fellow citizens. I believe you are a constant reminder of the true source of our Nation's strength, which is the good hearts and souls of the American people.

We have seen the good hearts of our people over the last week as caring volunteers have helped their fellow citizens through Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storm Hanna. The Red Cross, which provides a vital role in helping the relief efforts and recovery efforts, has been spending millions of dollars to provide shelter and food for the evacuees and to help with the cleanup efforts. Yet charitable contributions have not kept pace with their expenses, and I hope our fellow citizens will support the Red Cross, particularly as Hurricanes Ike and other storms develop over the Gulf Coast. You can help by going to the Red Cross's web site, redcross.org, and make a vital contribution to help our fellow citizens.

I appreciate the fact that those here represent the hundreds of thousands of our citizens who answered the call to love a neighbor like we'd like to be loved ourselves. I appreciate the fact that you and others lift up souls, one person at a time. You strengthen the foundation of our democracy, which is the engagement of our people. I want to thank you for what you do. God bless you, and welcome.

I thank Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, Department of the Interior, and Patricia, who have joined us. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez; Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters; Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy—welcome Madam Congresswoman—thanks for coming. I appreciate Stephen Goldsmith, the Chairman of the Corporation for National and Community Service; Jack Hawkins, Director of Volunteers for Prosperity; Ron Tschetter, who is the Director of the Peace Corps—[*applause*]—I knew that was coming—[*laughter*]—Jean Case, the Chairman of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, and members of that Council.

I appreciate my buddy Michael W. Smith, who is going to play a couple of songs for us here, and his wife Debbie. I want to thank student and school administrators and board members from the LEAGUE that are here today. These are students from schools all across the country. We are glad you are here.

With us is the 2007 Spirit of Hope Award recipient. This is the military's way of honoring people who have given back to their communities. Giovanni Balingit—Giovanni, welcome. Thank you, sir. Congratulations to you. I want to thank all those who are here in the United States military. Thank you for wearing the uniform of the United States.

And most of all, thanks for coming. I really appreciate your taking time out to come by and let me say hello to you.

In my first Inaugural Address, I challenged all Americans to be citizens, not spectators—responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character.

Eight months later, Americans were tested by the worst attack on our Nation. In the midst of chaos and sorrow, Americans responded with the—with characteristic courage and grace. It was a remarkable moment in our country. It really was, when you think about it. Rescue workers wrote their Social Security numbers on their arms and then rushed into buildings. Citizens became members of ambulance teams. And people from all across the country poured into New York City to help.

The terrorists who attacked our country on September the 11th didn't understand our country at all. Evil may crush concrete and twisted steel, but it can never break the spirit of the American people.

In the weeks and months after the attacks, inspiring acts continued to unfold all across the country. I'm sure you heard the stories, just like I did. Men and women of our Armed Forces accepted dangerous new duties, and a lot of folks stepped forward to volunteer to protect our fellow citizens. But the desire to serve reached far beyond the military. Millions of Americans were—really wanted to help our country recover.

And so to tap into that spirit, I called on every American to spend at least 4,000 hours—or 2 years in the course of a lifetime—to serve our Nation through acts of compassion. Some said that's acting—asking a lot for the country, and they were right. And they were right. Two years during a lifetime is a lot to give. But the truth of the matter is, citizens who do give realize that they become enriched just like those folks that they're helping.

To empower Americans looking to help, we launched what's called the USA Freedom Corps. The goal of the USA Freedom Corps was to connect Americans with opportunities to serve our country, to foster a culture of citizenship and responsibility and service. Over the last 6 years, the USA Freedom Corps has met these goals.

One way we helped was to launch a web site called volunteer.gov, which is the largest clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities in America. In other words, we used high-tech innovations to be able to channel people's desire to serve in a constructive way.

And so the Government—this Government web site directs people to private charities or local churches or Habitat for Humanity drives or Meals on Wheels, just opportunities to serve their neighbor. We can't put love in somebody's heart, but we certainly can help somebody channel their love. And that was the purpose of the web site.

And you can search by hometown. They tell me that if you get on Crawford, Texas, you'll find that the local Humane Society leaks—seeks volunteer pet groomers, which makes Barney really nervous. [*Laughter*]

This is just one of 4 million volunteer opportunities on the USA Freedom Corps web site. Isn't that interesting? There are 4 million opportunities for somebody who wants to serve to say, "Here's how I can help." And so I urge our fellow citizens to go to the web site and find out if there's not something that'll interest you, something that'll give you a chance to serve something greater than yourself.

The USA Freedom Corps fosters a culture of service by encouraging the private sector to step forward. We've got what we call the Pro Bono Challenge, which is—encourages corporate professionals to donate their services to charities and nonprofits. That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it, to encourage corporate America to not only serve their shareholders, but serve the communities in which they exist.

One really interesting, innovative idea came out of IBM this year. IBM employees will donate millions of hours of service to charities in the U.S. as well as technology projects in developing nations. They tell me that this work would cost $250 million if IBM's devoted employees were charging and not providing for free. I want to thank the CEO of IBM, Sam Palmisano, who is with us today. Sam, thank you very much for coming. And I encourage corporate America to figure out ways that they can serve to make America a better place.

Another key component of USA Freedom Corps is our effort to keep track of Americans' service to others. I mean, it's one thing to talk about it, it's another thing to measure, to kind of see how we're doing. In 2002, this administration became the first to conduct a regular survey of volunteerism through the U.S. Census Bureau. Because we've brought—begun to measure,

we know that nearly 61 million Americans now give their time to help their neighbors. Isn't that interesting? Sixty-one million of our fellow citizens volunteer.

We've also launched new national programs and enhanced others to help our citizens answer the call to service. For example, we helped Americans answer the call by creating the Citizen Corps. [*Applause*] Sounds like quite a few members have shown up. [*Laughter*] And we are glad you're here.

For those of you who don't know what the Citizen Corps is, it's a way for people to volunteer to help respond to disasters. This was set up right after September the 11th. Americans have formed community emergency response teams—[*applause*]—there you go—fire corps, medical reserve corps, neighborhood watch groups. Today, there are nearly 1 million Citizen Corps volunteers nationwide.

And one of those volunteers is County Judge Ed Emmett from Harris County, Texas. So let me tell you about what the Citizen Corps of Harris County did. So Katrina hits, there's about 200,000 Gulf Coast residents headed into the Houston area. The Citizen Corps showed up. Volunteers came to process evacuees, to help treat the ill and injured, and to help settle storm victims in permanent housing.

Here's what Ed said—I've known him for a long time, by the way—the jNMudge said: "That's just what members of the Citizen Corps do; they take care of their neighbors." And, Judge, I want to thank you and all of the members of the Citizen Corps nationwide for taking care of your neighbors.

We've helped Americans answer the call by creating a program called Volunteers for Prosperity. This initiative matched skilled American professionals with service opportunities, a lot of them in the developing world. This year, we mobilized more than 43,000 doctors, teachers, engineers, and other skilled volunteers. That's a pretty good start for an important program, it seems like to me. These men and women save babies from malaria on the continent of Africa. They bring modern information technology to Afghanistan. They live out one of America's strongest beliefs, that to whom much is given, much is required.

One of those people who is a member of this important team is Zach Harvey. He serves on the prosthetics staff at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. When he isn't—[*applause*]—let me finish with old Zach yet. [*Laughter*] When he isn't busy helping our wounded warriors, he's putting his skills to use in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic as a Volunteer for Prosperity. He works with pediatric cancer patients who've had a limb amputated as part of their treatment. He and his team of volunteers fit the children with new limbs, and they pass on their skills to other caregivers.

He says the only payment he receives is the pride that comes with children's—seeing children walk again. And, Zach, we are proud to have you here, and thank you for your service. Zach doesn't want anybody to look at him—[*laughter*]—but you can't help it when you're that kind of kind man. Appreciate it.

By the way, both the Citizen Corps and Volunteers for Prosperity have been very effective programs. And I really believe Congress needs to make these good programs permanent.

We've also helped answer the call to service by strengthening AmeriCorps. This is a program that matches dedicated volunteers with hundreds of private charitable institutions. AmeriCorps members sign up for 1-year commitments with the idea of strengthening their communities by teaching adults how to read or improving health care or helping the homeless put a roof over their heads. This is a good program that was started by my predecessor, President Clinton.

After 9/11, we tried to make this program more effective, in other words, to help the dollars allocated go further. Today,

more than 74,000 people serve their fellow citizens through AmeriCorps. I have met AmeriCorps volunteers all over our country, and they're very inspiring Americans.

One such volunteer was—is Emily Greene. After college, she enlisted in the program to serve with the Schools of Hope Literacy Project in Madison, Wisconsin. Through the Schools of Hope, Emily has recruited hundreds of volunteers to teach children how to read. What kind of—what a wonderful gift. When somebody says, how can I help serve America, how about teaching a child to read as a lasting contribution to the future of our country?

Madison's public elementary schools are improving; the achievement gap is narrowing. And, Emily, it must make you feel great to leave a lasting contribution. And we are glad you're here on behalf of AmeriCorps. Thanks for coming.

We've also helped others serve by expanding the Peace Corps. [*Applause*] So see, you don't know what I know: That every time I go to an Embassy overseas and I mention anything about the Peace Corps, and there happens to be a Peace Corps contingent—they give that same kind of yell. [*Laughter*] Peace Corps volunteers are incredibly motivated people, and it's a fabulous program.

The number of Peace Corps volunteers has increased. We've reopened 13—reopened programs in 13 countries. This is a vital program. There are about 8,000 Peace Corps members. They are fighting AIDS in Africa, training poor workers to start their own businesses in Latin America; they're teaching English to children in Asia. What they're doing is they're showing the rest of the world the compassionate heart of the American citizens. I mean, we are a compassionate nation, and the Peace Corps does a fabulous job of advancing that compassion.

Praya Baruch is with us today. After college, Praya spent 2 years in Ghana working with people who are HIV-positive, training religious leaders to provide community-based care, and educating young people about HIV preparation. She is now on the staff of the Peace Corps. She represents the 8,000 people who are on the frontlines of helping people deal with some of the more—most difficult problems in the world. Praya, we are honored you're here, and I want to thank the Peace Corps.

There are other ways to help Americans answer the call to service. We have got what we call the Faith-Based and Community Initiative through which we've empowered Americans to volunteer through their churches and congregations.

You know, I believe that if a program is successful, government ought to support it. And I believe if it takes faith to help some—solve some of the most intractable problems, government ought not to fear the influence of faith in our society, we ought to welcome the influence of faith in our society.

Laura—who is not here, but sends her best wishes—has rallied thousands of volunteers to help at-risk children through Helping America's Youth Initiative. We've encouraged volunteerism by holding up examples of our volunteers. You know, to date, 1.1 million Americans have received the President's Volunteer Service Award. That may not seem like a big deal to some people, but when you get one and you show it to people you're working with, they say, "How do I get one of those?" [*Laughter*] "What do I need to do?" Well, what you need to do is serve your community by volunteering and help make somebody's life better.

Volunteerism is strong in the country. But the truth of the matter is, the farther we've gotten away from 9/11, that memory has begun to fade. And some are saying, "Well, maybe I don't need to volunteer now. Maybe the crisis has passed." The aftermath of 9/11 isn't nearly as intense as it was. And my call to people is, there's always a need. You should be volunteering not because of 9/11, but you should be

volunteering because our country needs you on a regular basis.

We can use your help. There are citizens who say, "I need love." Government can pass law, but it cannot put love into somebody's heart. Oftentimes, that helps, when somebody puts their arm around you and say, "How can I help you, brother or sister? What can I do to make your life better?"

And so today I call upon our fellow citizens to devote 4,000 hours over your lifetime in service to your country. You'll become a better person for it, and our society will be more healthy as a result of it. You know, there's an old adage that says, you can bring hope to the lives of others, but the life you enrich the most will probably be your own.

I've witnessed the amazing phenomena of volunteerism throughout my travels in this country. At nearly every stop, I make it a point to meet a local volunteer selected by the USA Freedom Corps at the steps of Air Force One. After they get over the initial shock of seeing me come off the plane—[*laughter*]—I love to ask them what they're doing. What are you doing to make your community a better place?

One such volunteer is a young woman I met in Pittsburgh named Kristen Holloway. She started a program called Operation Troop Appreciation. It started off as kind of a small program, just an idea, a desire to make a statement. Her group collects everything from DVDs and phone calls—cards to musical instruments and sports gear. So far, they have sent care packages to more than 40,000 men and women serving in the frontlines in this war against the extremists. In every package—[*applause*].

Kristen, we're glad you're here. Thank you for—by the way, you're representing a lot of people here in this audience and around the country who have had—I have had the honor of meeting as volunteers at the foot of Air Force One.

I want to thank you all for showing up when I show up. Generally, the weather is nice; sometimes it's not so nice. But nevertheless, you're there with your smiling face, and you inspire me. You really do lift up my spirits, to meet people who are so dedicated that they are willing to take time out of their lives to help somebody in need. And I hope by getting you on the front page of your newspapers, that you inspire others to show up and serve America by volunteering.

But I want to tell you what the—what a soldier wrote to Kristen's group. A soldier wrote back after getting one of the packages and said, "My heart soars with pride to represent a country filled with such wonderful people as you." That was the thank you note that Kristen's group got.

Well, my heart soars with pride as well to be in the presence of those who are lifting up souls and helping mend hearts. I want to thank you for what you're doing. I am incredibly optimistic about the future of our country. And the reason I am is because I've seen firsthand the love and the compassion and the decency of our fellow citizens.

May God bless you. May God bless the armies of compassion.

And now please welcome my buddy Michael W. Smith.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia Kempthorne, wife of Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Proliferation Detection and Interdiction Activities
September 8, 2008

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 10(b)(1) of the Department of State Authorities Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–472), I am pleased to transmit the enclosed report on proliferation detection and interdiction activities. This report, prepared by the Department of State, includes information on efforts to provide proliferation detection and interdiction assistance to friendly foreign countries.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Message to the Congress on the Proposed Russia-United States Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy
September 8, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

On May 13, 2008, I transmitted a message to the Congress transmitting the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation for Cooperation in the Field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (the "proposed Agreement"), pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)) (the "Act").

In view of recent actions by the Government of the Russian Federation incompatible with peaceful relations with its sovereign and democratic neighbor Georgia, I have determined that the determination regarding the proposed Agreement in Presidential Determination 2008–19 is no longer effective. Accordingly, a statutory prerequisite for the proposed Agreement to become effective, as required by section 123 b. of the Act, is no longer satisfied. If circumstances should permit future reconsideration of the proposed Agreement, a new determination will be made and the proposed Agreement will be submitted for congressional review pursuant to section 123 of the Act.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 8, 2008.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance

September 8, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance, adopted at The Hague on November 23, 2007, and signed by the United States on that same date, with a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, subject to the reservations and declaration set forth in the report of the Secretary of State. The report of the Secretary of State, which includes an overview of the Convention, is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The United States supported the development of the Convention as a means of promoting the establishment and enforcement of child support obligations in cases where the custodial parent and child are in one country and the non-custodial parent is in another. The Convention provides for a comprehensive system of cooperation between the child support authorities of contracting states, establishes procedures for the recognition and enforcement of foreign child support decisions, and requires effective measures for the enforcement of maintenance decisions. It is estimated that there are over 15 million child support cases in the United States and that an increasing number of these cases will involve parties who live in different nations. United States courts already enforce foreign child support orders, while many countries do not do so in the absence of a treaty obligation. Ratification of the Convention will thus mean that more U.S. children will receive the financial support they need from both their parents.

The Department of State and the Department of Health and Human Services, which leads the Federal child support program, support the early ratification of this Convention. The American Bar Association and the National Child Support Enforcement Association have also expressed support for the Convention. Although some new implementing legislation will be required, the proposed Convention is largely consistent with current U.S. Federal and State law. Cases under the Convention will be handled through our existing comprehensive child support system, which involves both Federal and State law. The Departments of State and Health and Human Services have been working on preparation of the necessary amendments to Federal law to ensure compliance with the Convention, and that legislation will soon be ready for submission to the Congress for its consideration. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws has worked closely with the Departments of State and Health and Human Services to develop the necessary amendments to uniform State child support legislation.

The Convention requires only two contracting states for entry into force. No state has yet ratified the Convention. Early U.S. ratification would therefore likely hasten the Convention's entry into force. This would be in the interests of U.S. families, as it would enable them to receive child support owed by debtors abroad more quickly and reliably. I therefore recommend that the Senate give prompt and favorable consideration to the Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the reservations and declaration described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State, at the earliest possible date.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

September 8, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 9.

Remarks at the National Defense University
September 9, 2008

Thank you, General, for your kind and short introduction. [*Laughter*] I am pleased to be back at the National Defense University again. It turns out this is my fifth visit as President. Every time I come here, I'm inspired and encouraged because of the brave men and women who work here. And I really do want to thank you for your warm hospitality.

Across the world, NDU students and faculty have served with valor in the war against these extremists and killers. On this campus, you're helping train the next generation of military and civilian leaders who will defend our Nation against the real and true threats of the 21st century. You've developed new ways for our military and civilian personnel to work together to meet the new challenges we face. I thank you for your patriotism, I thank you for your hard work, and I thank you for your devotion to protecting the American people.

I thank the Members of the Congress who have joined us, Congressman Randy Forbes of Virginia and Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona. Thanks for coming.

I'm going to be talking in a little while about a recommendation I have received from the Joint Chiefs. And I'm so pleased that the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Cartwright, is with us today. Thanks for coming, Hoss.

I thank the leadership of the NDU. Thanks for having me again. I appreciate the civilian personnel, U.S. Government civilians studying here. And I thank those who wear the uniform. You know, one of the great things about being the Commander in Chief is to be the Commander in Chief of people who have volunteered to serve our country in a time of danger. I'm incredibly impressed by our military, and I am thankful to our military families.

You know, last week, a remarkable event took place in Iraq. At a ceremony in the city of Ramadi, responsibility for security in Anbar Province was transferred to Iraqi civilian authorities. Iraqi forces are now leading security operations across Anbar, with American troops in an overwatch role. With this transfer of responsibility, the people of Anbar took charge of their own security and their own destiny. It's a moment of pride for all Iraqis, and it was a moment of success in the war on terror.

Two years ago, such a moment was unimaginable to most. Anbar was one of the most dangerous Provinces in Iraq; Al Qaida was in control of almost every major population center. They had largely succeeded in turning the region into a safe haven, which brought them closer to one of their goals: a place from which to launch new attacks against America, our allies, and our interests in the region. In 2006, a military intelligence report concluded the Province was lost, and Anbar was held up as proof of America's failure in Iraq.

Yet something remarkable was happening. The tribes in Anbar were growing tired of Al Qaida's brutality. They wanted to live a normal life, and this presented us with an opportunity to defeat Al Qaida in Anbar. Last year, we sent 4,000 additional marines to Anbar as part of the surge. The surge showed America's commitment to security. It showed we were committed to helping the average citizen in Anbar live a normal life. And it helped renew the confidence of local leaders, the

tribal sheikhs, who then led an uprising to take Anbar back from the terrorists. Together, local tribes, Iraqi troops, and American forces systematically dismantled Al Qaida control across the Province.

Today, Anbar is a Province transformed. Attacks in the Province have dropped by more than 90 percent. Casualties are down dramatically. Virtually every city and town in Anbar now has a mayor and a functioning municipal council. Provincial Reconstruction Teams are helping local leaders create jobs and economic opportunity. As security has improved, reconciliation is taking place across the Province. Today, Anbar is no longer lost to Al Qaida; it has been reclaimed by the Iraqi people.

We're seeing similar gains in other parts of Iraq. Earlier this year, the Iraqi Government launched a successful military operation against Shi'a extremist groups in places like Basra and Baghdad and al-Amarah. Iraqi forces are staying on the offense. They are pressing the advantage against those who would bring harm and danger to their citizens. They're conducting operations in and around the northern city of Mosul, where Al Qaida terrorists seek refuge. The Iraqi Army recently launched a new offensive against Al Qaida in Diyala Province. All these operations are Iraqi led, with American forces playing a supporting role.

As a result of these and other operations in Iraq, violence is down to its lowest point since the spring of 2004. Civilian deaths are down, sectarian killings are down, suicide bombings are down, and normal life is returning to communities across the country. Provincial reconciliation is moving forward. The Iraqi Government has passed budgets and major pieces of legislation. Our diplomatic—diplomats report that markets once shuttered by terrorist violence are now open for business. Yesterday Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus reported to me via SVTS that they had just gone into a market area and seen the commerce and the activities. The Iraqi Health Ministry issued an interesting report that said that hundreds of doctors who had fled the fighting have now returned to serve the people of their country.

The reduced levels of violence in Iraq have been sustained for several months. While the progress in Iraq is still fragile and reversible, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker report that there now appears to be a degree of durability to the gains we have made.

Here's the bottom line: While the enemy in Iraq dangerous, we have seized the offensive. Iraqi forces are becoming increasingly capable of leading and winning the fight. As a result, we've been able to carry out a policy of return on success, reducing American combat forces in Iraq as conditions on the ground continue to improve.

We've now brought home all five of the Army combat brigades, the Marine expeditionary unit, two Marine battalions that were sent to Iraq as part of the surge. I was proud to visit with some of those troops at Fort Bragg earlier this year. They are among our Nation's finest citizens, and they have earned the gratitude and respect of the American people.

Another aspect of our return on success policy in Iraq is reduced combat tours. Last month, troops began deploying for 12-month tours instead of 15-month tours. This change will ease the burden on our forces, and I think, more importantly, this change will make life for our military families easier.

I'm pleased to announce the next step forward in our policy of return on success. General Petraeus has just completed a review of the situation in Iraq, and he and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended that we move forward with additional force reductions, and I agree. Over the next several months, we'll bring home about 3,400 combat support forces, including aviation personnel, explosive ordnance teams, combat and construction engineers, military police, and logistical support forces.

By November, we'll bring home a Marine battalion that is now serving in Anbar Province. And in February of 2009, another Army combat brigade will come home. This amounts to about 8,000 additional American troops returning home without replacement. And if progress in Iraq continues to hold, General Petraeus and our military leaders believe additional reductions will be possible in the first half of 2009.

The progress in Iraq is a credit to the valor of American troops and civilians, the valor of Iraqi troops, and the valor of our coalition partners. And I thank those who are here from other nations for joining us, and I thank you for working with our troops. We welcome you to the United States. And we appreciate your working closely with those who wear the uniform.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom began—I want our fellow citizens to hear this fact—more than 140,000 troops from 41 countries have served as part of our coalition in Iraq. Sons and daughters of Australia, Azerbaijan, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, and Ukraine have given their lives in the fight against the extremists. The citizens of these countries have sacrificed for the cause of freedom in Iraq. America has been proud to serve alongside such courageous allies.

I congratulate our coalition partners on their historic accomplishments in Iraq and for maintaining their resolve during the dark days. Thanks to their determined work and the growing capability of Iraqi forces, many of our partners in Iraq are now in a position to return on success as well. Australia has withdrawn its battle group, the Polish contingent is set to redeploy shortly, and many more coalition nations will be able to conclude their deployments to Iraq this year, thanks to the skill of their troops and the success of their missions.

The important task in the period ahead will be to work toward the conclusion of a strategic framework agreement and a status of forces agreement between the United States and Iraq. These agreements will serve as the foundation for America's continued security support to Iraq once the United Nations resolution authorizing the multinational forces there expires on December 31 of this year. They will allow us to establish a bilateral relationship between the United States and Iraq like those we have with dozens of other countries around the world.

Early on in this struggle, I made clear that America's goal in Iraq was to help the Iraqi people build a democratic nation that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. And thanks to the success of the surge, Iraq is making steady progress toward that goal. The steps I've described here at NDU will help us build on this success. It will set America's engagement in Iraq on a strong and steady course, and it will allow our troops to come home in victory.

Al Qaida's leaders have repeatedly declared that Iraq is the central front of their war with America, but it is not the only front. As Al Qaida faces increased pressure in Iraq, the terrorists are stepping up their efforts on the front where this struggle first began, the nation of Afghanistan.

After September the 11th, 2001, coalition forces destroyed the Taliban regime. We drove Al Qaida from the Afghan sanctuary where they had plotted and planned unprecedented attacks on our country. We helped Afghans begin to build a new democracy. Together with our military, American civilian experts helped the Afghan people build their economy and provide basic services and expand health care, as well as opened up schools for Afghan girls and boys.

These were important successes. Yet the enemies of a free Afghanistan refused to give up the fight. They sought to undermine the democratic Government so they

could regain the place of dominance they enjoyed in Afghanistan before September the 11th. With the help of their sanctuary in Pakistan, they ruthlessly attack innocent Afghans across the country.

As the security situation changed, America and our coalition partners responded with troop increases. At the NATO summit in Bucharest in April, I told our allies the United States was deploying 3,500 more marines to Afghanistan and that we would make additional forces available in 2009. I also called on allies to increase their force levels. And during the past year, the United Kingdom, France, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Australia, Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and others have sent additional forces to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

These troop increases represent a quiet surge in Afghanistan. In all, the number of American troops in the country increased from less than 21,000 2 years ago to nearly 31,000 today. The number of coalition troops, including NATO troops, increased from about 20,000 to about 31,000. And the number of trained Afghan Army and police forces increased from less than 67,000 to nearly 144,000.

These troop increases have made a difference, yet huge challenges in Afghanistan remain. This is a vast country. And unlike Iraq, it has few natural resources and has an underdeveloped infrastructure. Its democratic institutions are fragile. Its enemies are some of the most hardened terrorists and extremists in the world. With their brutal attacks, the Taliban and terrorists have made some progress in shaking the confidence of the Afghan people. And in the face of all these challenges, the Afghan people are naturally questioning what their future looks like.

Afghanistan's success is critical to the security of America and our partners in the free world. For all the good work we've done in that country, it is clear we must do even more. As we learned in Iraq, the best way to restore the confidence of the people is to restore basic security, and that requires more troops. I'm announcing today additional American troop deployments to Afghanistan. In November, a Marine battalion that was scheduled to deploy to Iraq will instead deploy to Afghanistan. It will be followed in January by an Army combat brigade.

The mission of these forces will be to work with the Afghan forces to provide security for the Afghan people, protect Afghanistan's infrastructure and democratic institutions, and help ensure access to services like education and health care. They will show the citizens of Afghanistan that the Government and its partners will stand with them in the battle against the Taliban and the extremists. They will help clarify a stark contrast in Afghanistan: While the terrorists and extremists deliberately target and murder the innocent, coalition and Afghan forces risk their lives to protect the innocent.

Regrettably, there will be times when our pursuit of the enemy result—will result in accidental civilian deaths. This has been the case throughout the history of warfare. Our Nation mourns the loss of every innocent life. Every grieving family has the sympathy of the American people. And I've given President Karzai my word that America will work closely with the Afghan Government to ensure the security of the Afghan people while protecting innocent life.

As we deploy these reinforcements, America will take new steps to help the Afghan Government mobilize more forces of its own. Afghan fighters are good fighters. If you talk to people who have been in Afghanistan, they'll tell you the Afghan troops are courageous; they just need some help.

Along with the Afghan Government, the United States and our allies are now launching a new initiative to double the size of the Afghan National Army over the next 5 years. We'll also work to increase the involvement of Afghan tribes. Local Afghan forces were key to our successes in

2001 and 2002, when we combined the 21st-century capabilities of the American military with the courage of Afghan fighters on horseback.

In the period ahead, we will once again encourage Afghan security forces and Afghan tribes to take a leading role in the building of a democratic Afghanistan. The Taliban and Al Qaida will not be allowed to return to power. The terrorists will suffer the same fate in Afghanistan that they are now suffering in Iraq, and they will be defeated.

In addition to these new military measures, we're stepping up efforts on the civilian side. We're increasing our civilian presence with new personnel from USAID and the Drug Enforcement Agency, as well as the Foreign Service. We're using Provincial Reconstruction Teams of military and civilian experts to help local communities fight corruption, improve governance, and jumpstart their economies. We're using agricultural development teams to help Afghan farmers feed their people and become more self-sufficient. We're supporting Afghanistan's National Development Strategy, which helps the democratic Government in Kabul offer greater support for the Provinces in areas like health and infrastructure.

We're working with the Afghan authorities to prepare for elections of 2009 and 2010. Recently, at an international conference in Paris, America pledged $10 billion over the next 2 years to support Afghanistan's development. In all these ways, we're working to ensure that our military progress is accompanied by the political and economic gains that are critical to the success of a free Afghanistan.

As we take these new steps in Afghanistan, we must also help the Government of Pakistan defeat Taliban and Al Qaida fighters hiding in remote border regions of their country. These extremists are increasingly using Pakistan as a base from which to destabilize Afghanistan's young democracy. In the past year, the Taliban, Al Qaida, and other extremist groups operating in these remote regions have stepped up their attacks against the Pakistani Government, hoping to stop that country's democratic progress as well.

This morning I called Pakistan's newly elected leader, President Zardari. I pledged the full support of America's Government as Pakistan takes the fight to the terrorists and extremists in the border regions.

Defeating these terrorist and extremists is in Pakistan's interest; they pose a mortal threat to Pakistan's future as a free and democratic nation. Defeating these terrorist and extremists is also Pakistan's responsibility, because every nation has an obligation to govern its own territory and make certain that it does not become a safe haven for terror. America and our NATO allies will continue helping Pakistan in its efforts to defeat the extremists. The same terrorists who murdered innocent civilians in Karachi and Islamabad are plotting new attacks against the United States and Europe.

Each of these three places I've discussed today—Iraq, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan—pose unique challenges for our country. Yet they're all theaters in the same overall struggle. In all three places, extremists are using violence and terror in an attempt to impose their ideology on whole populations. They murder to impose their dark vision of the world. In all three places, America is standing strongly with brave elected leaders and determined reformers and millions of ordinary citizens who seek a future of liberty and justice and tolerance.

Defeating our enemies requires success on the military front. Together with our allies, we've made substantial progress toward breaking up terrorist networks, and we will not rest until they are destroyed. Defeating our enemies also requires success in the ideological battle. We must show the people of the broader Middle East a better alternative to a life of violence and despair, and that alternative is based on liberty. History shows that people who are

given the choice between freedom and tyranny will choose freedom. And history shows that freedom will yield the peace we all want.

There will be difficult moments in the work ahead, and yet we can be confident in the outcome. With faith in the power of freedom, we will transform nations that once harbored our enemies into strong and capable allies in the war on terror. With faith in the power of freedom, we will prove that the future of the Middle East belongs not to terror, but to liberty. And with faith in the power of freedom, we will leave behind a safer and more peaceful world for our children and our grandchildren.

I thank you for all you do to keep America safe. I thank you for your service in freedom's cause. May God bless you, your families, and our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in Eisenhower Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Frances C. Wilson, USMC, president, National Defense University, who introduced the president; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks During a Visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center
September 9, 2008

The President. General, thank you for your hospitality, and thank you for your leadership.

I come to Walter Reed to do a couple of things; First, I pay my respects to those who have been wounded; I've come to pay my respects to the healers and doctors and nurses and thank them for their service. I can truthfully say that the health care our troops receive here is first class.

I've also come to pay my respects to family members that are praying that their loved one can get back on their feet and serve again, or get back on their feet and live a normal life.

It's—this is a interesting experience because, on the one hand, you see the horrors of war; on the other hand, you see the courage of the people that have volunteered to serve. I marvel when I come to Walter Reed, I marvel at the fact that people say to me, "Mr. President, I'd do it again." And you see somebody in bed who's been severely wounded, and they look and they say, "I'm honored and proud to have served." They had one kid in there who got hurt pretty bad, and he says, "I'm looking forward to getting back in uniform, getting back on the frontlines."

America is lucky to have men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform and to serve to protect us. And, General, we're lucky—and they're lucky—to have health care that can provide for the wounded and provide comfort to those who need the care. So I'm honored to be with you.

Maj. Gen. Carla G. Hawley-Bowland. Well, thank you. You energize our staff, as well as the patients and their families, to get even better. So thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. Participating in the visit was Maj. Gen. Carla G. Hawley-Bowland, USA, commanding general, North Atlantic Regional Medical Command and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq
September 10, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome. First of all, I am so pleased to see that you're looking good. The President's health is strong, and that's going to be very important for the people of Iraq. After all, there's been no stronger defender of a free Iraq than President Talabani. I've known him for a long time. He cares deeply about the Iraqi people, and he has been a strong defender of human liberty.

Mr. President, thanks for the good conversation we had about the election laws, about the need to get a strategic framework agreement signed. And thank you very much for bringing me up to date on your perspective about life inside of Iraq. It's—things have changed a lot since we've known each other.

President Talabani. Of course.

President Bush. And attitudes are completely different now that people realize the security situation has changed and mothers can raise their children in a more normal life. It's still difficult, but there's no doubt that the surge has been effective, which has enabled us to take out troops. Iraqis want there to be fewer U.S. troops, the United States wants there to be fewer U.S. troops, but both of us want to realize that vision based upon success.

And so, Mr. President, welcome back. I'm glad you're feeling good. And thank you for the visit.

President Talabani. Well, Mr. President, thank you very much for giving me the honor of meeting you again. I think it's clear that we are in Iraq looking to you as a hero of liberation of Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship. And now we are working with your—with you, Mr. President, for finalizing the strategic framework of—agreement between United States and Iraq.

And also, we are always getting benefit from your views about how to secure Iraq. I think you know very well that we—you and we in Iraq achieved very good successes on terrorism. Now I can say all parts of Iraq liberated from terrorist control and activities. It's true that some groups remain, hiding themselves from here or there, but there's no place, no inch of Iraqi land under the control of terrorist activities. There are some terrorist—still groups working, hiding themself. And thanks to you and sacrifice of your brave Army and to Iraqi people, now we can live in peace and security.

And Iraq Government started to spend the money which we have for serving the Iraqi people and rebuilding the country, reconstructing the country. Not only we liberated our country from terrorist activities, but also from militias, outlawed militias who are also making troubles and danger for Iraqi people.

And as you have heard, the Basra city, Sadr City, Shulla, Ninawa, Baqubah, all these cities are now liberated. So we are thankful to you and to your people, your Army. We hope that the agreement about this strategy situation will be signed soon.

And as usual, we are working in—our Parliament is working now for finalizing the draft of a new law for election of Provinces. And I hope that—as I heard the news yesterday—I hope that today it will be finalized, because the groups—head of groups of Parliament are now gathering in Parliament to reach—to finalize it.

In our country, we are now busy to reconstruct our country and to rebuild our country. And I am glad to tell you, Mr. President, that our relation with our neighbors is improved very well—with Turkey, with Syria, with Iran, with the Arab countries. The relation is normal now, and we have no problem with any of these countries. In contrary, many, many new ambassadors are coming——

President Bush. That's right.

President Talabani. ——to our country from Arab countries. And our—the visit of Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Tayyip Recep Erdogan, and of the—His Majesty the King of Jordan to Baghdad was very successful and was encouraging Iraqi people to understand that they have friends outside Iraq.

So I hope that friendship and relation between your great people and the Iraqi people will continue and will be strengthened. And we will never forget what you have done for our people.

President Bush. Thank you, President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:53 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Talabani referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of India Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy
September 10, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153) (AEA), the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of India Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. I am also pleased to transmit my written determination concerning the Agreement, including my approval of the Agreement and my authorization to execute the Agreement, and an unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Agreement. (In accordance with section 123 of the AEA, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–277), a classified annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately.) The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Energy and a letter from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stating the views of the Commission are also enclosed.

The proposed Agreement has been negotiated in accordance with the AEA and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all applicable statutory requirements except for section 123 a.(2) of the AEA, from which I have exempted it as described below.

The proposed Agreement provides a comprehensive framework for U.S. peaceful nuclear cooperation with India. It permits the transfer of information, non-nuclear material, nuclear material, equipment (including reactors) and components for nuclear research and nuclear power production. It does not permit transfers of any restricted data. Sensitive nuclear technology, heavy-water production technology and production facilities, sensitive nuclear facilities, and major critical components of such facilities may not be transferred under the Agreement unless the Agreement is amended. The Agreement permits the enrichment of uranium subject to it up to 20 percent in the isotope 235. It permits reprocessing and other alterations in form or content of nuclear material subject to it; however, in the case of such activities

in India, these rights will not come into effect until India establishes a new national reprocessing facility dedicated to reprocessing under IAEA safeguards and both parties agree on arrangements and procedures under which the reprocessing or other alteration in form or content will take place.

In Article 5(6) the Agreement records certain political commitments concerning reliable supply of nuclear fuel given to India by the United States in March 2006. The text of the Agreement does not, however, transform these political commitments into legally binding commitments because the Agreement, like other U.S. agreements of its type, is intended as a framework agreement.

The Agreement will remain in force for a period of 40 years and will continue in force thereafter for additional periods of 10 years each unless either party gives notice to terminate it 6 months before the end of a period. Moreover, either party has the right to terminate the Agreement prior to its expiration on 1 year's written notice to the other party. A party seeking early termination of the Agreement has the right immediately to cease cooperation under the Agreement, prior to termination, if it determines that a mutually acceptable resolution of outstanding issues cannot be achieved through consultations. In any case the Agreement, as noted, is a framework or enabling agreement that does not compel any specific nuclear cooperative activity. In the event of termination of the Agreement, key nonproliferation conditions and controls would continue with respect to material and equipment subject to the Agreement.

An extensive discussion of India's civil nuclear program, military nuclear program, and nuclear nonproliferation policies and practices is provided in the Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) and in a classified annex to the NPAS submitted to the Congress separately.

The AEA establishes the requirements for agreements for nuclear cooperation, some of which apply only to non-nuclear-weapon states (see AEA, section 123 a.). The AEA incorporates the definition of "nuclear-weapon state" from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which defines it to mean a state that has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to January 1, 1967. Therefore India is a non-nuclear-weapon state for NPT and AEA purposes, even though it possesses nuclear weapons. The Agreement satisfies all requirements set forth in section 123 a. of the AEA except the requirement of section 123 a.(2) that, as a condition of continued U.S. nuclear supply under the Agreement, IAEA safeguards be maintained in India with respect to all nuclear materials in all peaceful nuclear activities within its territory, under its jurisdiction, or carried out under its control anywhere (i.e., "full-scope" or "comprehensive" safeguards).

The Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006 (the "Hyde Act") established authority to exempt the Agreement from the full-scope safeguards requirement of section 123 a.(2) of the AEA, as well as certain other provisions of the AEA relating to supply under such an agreement, provided that the President makes certain determinations and transmits them to the Congress together with a report detailing the basis for the determinations. I have made those determinations, and I am submitting them together with the required report as an enclosure to this transmittal.

Approval of the Agreement, followed by its signature and entry into force, will permit the United States and India to move forward on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative, which Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and I announced on July 18, 2005, and reaffirmed on March 2, 2006. Civil nuclear cooperation between the United States and India pursuant to the Agreement will offer major strategic and economic benefits to both

countries, including enhanced energy security, an ability to rely more extensively on an environmentally friendly energy source, greater economic opportunities, and more robust nonproliferation efforts.

The Agreement will reinforce the growing bilateral relationship between two vibrant democracies. The United States is committed to a strategic partnership with India, the Agreement promises to be a major milestone in achieving and sustaining that goal.

In reviewing the proposed Agreement I have considered the views and recommendations of interested agencies. I have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved it and I urge that the Congress also approve it this year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 10, 2008.

Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia
September 11, 2008

Thank you all. Mr. Vice President; Secretary Gates; Madam Speaker; Justices of the Supreme Court; members of my Cabinet, administration; Members of Congress; Admiral Mullen and the Joint Chiefs; Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, a first-responder on September the 11th, 2001; directors of the Pentagon Memorial Fund—Mr. Chairman, congratulations; families and friends of the fallen; distinguished guests; fellow citizens: Laura and I are honored to be with you.

Seven years ago at this hour, a doomed airliner plunged from the sky, split the rock and steel of this building, and changed our world forever. The years that followed have seen justice delivered to evil men and battles fought in distant lands. But each day on this year—each year on this day, our thoughts return to this place. Here, we remember those who died. And here, on this solemn anniversary, we dedicate a memorial that will enshrine their memory for all time.

Building this memorial took vision and determination, and Americans from every corner of our country answered the call. Two young architects in New York City came up with the design. A foundry near St. Louis cast the steel. An Iraqi immigrant in Illinois gave the metal its luster. And citizens from across our Nation made contributions, large and small, to build this graceful monument.

The Pentagon Memorial will stand as an everlasting tribute to 184 innocent souls who perished on these grounds. The benches here bear each of their names. And beneath each bench is a shimmering pool filled with the water of life, a testament to those who were taken from us and to their memories that will live on in our hearts.

For the families and friends of the fallen, this memorial will be a place of remembrance. Parents will come here to remember children who boarded Flight 77 for a field trip and never emerged from the wreckage. Husbands and wives will come here to remember spouses who left for work one morning and never returned home. People from across our Nation will come here to remember friends and loved ones who never had the chance to say goodbye.

A memorial can never replace what those of you mourning a loved one have lost. We pray that you will find some comfort amid the peace of these grounds. We pray that you will find strength in knowing that our Nation will always grieve with you.

For all our citizens, this memorial will be a reminder of the resilience of the American spirit. As we walk among the benches, we will remember there could have been many more lives lost. On a day when buildings fell, heroes rose. Pentagon employees ran into smoke-filled corridors to guide their friends to safety. Firefighters rushed up the stairs of the World Trade Center as the towers neared collapse. Passengers aboard Flight 93 charged the cockpit and laid down their lives to spare countless others. One of the worst days in America's history saw some of the bravest acts in Americans' history. We'll always honor the heroes of 9/11. And here at this hallowed place, we pledge that we will never forget their sacrifice.

We also honor those who raised their hands and made the noble decision to defend our Nation in a time of war. When our enemies attacked the Pentagon, they pierced the rings of this building, but they could not break the resolve of the United States Armed Forces. Since 9/11, our troops have taken the fight to the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. Thanks to the brave men and women and all those who work to keep us safe, there has not been another attack on our soil in 2,557 days.

For future generations, this memorial will be a place of learning. The day will come when most Americans have no living memory of the events of September the 11th. When they visit this memorial, they will learn that the 21st century began with a great struggle between the forces of freedom and the forces of terror. They will learn that this generation of Americans met its duty. We did not tire, we did not falter, and we did not fail. They will learn that freedom prevailed because the desire for liberty lives in the heart of every man, woman, and child on Earth.

We can be optimistic about the future because we've seen the character and courage of those who defend liberty. We have been privileged to live amongst those who have volunteered to spread the foundation of peace and justice, which is freedom.

Seven years ago this morning, police officer Cecil Richardson was on duty here at the Pentagon. He saw the terror that day with his own eyes. He says on some nights he can still smell the burning metal and smoke. Not long ago he wrote me, saying, "I remember the reasons we fight, I remember the losses we felt, and I remember the peace we will have."

That day of peace will come. And until it does, we ask a loving God to watch over our troops in battle. We ask Him to comfort the families who mourn, and we ask Him to bless our great land.

And now it's my honor to dedicate the Pentagon Memorial.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; James J. Laychak, president and chairman, board of directors, Pentagon Memorial Fund; architects Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman; and Abe Yousif, owner, Buchtel Metal Finishing Corp. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Arrival in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
September 12, 2008

I'm privileged to be the President of a country that produces citizens such as these. The United States is a country of volunteers, and three such volunteers are with us, Oklahoma citizens who serve in a variety of ways.

Karen has produced a tie to—a way to keep our—to help our soldiers stay cool in Iraq. She is supportive of our troops. She and her organization have done fine work.

The major here, a golf pro, who is going to go on his third tour in Iraq, has used his position in the golfing industry to raise money to help Gold Star families. How cool is that? This guy is going to Iraq on Monday, and yet he has—he served that way, but he also serves in a very compassionate way.

Captain Castleberry and some of his folks he works with out at sheriff's department pulled up stakes and headed down to Morgan City, Louisiana, in the wake of Gustav. Nobody made him do it; he just decided to do it on his own.

Our country is better off because millions of citizens, such as these three folks, have heard the call to serve something greater than themselves. And I urge our fellow citizens all around the Nation to find ways to serve. It turns out that when you help somebody in need, you help yourself even more.

I am deeply concerned about Hurricane Ike. It is a major storm headed toward a large population center. I was on the phone this morning with Secretary Chertoff and Director Paulison of FEMA. I spoke to my friend, Governor Perry, yesterday. The State of Texas is preparing for this emergency. I suspect there's going to be some Texans headed for Oklahoma. And I know that they're going to find good people up here who want to help them.

And so I want to thank the citizens of Oklahoma for getting ready to help a Texan in need. I urge my fellow Texans to listen carefully to what the authorities are saying in Galveston County or parts of Harris County, up and down the coast. Now, we'll be monitoring the situation very carefully. The Federal Government will not only help with the prestorm strategy, but once this storm passes, we'll be working with State and local authorities to help people recover as quickly as possible.

Thank you all for what you're doing; God bless your work. Good luck to you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at Tinker Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Stark, founder, HUGS Project; Daniel M. Rooney, founder, Folds of Honor Foundation; Capt. Joe Castleberry, Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office; and Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas.

Remarks Following a Discussion on Health Savings Accounts and an Exchange With Reporters in Oklahoma City
September 12, 2008

The President. I want to thank our participants for joining me here in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I want to thank the mayor, Members of Congress, United States Senator. Most importantly, I want to thank women entrepreneurs. Seventy percent of all new jobs in America are created by small-businesses owners. Today with us are

small-business owners, people who've taken risk in order to realize dream, and in so doing have provided job opportunities. These are the job creators of the vibrant economy here in Oklahoma.

One of the real issues—there's a couple of issues that face obviously a small-business owner. One, are they—do they have a product anybody wants to buy? But also taxes, high taxes make it harder to stay in business. I strongly urge the Congress to make the tax relief we passed permanent so that taxes won't increase on small businesses.

But another issue that I hear all the time when I'm talking to small-business owners is the issue of health care costs. If you listen to anybody who owns a small business, they will tell you that the rising cost of health care is troubling not only to their balance sheet, but to their soul, because they want their employees to have the best. A small-business owner really does care a lot about their employees.

Today we're talking about a way for small businesses and individuals—and large businesses, for that matter—to help to deal with rising health care costs. Our goal is to make sure health care is available and affordable. And once—one way to help deal with rising health care costs is what's called health savings accounts. These are ingenious products to help people save, incent people to, you know, take care of their bodies, and also make sure that if there's a catastrophic illness, they're taken care of. These are products that enable somebody to, you know, move from one job to the next and keep their health care with them, which is important in the 21st century. They're ways for employees to take care of their employees.

In Oklahoma, a lot of people don't know about health saving accounts, and one of the reason I've come down to this part of the country is because I do want people to understand they're available and they're good. About 6 million people across the country are using health savings accounts. The biggest increase is with small-business owners.

And so today we've had a good discussion with owners who've got a health savings account, people who are looking at health savings account. I introduced Sandy, head of the SBA here, to folks, and if somebody wants to really learn about an HSA, just go on hsa.gov, which is an SBA site, so people can see whether or not it makes sense for your business or your family.

Anyway, I do want to thank you all very much for, one, being pioneers; two, being risk takers; and three, giving me a chance to hear your thoughts and concerns and—about a very innovative way for small businesses and individuals to be able to better afford health care.

Thank you, all.

Guy was trying to ask a question, but he was in violation of the no question policy. [*Laughter*] Right, Deb [Deb Reichmann, Associated Press]?

Republican Vice Presidential Nominee Sarah Palin

Q. Did you watch the Palin interview?

The President. As I said, no question policy. [*Laughter*] She did just fine.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at the Presbyterian Health Foundation Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Mick Cornett of Oklahoma City, OK; Sen. Thomas A. Coburn; and Sandy K. Baruah, Acting Administrator, Small Business Administration. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts
September 13, 2008

Good morning. I just finished a video conference with Secretary Chertoff, Director Paulison, and other people about Hurricane Ike.

Obviously, this is a huge storm that is causing a lot of damage not only in Texas, but also in parts of Louisiana. The storm has yet to pass, and I know there are people concerned about their lives. Some people didn't evacuate when asked, and I've been briefed on the rescue teams there in the area. They're prepared to move as soon as weather conditions permit. Obviously, people on the ground there are sensitive to helping people and are fully prepared to do so.

Secondly, I've asked Secretary Chertoff to go down as soon as weather conditions permit. I suspect he'll be able to get down to Texas this afternoon and will be in the Gulf Coast region, hopefully, within a reasonable period of time to help the State of Texas officials, as well as local officials, begin the recovery effort. There's going to be a need for Federal, State, and local coordination as this storm moves through east Texas.

Obviously, there will be concerns about electricity. We've got generators in place, generators moving into the area to help. They'll be concerned about water and ice. They'll be concerned about energy, and I'm concerned about energy.

Now, this administration has moved quickly. Last night, we suspended EPA waivers on certain reformulated gasolines, which will make it easier for imports from abroad to make it into our markets. In the meantime, the Department of Energy, the Federal Trade Commission, and, I know, State authorities will be monitoring gasoline prices to make sure consumers are not being gouged, make sure consumers are being treated fairly.

As this massive storm moves through the Gulf Coast, people of that area can be rest assured that the American people will be praying for them and will be ready to help once the storm moves on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:39 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address
September 13, 2008

Good morning. This week, Americans marked 7 years since the terrorist attacks that shook our Nation on September the 11th, 2001. On that day, we witnessed unspeakable destruction perpetrated by evil men, but we also witnessed selfless acts of valor and compassion performed by courageous citizens. And we saw the strength of the American people as they rallied in defense of the Nation.

On Thursday, I dedicated a new 9/11 memorial at the Pentagon. In the years to come, parents will visit this site to remember children who boarded Flight 77 for a field trip and never emerged from the wreckage. Husbands and wives will visit the memorial to remember spouses who left for work one morning and never returned home. And people from across our Nation

will visit to remember the heroism of rescue workers who rushed into the burning Pentagon to save the lives of their fellow citizens.

Seven years after the attacks of 9/11, this spirit of heroism lives on. We see it in the courageous members of the United States Armed Forces. These brave men and women have volunteered to defend our Nation during a time of war. Every day, they are confronting our enemies abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And because of their efforts, our Nation is safer today than it was 7 years ago.

In Afghanistan, where the 9/11 attacks were planned, our men and women in uniform toppled the Taliban regime, destroyed Al Qaida camps, and liberated more than 25 million Afghans. In the years since, members of the Taliban and Al Qaida have sought to regain power through acts of terror. The United States and our allies are meeting this challenge head on. We will not allow Afghanistan to once again become a safe haven for terror.

Earlier this week, I announced additional American troop deployments to Afghanistan. In November, a Marine battalion that was scheduled to deploy to Iraq will deploy to Afghanistan instead. It will be followed in January by an Army combat brigade. This continuing commitment to the Afghan people illustrates a stark contrast: While the terrorists and extremists deliberately target and murder the innocent, coalition and Afghan forces risk their lives to protect the innocent.

America is also on the offense against terrorists and extremists in Iraq. Since we launched the surge last year, violence has fallen to its lowest point since the spring of 2004. While the enemy in Iraq is still dangerous, we seized the offensive, and Iraqi forces are becoming increasingly capable of leading and winning the fight. As a result, we've been able to carry out a policy of return on success, reducing the number of American combat forces in Iraq as conditions on the ground there continue to improve.

After reviewing conditions in Iraq, General Petraeus and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended additional force reductions. By February, about 8,000 additional American troops will have returned home without replacement. And if this progress in Iraq continues to hold, General Petraeus and our military leaders believe additional reductions will be possible in the first half of 2009.

In the 7 years since the attacks of September the 11th, the men and women of our Armed Forces and their wonderful families have been a source of pride for the Nation. Those who do not wear the uniform also have a responsibility to serve our country. After 9/11, I called on Americans to devote at least 4,000 hours—or 2 years over the course of a lifetime—to volunteering in their communities. This morning I renew that call. Serving others is more than just a generous act, it is essential to the health of our society. And as any volunteer can tell you, when you bring hope to the lives of others, the life you enrich most is usually your own.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on September 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 12, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts
September 14, 2008

I want to thank senior members of the administration for coming in this Sunday morning to discuss Hurricane Ike. I was on the phone to—with Secretary Chertoff before coming into this meeting. The Secretary went down yesterday. He gave me a briefing from Austin; he'll be heading into Houston. This is all part of our efforts to help Texas and Louisiana with a focused, effective recovery effort.

Administrator Paulison briefed us on how we're doing on our priorities. First priority is search and rescue, and I want to thank the people at the Federal and State levels for working so hard to rescue our fellow citizens from harm's way. Rescue efforts continue on as we speak.

I do urge people in the affected areas to listen closely to local authorities before they attempt to get back home. There are people now surveying damage, people reporting in to the State as to the conditions there in the different communities. And it's very important for citizens, who I know are anxious to get home, to take your time and listen, take the advice of the local folks.

Our priorities, along with the State and local folks, is to make sure electricity gets up as quickly as possible. Secretary Bodman gave us a briefing on the outages. Interestingly enough, some electricity is already being restored in Houston, I'm told. And I do want to thank the utility companies for working hard to get electricity up. And to the extent that you need help on stringing lines, I'm confident other utility companies from around the country will help provide manpower.

Secretary Chertoff and David Paulison tell me that the Federal Government will be providing 1½ million liters of water a day and 1 million meals a day to help the people who have been displaced. That'll of course be coordinated with Governor Perry's office and the State of Texas, as well as the mayors.

One of the things that's very important for the city of Houston and the other cities is to get the water up and running, the sewage plants running. And that'll be a priority of ours to help them. And finally, debris removal, it's very important that our Corps of Engineer, working with local officials, implements a coordinated debris removal plan.

And so that's what we discussed this morning. This is a tough storm, and it's one that is going to be—it's going to require time for people to recover.

As well, the Secretary of Energy briefed us on, you know, preliminary reports on gasoline production, pipeline distribution. And it's a little early to fully assess where we stand, although I can say that, you know, one of the plant—one of the pipelines coming out of the Gulf Coast area is running—the Plantation Pipeline. And we are watching very carefully as to when the Colonial Pipeline can get up and running.

In the meantime, as I mentioned yesterday, in coordination with the Department of Energy, we suspended—and the EPA—we suspended reformulated gasoline rules so it would make it easier to import gasoline from abroad so as to take pressure off of our consumers.

And I repeat what I said yesterday, that the Federal Government, along with State governments, will be monitoring very carefully as to whether or not consumers are being mistreated at the pump, in other words, gouged. It's very important for our fellow citizens, during the period of temporary disruption, to be treated fairly.

And so I'm considering—have considered my plans over the weekend, and I will be going down to Texas on Tuesday to express

the Federal Government's support—sympathy on the one hand and support on the other to—for this recovery effort and rebuilding effort.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana

September 15, 2008

Good morning. President Kufuor and Mrs. Kufuor, it is a pleasure to welcome you back to the White House. The American people are honored to receive Ghana's official delegation, and Laura and I are happy to host two good friends.

The ties of friendship between the United States and Ghana are strong, and they are enduring. Many Americans—citizens trace their ancestry to Ghana. For example, the great jazz legend Louis Armstrong traced his ancestry back to Ghana. Centuries ago, Armstrong's forebears came to America as slaves. In 1956, Armstrong returned to Ghana and played a concert for more than 100,000 people who turned out to celebrate their country's march toward freedom.

And when Ghana's independence was secure, President Eisenhower sent a message to Ghanaians from the people of the United States. He said, "We revere in common with you the great and eternal principles which characterize the free democratic way of life. I am confident that our two countries will stand as one in safeguarding this greatest of all bonds between us."

Half a century later, we see that President Eisenhower's confidence was well placed. Today, Ghana and America are still bound by our love for liberty, and we stand as one in our efforts to safeguard freedom.

Ghana and America stand as one as we work to secure freedom from poverty. Ghana's leaders are governing justly, fighting corruption, and investing in their people. And America is proud to support these efforts through our Millennium Challenge compact. Together, we work with Ghana to improve agriculture and infrastructure and support development in Ghana's rural areas and bring prosperity to Ghana's people. We have worked to promote free trade as a powerful engine of prosperity for both our countries. Last year, trade between Ghana and the United States was valued at more than $600 million, an increase of more than 55 percent since President Kufuor and I took office.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to free people from illiteracy and ignorance. Through the Africa Education Initiative, Ghana and the United States have partnered to provide thousands of scholarships to girls. We've trained teachers. And across that important country, schools are being renovated, textbooks are being distributed, and Ghana's children are looking toward a brighter future.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to free people from disease. Together, we've protected hundreds of thousands of people from malaria. Starting this month, Ghana and the United States will begin distributing medicines to about 8 million people as part of a new initiative to combat neglected tropical diseases.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to promote free elections. Ghana is now in the middle of a lively election season, marked by spirited debate and close-

fought contests, which sounds kind of familiar, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] Whatever the outcome, Ghana is showing Africa that democracy is not a challenge to be feared, but a sure path to prosperity and peace.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to promote peace. Ghana is a vital partner in our efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur. Ghana has more than 3,000 peacekeepers serving around the world, from Liberia and the Congo to Kosovo and Georgia.

President Kufuor, your country is a model of entrepreneurship and democracy and peace on the continent of Africa. We are grateful for the warm friendship your nation has shown ours. When Laura and I visited Ghana this February, we were touched by the gracious hospitality shown by you and Mrs. Kufuor. Thousands of people lined the street to show their gratitude to America. One shop even painted the colors of the American flag; I hope their business went up. [*Laughter*] I was moved by your decision to name a new road the "George Bush Motorway." Maybe next time I visit Ghana, I can see that motorway without stopping a lot of traffic. [*Laughter*]

What inspired us most on our visit was the incredible energy and optimism of Ghana's people. I will always remember the Little League game in Accra, played between children from local churches and a local orphanage. As each young batter stepped up to the plate, we heard about their plans for the future, to become businessmen or doctors or astronauts or even a fashion designer. One after another, we saw children confident of their place in a free and prosperous Ghana.

Mr. President, I congratulate you on the progress Ghana has made under your strong leadership. And on behalf of the American people, Laura and I are honored to welcome you and Mrs. Kufuor to the United States. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great nations. Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Kufuor was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to Theresa Kufuor, wife of President Kufuor. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kufuor.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana

September 15, 2008

President Bush. Good morning. I'm pleased to be here with my friend, the President of Ghana, John Kufuor of Ghana. We just had a very good discussion, and before I summarize it, I do want to say a word about the U.S. economy.

I know Americans are concerned about the adjustments that are taking place in our financial markets. At the White House and throughout my administration, we're focused on them, and we're working to reduce disruptions and minimize the impact of these financial market developments on the broader economy.

I've been in close touch with Secretary Paulson throughout this weekend and this morning. I appreciate the work the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission and major financial institutions here and around the world are doing to promote stability in the financial systems.

As policymakers, we're focused on the health of the financial system as a whole.

In the short run, adjustments in the financial markets can be painful, both for the people concerned about their investments and for the employees of the affected firms. In the long run, I'm confident that our capital markets are flexible and resilient and can deal with these adjustments.

I admire President Kufuor, and the reason I do is because he has shown the world that democracy can flourish on the continent of Africa. He's been a steady and principled leader. We're soon to leave office, but I'm going to finish strong, and I know you are as well.

We had a good discussion about important issues, such as fighting disease. One of the initiatives that we're working on together is the fight to—against neglected tropical diseases. And the President brought me up to date on the strategy to deal with that important issue and how we can help.

We're talking about, obviously, fighting malaria. And the good news is, is that this is a Government that's very capable of taking American help and converting it into the kind of results that we all expect.

We talked about education and economic opportunity. The United States supports vital educational partnerships in Ghana. We're training teachers. We've issued 6,000 scholarships to girls. Under the President's leadership, the education system is improving, and we're glad just to be a small part of that, Mr. President.

And one of the most important initiatives of this administration has been the Millennium Challenge Account. It's an opportunity for the United States Government to help countries that govern justly and invest in the health and education of their people and believe in market economies. Ghana is such a country. And as the President mentioned in the welcoming ceremony, we're soon to begin spending $547 million to renovate schools, increase agricultural productivity, expand infrastructure, and support rural development.

So the conclusion of the Millennium Challenge compact, Mr. President, is a testament to your leadership, and I'm very comfortable in telling the American people that this will be money well spent.

The President has been very strong voice for peace. And we talked about Darfur. I appreciate very much Ghana's 11 U.N. peacekeeping operations that are ongoing. He has been a good, steady voice for strong leadership and for conflict resolution, witnessed by the fact that they were great on the U.N. Security Council. And thank you for your leadership there.

All in all, it's been a good partnership, it's been good partners amongst me and you, John, but it's been a good partner between our countries. And I firmly believe that beyond our time in office, whoever the next Presidents will be, they will find relations between our countries are in good shape, which I believe is vital.

And so I welcome you here. Laura and I are looking forward to having you to dinner tonight. I promise not to unleash the dance moves—[*laughter*]—that I first displayed in Ghana, in what was one of the most memorable trips of my Presidency.

And so we're sure glad you're here. Welcome.

President Kufuor. Thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to use this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of my nation and myself to you, as President of the United States, and to your great nation for the supports we've benefited and our relationship with you.

The two countries have been friendly since Ghana attained independence in 1957. But I believe, under our watch, this relationship has been taken even higher——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. ——and has translated into many supports affecting the—all aspects of our national life in Ghana. A typical example is the Millennium Challenge Accounts by which Ghana received, or is receiving, $547 million to modernize and

commercialize agriculture. You would appreciate the importance of this gesture from the United States when you know that about 60 percent of the Ghana population is rural and depends on agriculture.

So far, much of our agriculture is subsistence, meaning farmers just scratch—[*inaudible*]—to feed themselves. But with the advent of the Millennium Challenge Accounts, we want to move the farmers on to more scientific and technological agriculture and thereby empower them more and make agriculture worth pursuing for the youth.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. We are suffering as an economy a drift, very serious drift of the youth from the rural parts to the urban areas, which have not been planned to accommodate——

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. ——the drifts. And so now in our streets in the big towns, you have street children. We believe the success of the Millennium Challenge Account will help stem all these antisocial developments.

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. If you look at the malaria support from the United States, our country in the old times was dubbed "the white man's grave." It was malaria infested, and the Europeans who first came along our coasts just didn't last. This disease continues to plague much of Africa and perhaps is the biggest killer—even bigger than HIV/AIDS—of our people on the continent. The hefty support we are getting from the United States, under your watch, is very welcome, and we hope to take it even further, again employing technologies and more scientific research.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. Similarly, under your watch, you have increased the support for the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is devastating many countries on our continent. I believe you've increased the supports your country has been giving by over $20 billion. I believe that's humanitarian——

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. ——and you have to be accorded the credit——

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. ——for this gesture.

In terms of trade, your country, I would say, holds the hub. We in Ghana trade in your currency, for instance. So with the current difficulties, naturally we also are affected. So we can only wish that your country rallies quickly to find solutions so that much of the world would be saved the trauma that we are going through.

If you take the current situation of rapidly increasing food prices and crude oil prices, which are subverting all the efforts we are trying to make to put our economies together, we believe the developed as well as the developing countries should feel that we are in the boat together and that we must learn to sail together or perhaps we sink together.

Again, with the climatic change—and here I have to express condolences and sympathy to the United States for what you are suffering down south in your country, especially in your State of Texas now.

President Bush. My State, Texas, yes.

President Kufuor. But you must know you are not alone here.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. On the continent of Africa, as elsewhere in Asia, we are victims of the changes of climate. But this, again, should show humanity that perhaps we all belong together more than we want to admit. If we are going to make a dent on the problems caused by the climatic change, we need to be able to marshal scientific and technological knowledge and resources in which your country, the United States, must play leadership.

So look to you to readily put abroad your resources, ethically and selflessly, so all of us will see how to contain——

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. ——the challenges of global climatic change, which, again, should make us aware that perhaps we are already into the global village, and which we should share common values and sense of humanity. Forget about the race; forget about the ideology; forget about the religion; it's humanity that is at risk. And the United States definitely is in the forefront, or must be in the vanguard, of trying to find solutions to save mankind.

But at bottom, Ghana is very grateful for the friendship we are—she is enjoying from the United States. And I personally am very happy and appreciate your friendship so far.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Kufuor. And I look forward to a good and productive retirement, just as I wish for you, as you go into retirement. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Thank you, sir. [*Laughter*]

President Kufuor. You have been good, and I hope history will judge you well.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Kufuor. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts
September 15, 2008

Thank you very much, Secretary Chertoff, for your briefing—you just came back from Houston; Administrator Paulison. The briefing, of course, was on the damage done to Texas and Louisiana, a result of Ike.

We obviously watch this recovery very carefully, because the Federal Government is playing a crucial role in helping the people of the devastated areas recover. We're working closely with the State and local authorities on a variety of subjects.

Recently I was informed that there are going to be a—numerous points of distribution for food, water, and ice throughout Harris County to help the people there adjust. Obviously, until electricity is fully restored, people are going to need help with water, food, and ice.

There's some good news on electricity. Electricity is beginning to be restored. Obviously, there's a lot more houses and folks that are waiting for electricity, but people are working hard. There's crews coming in from around the country to help.

The energy situation is one that's of concern. Our drivers, our folks at the pump are going to have to expect some upward pressure on price, because the storm disrupted the supply of gasoline as a result of shutting down refineries and pipelines. Now, two—the two major pipelines are up and running, which is positive news, and it happened quicker than we thought it would happen. Yet until those refineries get up and running full blast, those pipelines are going to be looking for product.

And so there's going to be a pinch. I wish it wasn't the case, but it is. On the other hand, if the pinch is too hard, if people think they're being treated unfairly, they need to get on the Department of Energy web site, because there's—or the FTC web site—and make their complaints known.

The storm was—damaged a lot of infrastructure, but truthfully, it was not as bad as some predicted that it would be on the energy sector.

I'm going down tomorrow; I'm looking forward to going down. Members of my

administration will be going down. We're looking forward to hearing from, you know, the local folks. I'm confident there will be people that are very frustrated because their lives have been severely affected by this storm. And my message will be that we hear you, and we'll work as hard and fast as we can to help you get your lives back up to normal.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana

September 15, 2008

Mr. President and Mrs. Kufuor and family members; members of the Cabinet; Mr. Vice President; Members of Congress; distinguished guests: Thank you all for coming. Laura and I are really happy to host you tonight. And we're particularly happy to host President Kufuor and Mrs. Kufuor. After all, we were in their country last February, and it was a unbelievable visit in spite of my lousy dancing. [*Laughter*] Mrs. Kufuor was my partner, and she can testify to my lousy dancing. [*Laughter*]

The memories of the trip will always stay with us, Mr. President. It was a great experience. You're the President of a country of such great potential, and you're President of a country of such wonderful people.

We really do want to—I hope you relax tonight for this special evening. After dinner we'll go out to the Rose Garden for a—interesting entertainment.

John and I will be joining the ex-Presidents club in a couple of months. [*Laughter*] But I am confident we have left behind an enduring relationship between our two countries. We are—we've worked hard to help the people of Ghana. Because of his integrity and because of his leadership, I was confident in proposing the Millennium Challenge Account for the country of Ghana.

We're working hard to fight disease together. In this room are compassionate people who care deeply about the citizens of your country, John. And we want to thank you for your compassion and thank you for coming. We care deeply about the education of people all across the globe. John, you've helped your people build a thriving democracy, where the rule of law is respected. And as well, you've taken a leadership role on the continent of Africa.

I thank you for your wise counsel and your judgment on how the United States can work to promote peace. I really have greatly enjoyed serving with you in an historic era. I have confidence that the next Presidents of both our countries will be able to work together.

In the meantime, I offer you a toast. I wish you all the best in your retirement. I have loved being in your presence. And so a toast to the President, and his gracious wife Theresa, and the people of Ghana.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kufuor.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts in Houston, Texas

September 16, 2008

The President. So listen, I have come home to the great State under very difficult circumstances for the people who live down here. My first observation is that the State government and local folks are working very closely and working hard and have put a good response together. The evacuation plan was excellent in its planning and in execution. The rescue plan was very bold. And we owe a debt of gratitude to those who were on the frontline pulling people out of harm's way, like the Coast Guard people behind us here.

I'm now asking questions about how the Federal Government can help the response and help the recovery effort begin. One thing is, is that we have decided to match 100 percent—or pay 100 percent with no State match for debris removal, as well as the emergency preparedness that the State and local governments have put in place and executed.

Secondly, obviously, people are concerned about electricity and, you know, the—what I look for—or is there enough help to get these energy companies to do what they instinctively want to do, which is get the grid up and running. And I'm told by the folks who are monitoring this that there is a lot of people that are coming into this State to help restring wires, and that there's a lot of focus on getting the grid up. And so the sooner this electricity gets going, obviously, the easier it is going to be to help recover.

People have been moved out of their homes, and I know a lot of people are anxious to get back in. I urge you to listen to State and local authorities before you come back. It is their considered judgment which is important for you. And I know some are concerned about whether or not the government will reimburse you for your stay, and the answer is yes. We've got a plan for the next 30 days, and of course, we'll continue to monitor this situation as to reimbursing you for your time away from home.

One thing that's a concern is to whether or not we're getting water and fuel distributed. We just had a good discussion about how to make sure that we continue the—making sure these points of distribution are fully supplied. Step one is, do we have points of distribution in place? And then, how do we make sure they are supplied in a way that meets the people's needs? And the State and the Federal Government are sharing that responsibility—the Federal Government inside Harris County, primarily the State outside Harris County. Thus far—I know there are some shortages, but thus far, the demand has been met. And we'll continue to monitor the situation to make sure that people are taken care of.

We're fixing to go down to Galveston and obviously going to see a devastated part of this fantastic State. And it'll give the Governor and me and the Congressmen, Senator, and others a chance to express our heartfelt sympathies for those whose lives have been, you know, disrupted. You know, it's a tough situation on the coast. I have been President long enough to have seen tough situations and have seen the resilience of the people be able to deal with a tough situation. It may be hard for people to now envision a better Galveston or a better Orange or some of these other communities that have been affected. But I know, with proper help from the Federal Government and State government, there will be a better tomorrow.

And so it is with—you know, it is good to be home. I'm just sorry it's under these circumstances.

I do want to say something about the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross is working closely with the emergency rescue efforts. A lot of people are sheltered, and the Red Cross is helping those people who have been displaced from their homes. It is very important for our citizens to support the American Red Cross. You can get on their web page and find a way to contribute. You know, I hope the country does not have disaster fatigue. The Red Cross is a vital part of helping people recover and helping people find the compassionate care that our citizens expect when there's a disaster such as this.

Anyway, Governor, thanks——

Governor J. Richard Perry of Texas. Very good, sir.

The President. ——for having us.

Gov. Perry. Glad to have you home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:32 a.m. in the U.S. Coast Guard hangar at Ellington Field. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Kevin P. Brady, John Culberson, Sheila Jackson Lee, and Ted Poe; and Sen. John Cornyn. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Multi-National Force—Iraq Former Commander General David H. Petraeus
September 17, 2008

The President. The United States is fortunate to have great men and women who volunteer to serve in a time of danger. I have been incredibly impressed by the sacrifice of our troops who have been put in harm's way, and I've been incredibly impressed by the level of leadership for those troops.

General David Petraeus was asked to do a very difficult job, and he did it with distinction and honor. He was a part of the planning for the surge. He implemented the surge, along with a lot of other brave people, and the United States and the world is better off because of it.

And now the general has agreed to be commander of CENTCOM, which oversees the very important part of the world, the Middle East. And I want to thank you for taking on that assignment, General.

Recently we saw how important it is, with the attack on our Embassy in Yemen. There were some security forces that lost their lives there, and we send our condolences to their families. This attack is a reminder that we are at war with extremists who will murder innocent people to achieve their ideological objectives. One objectives of these extremists is they kill, is to try to cause the United States to lose our nerve and to withdraw from regions of the world. And our message is, is that we want to help governments survive the extremists. We want people to live normal lives. We want mothers to be able to raise their sons and daughters in a peaceful environment so they can realize the hopes and dreams of a better world.

And I want to thank our diplomats who stand in harm's way. I thank our military who stands in harm's way. And I want to thank General Petraeus and his family for being so dedicated to our great country.

General.

General Petraeus. Thanks, Mr. President. Great to be home, sir. And it was a great privilege to serve there with our young men and women.

The President. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama
September 17, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming. It's—*bienvenidos*.

President Torrijos. Yes.

President Bush. Yes. President Torrijos has been a good personal friend, and he has been a good friend to freedom, prosperity, and democracy. I've been very impressed by your leadership.

The Panamanian economy is strong. They are implementing now a very strategic decision, which is the—building a parallel canal in Panama. I remember when you first explained it to me there, when I went to visit you, I was most impressed. And then you're here now briefing me that the plans are not only in place, but the operations are beginning soon. And I congratulate you for that.

We've talked about bilateral issues. One key issue, of course, is the free trade agreement between the United States and Panama. Congress needs to get it done. This is important for our—both our nations, it's important for our economies, and it's important for our friendship. And I appreciate you coming to talk to Members of Congress. I think it is most useful.

And so it's a joy to be with you again, and I'm proud to have you here. And I pledge to you that I will continue to work hard on this important agreement, and I will. Welcome.

President Torrijos. Thank you, sir. Thank you. It's always a pleasure talking to you and looking at our bilateral relations. They have grown stronger. There's a lot of issues of cooperation in the agenda, cooperation that will make a difference to common people in Panama: health programs, the regional center that's been established in Panama, educational programs that we're talking, and of course, our commitment to free trade and, as you said, the commitment that we hope we'll be ready to help in any way to—in the process.

And I just want to thank you for being a friend of the country, being aware of our problem, and reaching out to help the Panamanian people. So thank you, sir.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at the Iftaar Dinner
September 17, 2008

Good evening, and welcome. Over the past 8 years, we have made the Iftaar dinner an annual tradition here at the White House, and I'm really glad we did. At this year's gathering, we pay special tribute to the many contribution Muslim Americans

have made to our Nation. We join in wishing Muslims around the world, *Ramadan mubarak*.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. We are honored you're in our midst. Congressman Keith Ellison, Congressman Andre Carson are with us. Members of the administration here tonight; members of the diplomatic corps, we are glad you're here; my fellow citizens. Major, I'm looking forward to the blessings. Thank you for being here with us today.

According to the teachings of Islam, Ramadan commemorates the revelation of God's word in the Holy Koran to the prophet Muhammad. The word has become the foundation for one of the world's great religions. Today, more than a billion Muslims around the globe celebrate the month of Ramadan with daily fasting, heartfelt prayer, and acts of charity.

During Ramadan, we are reminded of Islam's long and distinguished history. Throughout the centuries, the Islamic world has been home to great centers of learning and culture. Muslim thinkers and scientists have advanced the frontiers of human knowledge. People of all faiths have benefited from the achievements of Muslims in fields from philosophy and poetry to mathematics and medicine.

At the beginning of a new century, Muslims in the United States are continuing this proud tradition of innovation and invention. Tonight we honor members of the Muslim community who've risen to the top of their professions. Among our guests are individuals with wide-ranging accomplishments, from working on the Apollo program to pioneering advances in health care and medicine to developing cutting-edge applications for the Internet.

One of these innovators is Professor Maysam Ghovanloo. This immigrant from Iran has become one of our Nation's most ingenious biomedical engineers. Last month, the good professor and his team of researchers at Georgia Tech unveiled an incredible invention that could one day help people with severe disabilities operate wheelchairs and surf the Internet by simply moving their tongue. Through this pioneering research, this good professor has brought new hope to thousands. He, like others in this room, have earned the admiration of our citizens.

Stories like the professor's remind us that one of the great strengths of our Nation is its religious diversity. Americans practice many different faiths, but we all share a belief in the right to worship freely. We reject bigotry in all its forms. And over the past 8 years, my administration has been proud to work closely with Muslim Americans to promote justice and tolerance of all faiths.

We've also partnered with Muslims around the world to spread freedoms to millions of people who have never known it before. We're helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan build free societies after decades of tyranny. And during the month of reflection, we will remember all the brave Muslim Americans who wear the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. They represent the best of our Nation. I'm honored to be their Commander in Chief.

As we break the fast tonight, let us give thanks for all those who serve a cause greater than themselves. Let us give thanks for the many ways that Muslim Americans have enriched our lives. And let us give thanks that we live in a country that makes one people out of many.

I thank you for joining us tonight. I wish you all a blessed Ramadan. And now the imam will say the blessing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nasir al-Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah of Kuwait; and Maj. Abdullah Hulwe, USN, Navy Chaplain Corps, who gave the blessing.

Remarks on the National Economy
September 18, 2008

The American people are concerned about the situation in our financial markets and our economy, and I share their concerns.

I've canceled my travel today to stay in Washington, where I will continue to closely monitor the situation in our financial markets and consult with my economic advisers. I spoke to Secretary Paulson this morning, and I will meet with him later on today.

In recent weeks, the Federal Government has taken extraordinary measures to address the challenges confronting our financial markets. We've taken control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—the home finance agencies—to help promote market stability and to ensure they can continue to play a role in helping our housing market recover. This week the Federal Reserve acted to prevent the disorderly failure of the insurance company AIG, a development that could have caused a severe disruption in our financial markets and threatened other sectors of the economy. Yesterday the Security and Exchange Commission took action to strengthen investor protections and step up its enforcement actions against illegal market manipulation. Last night the Federal Reserve, in coordination with central banks around the world, took a substantial step to provide additional liquidity to the U.S. financial system.

These actions are necessary, and they're important, and the markets are adjusting to them. Our financial markets continue to deal with serious challenges. As our recent actions demonstrate, my administration is focused on meeting these challenges. The American people can be sure we will continue to act to strengthen and stabilize our financial markets and improve investor confidence.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. on the Colonnade at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Carlos Marin
September 18, 2008

I am deeply saddened by the tragic death of Carlos Marin, a dedicated public servant who died while fulfilling his responsibilities as United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico. Carlos Marin was an accomplished engineer and capable leader who achieved the American Dream while serving at the Commission for over two decades. He quickly rose through the ranks as he worked hard to effectively apply the boundary and water treaties between our country and Mexico. I appreciate his efforts to protect our Nation's interests, raise agency morale, and establish solid and transparent relationships with his Mexican counterparts. I am honored that he served in my administration.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Rosa Alva and the entire Marin family.

Mexican Commissioner Arturo Herrera, Jake Brisbin, Jr., and Matthew Peter Juneau were also killed in this tragic plane crash. Their families are also in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

NOTE: The statement referred to Jake Brisbin, Jr., executive director, Rio Grande Council of Governments; and pilot Matthew Peter Juneau.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism

September 18, 2008

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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2008.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks in New York, in Pennsylvania, and against the Pentagon committed on September 11, 2001, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 18, 2008.

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

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Nasir al-Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah of Kuwait

September 19, 2008

President Bush. Your Excellency, thanks for coming. Kuwait is a strategic partner of the United States, and our discussion today was befitting of our strategic partnership.

We talked about a lot of issues. One issue we talked about was Iraq. And I do want to thank Your Excellency for naming an Ambassador to Iraq. It's a recognition on your part that a stable and peaceful Iraq is in your interests. And we support those interests.

I also want to thank you for being such a good security partner in the region. I can remember fondly coming to Kuwait

and going to our base there and how appreciative our commanders and our folks based there were for the hospitality of your country.

We talked about the economic situation here in the United States, and I told His Highness—His Excellency I'm going to go give a speech here in a minute.

And all in all, it was a very good discussion. And I thank you for your friendship, and I welcome you to the United States.

Prime Minister Nasir. Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of my delegation, I want to thank you for the hospitality, the warm welcome. The discussions that we have had here, Mr. President, concern all the international arena. Our people cannot forget the position that United States took—the leadership and the coalition forces—to liberate Kuwait in '91.

And since United States has become one of our allies in the region, the discussion that we have had is the mutual interests between both countries in all these fields. And we are happy, we are glad to see that everything is moving very, very well between the two countries.

Thank you again, and I bring the best wishes of the Amir, the Crown Prince, and the people of Kuwait. Thank you, sir, and the people of United States.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, Prime Minister Nasir referred to Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah and Crown Prince Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait.

Remarks on the National Economy
September 19, 2008

Good morning. I thank the Treasury Secretary, Hank Paulson, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, and SEC Chairman Chris Cox for joining me today.

This is a pivotal moment for America's economy. Problems that originated in the credit markets—and first showed up in the area of subprime mortgages—have spread throughout our financial system. This has led to an erosion of confidence that has frozen many financial transactions, including loans to consumers and to businesses seeking to expand and create jobs. As a result, we must act now to protect our Nation's economic health from serious risk.

There will be ample opportunity to debate the origins of this problem. Now is the time to solve it. In our Nation's history, there have been moments that require us to come together across party lines to address major challenges. This is such a moment. Last night Secretary Paulson and Chairman Bernanke and Chairman Cox met with congressional leaders of both parties, and they had a very good meeting. I appreciate the willingness of congressional leaders to confront this situation head on.

Our system of free enterprise rests on the conviction that the Federal Government should interfere in the marketplace only when necessary. Given the precarious state of today's financial markets and their vital importance to the daily lives of the American people, Government intervention is not only warranted, it is essential.

In recent weeks, the Federal Government has taken a series of measures to help promote stability in the overall economy. To avoid severe disruptions in the financial markets and to support home financing, we took action to address the situation at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The Federal Reserve also acted to prevent the

disorderly liquidation of the insurance company AIG. And in coordination with central banks around the world, the Fed has injected much needed liquidity into our financial system.

These were targeted measures designed primarily to stop the problems of individual firms from spreading even more broadly. But more action is needed. We must address the root cause behind much of the instability in our markets: mortgage assets that have lost value during the housing decline and are now restricting the flow of credit. America's economy is facing unprecedented challenges, and we are responding with unprecedented action.

Secretary Paulson, Chairman Bernanke, and Chairman Cox have briefed leaders on Capitol Hill on the urgent need for Congress to pass legislation approving the Federal Government's purchase of illiquid assets, such as troubled mortgages from banks and other financial institutions. This is a decisive step that will address underlying problems in our financial system. It will help take pressure off the balance sheets of banks and other financial institutions. It will allow them to resume lending and get our financial system moving again.

Additionally, the Federal Government is taking several other steps to address the trouble of our financial markets.

The Department of the Treasury is acting to restore confidence in a key element of America's financial system: money market mutual funds. In the past, Government insurance was not available for these funds, and the recent stresses on the markets have caused some to question whether these investments are safe and accessible. The Treasury Department's actions address that concern by offering Government insurance for money market mutual funds. For every dollar invested in an insured fund, you will be able to take a dollar out.

The Federal Reserve is also taking steps to provide additional liquidity to money market mutual funds, which will help ease pressure on our financial markets. These measures will act as grease for the gears of our financial system, which were at risk of grinding to a halt. They will support the flow of credit to households and businesses.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has issued new rules temporarily suspending the practice of short-selling on the stocks of financial institutions. This is intended to prevent investors from intentionally driving down particular stocks for their own personal gain. The SEC is also requiring certain investors to disclose their short-selling and has launched rigorous enforcement actions to detect fraud and manipulation in the market. Anyone engaging in illegal financial transactions will be caught and persecuted [prosecuted]. *

Finally, when we get past the immediate challenges, my administration looks forward to working with Congress on measures to bring greater long-term transparency and reliability to the financial system, including those in the regulatory blueprint submitted by Secretary Paulson earlier this year. Many of the regulations governing the functioning of America's markets were written in a different era. It is vital that we update them to meet the realities of today's global financial system.

The actions I've just outlined reflect the considered judgment of Secretary Paulson, Chairman Bernanke, and Chairman Cox. We believe that this decisive Government action is needed to preserve America's financial system and sustain America's overall economy. These measures will require us to put a significant amount of taxpayer dollars on the line. This action does entail risk, but we expect that this money will eventually be paid back. The vast majority of assets the Government is planning to purchase have good value over time, because the vast majority of homeowners continue to pay their mortgages. And the risk is—of not acting would be far higher. Further stress on our financial markets would

* White House correction.

cause massive job losses, devastate retirement accounts, and further erode housing values, as well as dry up loans for new homes and cars and college tuitions. These are risks that America cannot afford to take.

In this difficult time, I know many Americans are wondering about the security of their finances. Every American should know that the Federal Government continues to enforce laws and regulations protecting your money. Through the FDIC, every savings account, checking account, and certificate of deposit is insured by the Federal Government for up to $100,000. The FDIC has been in existence for 75 years, and no one has ever lost a penny on an insured deposit, and this will not change.

America's financial system is intricate and complex. But behind all the technical terminology and statistics is a critical human factor: confidence. Confidence in our financial system and in its institutions is essential to the smooth operation of our economy, and recently that confidence has been shaken. Investors should know that the United States Government is taking action to restore confidence in America's financial markets so they can thrive again.

In the long run, Americans have good reason to be confident in our economic strength. America has the most talented, productive, and entrepreneurial workers in the world. This country is the best place in the world to invest and do business. Consumers around the world continue to seek out American products, as evidenced by record-high exports. We have a flexible and resilient system that absorbs challenges and makes corrections and bounces back.

We've seen that resilience over the past 8 years. Since 2001, our economy has faced a recession, the bursting of the dot-com bubble, major corporate scandals, an unprecedented attack on our homeland, a global war on terror, a series of devastating natural disasters. Our economy has weathered every one of these challenges and still managed to grow.

We will weather this challenge too, and we must do so together. This is no time for partisanship. We must join to move urgently needed legislation as quickly as possible, without adding controversial provisions that could delay action. I will work with Democrats and Republicans alike to steer our economy through these difficult times and get back to the path of long-term growth. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 National Basketball Association Champion Boston Celtics
September 19, 2008

The President. Welcome to the White House. Please be seated. So Celtic Pride is back. So a friend of mine, who is a huge Celtics fan, said, "Why don't you call it the 'Boston Three Party'? " I said, "Because it took a team to win." And I welcome the Boston Celtics team that has brought great pride to the Boston area. You know, I was telling them, I went to school up there. And those were the days when the Celtics were awesome. And there was a little bit of a drouth, but sure enough that drouth ended with the NBA championship. And I welcome you all to the White House as NBA champs.

I do want to say congratulations to the owners. You might recall I was an owner of a baseball team, and never knew what this felt like. [*Laughter*] Wyc Grousbeck, Irv Grousbeck, and wives; Steve Pagliuca; Bob Epstein—these all say managing partner. You got a lot of managing partners. [*Laughter*] But that's good. I know you're proud, and I know you're thrilled to—being here. I congratulate the general manager, Danny Ainge; Rick Gotham, the team president who is with us; Doc Rivers—look, this guy can coach. And coaches—and coaches—I congratulate the—all those who work in the organization for joining us.

Welcome to Members of Congress; glad you all are here. I welcome members of my administration who've come, members of the United States Armed Forces who are with us today, Boston Celtics fans who are with us today. I don't think we've had this many fans since Saint Patrick's Day, Senator. [*Laughter*] And finally, and most importantly, the players who brought the championship back to Boston. Welcome. Congratulations to you.

It's amazing how sports works, isn't it? At the beginning of last season, few would have predicted how this season would have ended. After all, the Celtics had finished with the second-worst record in the NBA. And the two-decade championship drouth was pretty likely to continue, at least that's what the experts said. There's a lot of experts in life these days, if you hadn't noticed. [*Laughter*]

Except the owners were determined to win. They said, "We're going to bring a winner for our fans." These are fan-oriented owners who understand that a sports franchise is only good as its fan base. And then you hired a general manager who knew what it meant to be a champion. You didn't hire him; he had been there for a while. But he knew what it meant to be a champion. After all, he's on the 1986 championship team. And he knows there's something special that needs to be put together to make a team work, and that's Danny Ainge.

And so during the off-season, he figured out the need to bring maybe some new blood, or some old new blood. [*Laughter*] Well, older new blood. And of course, you know, the famous trades were made for—the famous pickups were Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen. And these guys are awesome players. But Danny Ainge would be the first to tell you—by the way, the NBA executive of the year would be the first to tell you, it takes an entire team to win a championship. You bet these two people were awesome additions to the team, but it required a bunch of people playing together for the common good to win.

And that's what Doc Rivers did. See, this guy is—I've known him somewhat. He's a good man. He brought character to the clubhouse. He brought unity to the team. And he helped bring the championship back to Boston.

The team got off to a fast start. They won the first 8 games, and they never looked back for 66 wins for the NBA's best record. And then you got in the playoffs, which didn't exactly go as smoothly as some people thought—[*laughter*]—but nevertheless, when it came time to defend your home court, this team figured out how to do it.

And then, of course, the LA Lakers in the finals. For baby boomers like me, that is the—that was a reminder of a great basketball rivalry. So, like, Boston fans were screaming, "Beat LA!" at the top of their lungs, and that's exactly what this team did in six hard-fought games. If you're a basketball fan or a sports fan, it was really awesome to watch, wasn't it? If you're a Boston Red Sox fan it was doubly awesome to watch—[*laughter*]—Boston Celtics fan, man, you were in heaven. [*Laughter*]

Despite his knee injury early in the series, this team's captain, Paul Pierce, played with courage. You know, leadership comes in all different kinds of ways. Playing hurt in a championship game is the ultimate sign

of leadership. And that's why he won the MVP honors for the NBA finals. And that's why the league calls him "The Truth." This team calls him the captain.

It is safe to say that everybody on this team contributed to the championship. You know, not enough focus has been put on, until the end, the depth of the bench on the Boston Celtics. They had a lot of players come off the bench to make a huge difference, and although they—three big names, three great NBA players were there, but the real strength was the depth of the roster, I think. And I think most of the basketball experts will tell you that's the case. So I congratulate all of you for contributing to something that was very important. We'll remember your stifling defense, we'll remember your sharp shooting and the way—we'll remember the way you played together as a unit, as a team.

I appreciate very much the use of the word *ubuntu*. I don't know if you know what that's talking about here. Probably most people outside Boston don't. It is a African word for unity that they declared when they broke the huddle. I've been looking forward to saying that with a Texas accent. [*Laughter*] *Ubuntu*. Yes. Did I get it right?

I'm proud of your character. I want to thank the Celtic organization for what you do off the court as well. I believe there is a huge responsibility not only to try to win on the court, but to be responsible citizens in the community in which you live. The Shamrock Foundation, for example, helps disadvantaged children during the season and after the season. I appreciate the fact that during the second quarter of every home game, the Celtics honor some caring citizen—someone who I said is a soldier in the army of compassion—with the "Hero Among Us" program. That's a really good idea, and I thank you for doing that. I want to congratulate you for worrying about children and literacy and using your special status in society to set a good example.

Most of all, I congratulate you for being champs. I wish you all the very best for the next season. Should you win it, you can find me in Texas. [*Laughter*]

Congratulations. Congratulations, and now it is my honor to bring to the podium "The Truth," team captain Paul Pierce.

Paul Pierce. Little nervous. [*Laughter*] Well, Mr. President——

The President. Yes, sir.

Mr. Pierce. ——we just want to say it's truly an honor to be here in your house today. And on behalf of the Celtics organization, we'd like to thank you. And from what I hear, you played a little high school basketball yourself. So we're going to honor you with a basketball signed from our team.

The President. I'm honored.

Mr. Pierce. And a jersey, Celtic jersey with a 43 on it, even though that's Kendrick Perkins's number. [*Laughter*]

The President. He's from Beaumont.

Mr. Pierce. And he's from Texas. So that's why we gave you 43. [*Laughter*]

No, but for real, in honor for you being the 43d President, we'd like to present this to you. And also, on behalf of the families and the victims in Hurricane Ike, the organization would like to also present a check for $100,000 to the Red Cross relief.

The President. Well, thank you. That's awesome. Thank you for doing that. That's a big deal, really big.

Mr. Pierce. So once again, we'd just like to say thank you, and it's truly an honor.

The President. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kevin Garnett, forward, Ray Allen, guard, and Kendrick Perkins, center, Boston Celtics.

Memorandum on Use of the Department of the Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund To Support a Guaranty Facility for Certain Money Market Mutual Funds
September 19, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Use of the Department of the Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund To Support a Guaranty Facility for Certain Money Market Mutual Funds

Pursuant to section 10(b) of the Gold Reserve Act of 1934, as amended, 31 U.S.C. 5302(b), I approve the use of funds from the Exchange Stabilization Fund to provide up to $50 billion as a guaranty facility for certain money market mutual funds, consistent with your recommendation to me and the terms and conditions set out in your memorandum to me dated September 18, 2008.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President's News Conference With President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia
September 20, 2008

President Bush. Good morning, Mr. President. Welcome back to the White House. I appreciate your friendship, and I admire your bold leadership. You have transformed your nation, and you have made Colombia a powerful example of how democracy can work in our neighborhood. And I congratulate you.

Colombia is one of our closest allies, and we have worked together on many important issues, and we will continue to do so. We worked to improve security and advance freedom. The United States supports Colombia's efforts to modernize its security forces, to fight terrorists and drug kingpins, and to provide Colombians with alternatives to lives of terror and narcotrafficking.

And your efforts are working. I think it's very important for the people of the United States to hear these statistics. Since you took office, Mr. President, homicides have dropped by 40 percent, kidnapings have dropped by more than 80 percent, terrorist attacks have dropped by more than 70 percent. That is a very strong record. Because of your decisive actions, the Marxist terrorist network known as FARC has been put on the run. And our country admired greatly the rescue efforts, made by your team, of 15 hostages, including 3 Americans. And thank you for meeting with them.

In the last few years, thousands of members of FARC have deserted. They've realized the empty promise of the leaders of—you know, won't be met. And you have offered these folks a better life and a better alternative.

It's also—it's in our interest to continue to support Colombia. What happens in Colombia can affect life here in the United States. You've got a strong supporter here. And after I leave office, it's going to be very important for the next President and the next Congress to stand squarely by your side.

We're working together to open up markets and increase prosperity. And next week, the President and I will be meeting with leaders throughout our hemisphere in New York to discuss the importance of free and fair trade. We're going to send a clear message, that increasing trade is essential to the economic well-being of every nation in our region, that our neighborhood will prosper if we trade freely. You're our fourth largest trading partner. Trade between our two nations reached $18 billion last year, and that's beneficial for the people of Colombia, and it's beneficial for the people of the United States.

And I believe it's in our interest to continue to open new opportunities for both countries. Most of Colombia's products enter the United States today duty free. Most of ours face tariffs up to 35 percent or higher. In essence, that's a—that makes our goods and services less competitive. We negotiated an agreement in November of 2006, nearly 2 years ago, which leveled the playing field; our negotiators worked hard to treat each other fairly. It's in our economic interest that we have free trade and fair trade. It's in our economic interest that we continue to open up markets in our neighborhood, particularly with a nation that is growing like yours.

And yet we can't get a vote out of Congress. I've been asking the Democrat leadership in Congress for a vote, and they've consistently blocked the vote. And Members of Congress from both parties have got to understand the following facts.

First of all, about half our growth last year, Mr. President, was because of exports. In other words, exports have affected our economy in a positive way. If that's the case, it seems like we ought to be encouraging exports, not discouraging them.

Secondly, a lot of small businesses trade—send goods and services to Colombia. It's important for the small-business sector to be vital and strong.

Thirdly, a lot of jobs depend upon exports. And if we can create exports, it makes it more likely somebody is going to have good work.

And so this bill is in everybody's interest, and I urge the Congress to carefully consider not only the economic interest at stake, but the national security interest at stake of not approving this piece of legislation.

Mr. President, you've been a good friend, and it has been a real pleasure to have worked with you during these years. You have done what you said you were going to do. You've been an honest man, forthright and open. And you deserve the support of the United States of America. You've had it during my administration; you will have it to the end of my administration. And I ask that the Congress carefully consider the importance of this relationship as they think about different pieces of legislation to pass before the term ends.

Bienvenidos.

President Uribe. Muchas gracias. Inmensamente agradecido.

President Bush. Si.

President Uribe. Mr. President, I have no words to express my gratitude to you, to your team, for your permanent interest in our country, for your friendship for my country.

We have made significant progress. And one very essential portion of this progress has been your help, the help of the United States. We are working to have Colombia with more confidence—confidence to invest in Colombia, to live in Colombia, to study in Colombia, to find jobs in Colombia. And we support confidence upon three pillars: security with democracy; it means security with democratic values, with pluralism, with freedoms, with dissent. The second pillar is investment; investment with social responsibility, security, and investment, create a framework for prosperity. And in a part of prosperity, it is possible to create social cohesion, and social cohesion is the validator for security and for investment.

Therefore, you see that our policy is based upon the universal democratic values

we share with the United States. Your support has been very important for Colombia to face the threat of terrorism and for Colombia to maintain and to grow deeper and deeper with a respect to universal democratic values.

The free trade agreement is one of the main aspects of our bilateral relationships. You have understood the importance of this agreement for both countries. It could be that our economy is a very small economy to be considering trade agreements. But for us, it is very important. And it is very important not only from the political standpoint, but also from the economic standpoint.

Free trade agreement for us is the possibility to give certainty to investors for them to come to Colombia, and the more the investors come to Colombia, the less difficult for us to defeat terrorism. Investment is the real alternative to illicit crops. Investment is the real possibility for our people to find high-quality jobs.

Thank you, Mr. President. And please, I want to express, on behalf of all Colombians, our gratitude to you, to your team, and, through you, to your people, all the citizens in the United States.

Yesterday we were very happy when we saw again the three Americans who were in captivity for many years and were rescued, thanks to the heroism of our soldiers. We are—we were very sad when we came to United States in other opportunities, and we had no good news about the hostages. Now we are very happy because of this good news, the rescue of the hostages. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you. *Dos preguntas por cada lado.*

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press]. That's two questions per each side. [*Laughter*] Just strutting out my Spanish here.

National Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Tengo que practicar.

Q. Democrats are insisting that the Federal bailout package include help for homeowners facing foreclosure, other assistance for middle class citizens, such as possibly expanding the jobless benefits. Is that completely out of the question?

President Bush. We're going to work with Congress to get a bill done quickly. I called leaders of both Chambers, both parties yesterday to thank them for the initial statements coming out of the meeting that they had with Secretary Paulson and Chairman Bernanke. I found a common understanding of how severe the problem is and how it is necessary to get something done quickly, and I think we will.

And we'll continue to work with them. It is essential that the package be robust and strong to address the problem. I know—look, I'm sure there are some of my friends out there saying, "I thought this guy was a market guy; what happened to him?"

Well, my first instinct wasn't to lay out a huge Government plan. My first instinct was to let the market work, until I realized that—upon being briefed by the experts, of how significant this problem became.

And so I decided to act and act boldly. It turns out that there's a lot of interlinks throughout the financial system. The system had grown to a point where a lot of people were dependent upon each other, and that the collapse of one part of the system wouldn't just affect a part of the financial markets, it would affect the average citizen. And how? Well, it'd affect their capacity to borrow money to buy a house or to finance a college loan. It'd affect the ability of a small business to get credit. In other words, the systemic risk was significant, and it required a significant response, and Congress understands that. And we'll work to get something done as quickly and as big as possible.

There's going to be billions—hundreds of billion dollars at risk. This is a big package, because it was a big problem. And, you know, I tell our—I will tell our citizens

and continue to remind them that the risk of doing nothing far outweighs the risk of the package and that, over time, we're going to get a lot of the money back. But right now the Government needed to send a clear signal that we understood the instability could ripple throughout and affect the working people and the average family, and we weren't going to let that happen.

You want to call on somebody?

President Uribe. I never choose the——

President Bush. You never choose the questioner? I will.

President Uribe. But here today I have to do this.

President Bush. Well, I'll be glad to do it.

President Uribe. We have two Juan Carlos here. *A ver, un* Juan Carlos *de* RCN *y otro* Juan Carlos *de* Caracol.

President Bush. I only saw one Carlos.

[*At this point, President Uribe spoke in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)/Colombia Free Trade Agreement

[*The reporter asked a question in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

President Uribe. Entendio?

President Bush. No, but I'll play like I understood it. [*Laughter*] What was the question? I got to ask my translator. [*Laughter*]

President Uribe. What can do the United States to help us in rescue the hostages who keep in captivity——

President Bush. What did we do to help?

President Uribe. Yes, actually you are doing very much to help us in—against illicit drugs. And the first question he made was about how we can unblock the free—the approval of the free trade agreement.

President Bush. Yes. Thank you. First of all, it is—a government has to be effective and efficient in order for any help to work. In other words, we could—our intentions could be great to help deal with FARC or extremists. But unless there's a well-organized government headed by determined leadership, that help doesn't work.

And so the progress that's been made is a tribute to the Colombian Government and President Uribe. The United States is a partner. But the truth of the matter is, the credit goes to the Uribe Government.

And we will continue to stand with a Government that's willing to do hard things. And there's nothing harder than to deal with FARC. But it's undeniable that progress is being made and that the FARC is weaker, FARC is on the run. People are leaving FARC because of the generous hand that the Government has reached out with.

I understand how important the free trade agreement is to Colombia. It's not only economically important, because, as the President said, if the—there's doubt about the free trade agreement, investment will become nervous. And without investment, it's very hard for the Colombian economy to continue to sustain growth, and without economic growth, it's hard to be in a hopeful society.

Secondly, the free trade agreement is more than just an economic agreement, it is a statement of friendship, it's a statement of common values. And if this agreement were not to pass, it would embolden the voices of populism in the neighborhood, to the detriment of a Government which has been very strong in dealing with human rights and human dignity and the market.

And so I appreciate the President being here if this statement will help clarify the issue once again. We're going to go to New York and talk to—and remind people here in the Nation's Capital that this is an issue that affects a lot more than countries—than just Colombia. And my hope is that when people fully analyze the—what's good about it from our perspective and what's good about it from Colombia's perspective and the strategic implications inherent in this bill, that they will get a vote up and it will pass. And we'll work to see that it passes.

Michael [Mike Emanuel, FOX News]. *Miguel.*

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much. We're hearing, regarding the financial market bailout, a price tag of $700 billion. I'm wondering what you could say to conservatives who are anxious about the price tag, and if you've been given assurances in your conversations with leaders on the Hill that this legislation won't be weighed down with other items.

President Bush. Yes. I think most leaders would understand we need to get this done quickly and, you know, the cleaner the better. Yes, this is a big price tag because it's a big problem, Mike. I told our people I don't want to be timid in the face of a significant problem that will affect the average citizen. You know, some said, "This is—we can contain this to just the financial community." In my judgment, based upon the advice of a lot of people who know how markets work, this wasn't going to be contained to just the financial community. This problem could—would spread to the average citizen.

You know, you hear them talking about Wall Street and Main Street. Well, this is Wall Street plus Main Street, and I'm worried about Main Street. I'm worried about people being able to send their kids to college or to be able to afford their homes. And therefore, I asked Hank Paulson—who, by the way, in my judgment, is doing a fabulous job; he's got a lot of credibility, and he's working and his team are working hard, as are the people at the Fed and the SEC. I said, what's it going to take to make sure Main Street doesn't get affected by the policies of Wall Street? And this is what they came up with, and this is big ticket, because it's a big problem.

I talked about confidence yesterday, that people are beginning to doubt our system. People were losing confidence. And I understand it's important to have confidence in a financial system. And so the move, as well, is to say, we understand the significance and the depth of the problem. And I believe, when it's all said and done, however, that the taxpayer is going to get a lot of that money back.

Yes, I hear people, you know, suggesting we should—maybe taken a different tack. That's the way the system works. And I understand that, but creative destruction, in my judgment, wouldn't work. This requires a—you know, it required addressing certain problems.

At first I thought we could deal with this—deal with the problem one issue at a time. We made the decision on Fannie and Freddie because there was systemic risk to our mortgage markets. And then, obviously, AIG came along—and Lehman came along, and it was—it declared bankruptcy; then AIG came along, and it—the house of cards was much bigger, beyond—started to stretch beyond just Wall Street, in the sense of the effects of failure. And so when one card started to go, we were worried about the whole deck going down and so therefore moved and moved hard.

And I believe this is going to work. We had the considered judgment of a lot of capable people. It's not only just here in Washington, but our people were listening to a lot of other voices. And we took our time to come up with a strategy and a plan that would address the problem. And you bet it's big, because it needed to be big.

And, Mike, sometimes in my line of work you get criticized. But the American people have got to know that I made this decision, along with a lot of experts, because it was necessary to protect them. In the long run, we're going to be fine. You know, we're an innovative economy. We got smart, capable people; our workers are great; small-business sector is thriving and vibrant; we're productive people. And we'll get through this.

And, you know, I know a lot of people here in Washington, Mr. President, saying, "Well, who to blame?" Now is not the time

to play the blame game. There's plenty of time to analyze the situation. But from our perspective, it's time to solve the problem, and that's what we did.

Final question.

2008 Presidential Election/Colombia Free Trade Agreement

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Uribe. El otro Juan Carlos.

President Bush. I only saw one Carlos. Speak English this time, Juan, will you? [*Laughter*]

Q. This is a question for both of you, but first for President Bush. Mr. President, many analysts say that the best thing for the approval in Congress of the free trade agreement would be the victory in November of Senator Obama. Do you agree?

President Bush. First of all, I think the best thing for the country will be the victory of McCain. I'm a big believer in Senator John McCain and his capabilities to do this job. It's very important that we get the trade bill out of politics and into the realm of strategic thought. It's in our strategic interests that we get this bill done. It's good for our economies, and it's good for our national security interest.

Y luego?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Bush. Oh. He's not going to comment about American politics, sure.

President Uribe. Whatever the world, we respect the principle of self-determination. We cannot intervene in any other country. We have fought for bipartisan policy in the United States regarding Colombia. The approach of bipartisan policy has been very convenient for our two countries. Therefore, this is what we work for.

Let me add an answer for investment. Many people ask me here, in the United States, Mr. President, why you are so eager to make Colombia country much more attractive for investors? For one reason: If we have investors, we have opportunities for our people to find high-quality jobs, with affiliation to the social security system. Investment is not our end, it's a necessary means to overcome poverty, to create a community with fair opportunities for all. This is the reason we fight for investment.

President Bush. Si. Gracias. Adios, Juan Carlos.

President Uribe. Dos Juan Carlos. Two Juan Carlos.

President Bush. Y vamos?

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 9:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); and Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee. A reporter referred to Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this news conference.

The President's Radio Address
September 20, 2008

Good morning. This is a pivotal moment for America's economy. Problems that originated in the credit markets and first showed up in the area of subprime mortgages have spread throughout our financial system. This has led to an erosion of confidence that has frozen many financial transactions, including loans to consumers and to businesses seeking to expand and create jobs.

As a result, the Government is acting to protect our Nation's economic health

from serious risk. Our free enterprise system rests on the conviction that the Federal Government should intervene in the marketplace only when necessary. Given the precarious state of our financial markets and their vital importance to the daily lives of the American people, Government intervention is not only warranted, it is essential.

In recent weeks, the Federal Government has taken a series of targeted measures designed primarily to stop the problems of individual firms from spreading more broadly, but more action is needed. We must address the root cause behind much of the instability in our markets. America's economy is facing unprecedented challenges, and we're responding with unprecedented action.

My administration is working with Congress on legislation which will approve the Federal Government's purchase of illiquid assets such as troubled mortgages from banks and other financial institutions. This decisive step will address underlying problems in our financial system, and it will allow financial institutions to resume lending and get our financial system moving again.

The Department of the Treasury is also acting to restore confidence in a key element of America's financial system by offering Government insurance for money market mutual funds. For every dollar you have invested in an insured fund, you'll be able to take a dollar out.

The Federal Reserve is also providing more liquidity to money market mutual funds, which will help ease pressure on our financial markets.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has issued new rules temporarily suspending the practice of short-selling on the stocks of financial institutions. This is intended to prevent investors from intentionally driving down particular stocks for their own personal gain.

Finally, when we get past the immediate challenges, my administration looks forward to working with Congress on measures to bring greater long-term transparency and reliability to the financial system.

These measures require us to put a significant amount of taxpayer dollars on the line, but I'm convinced that this bold approach will cost American families far less than the alternative. Further stress on our financial markets would cause massive job losses, devastate retirement accounts, further erode housing values, and dry up new loans for homes, cars, and college tuitions.

In this difficult time, I know many Americans listening may be wondering about the security of your finances. Through the FDIC, every savings account, checking account, and certificate of deposit is insured by the Federal Government for up to $100,000. The FDIC has been in existence for 75 years, and no one has ever lost a penny on an insured deposit. And this will not change.

In the long term, Americans can have reason to be confident in our economic strength. America has the most talented, productive, and entrepreneurial workers in the world. This country is the best place in the world to invest and do business. And as we've seen repeatedly over the past 8 years, we have a flexible and resilient system that absorbs challenges, makes corrections, and bounces back.

We will weather this challenge too, and we will do it together. This is not a time for partisanship. I'll work with Democrats and Republicans alike to steer our economy through these difficult times and back to the path of long-term growth. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:25 p.m. on September 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 19, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Islamabad, Pakistan
September 20, 2008

I strongly condemn the terrorist bombing in Islamabad that targeted and killed many innocents, including at least one American. I extend condolences to the families of all those killed in this brutal attack.

This bombing, the latest in a series of terrorist attacks, is part of a continuing assault on the people of Pakistan. This attack is a reminder of the ongoing threat faced by Pakistan, the United States, and all those who stand against violent extremism. We will assist Pakistan in confronting this threat and bringing the perpetrators to justice. We will fully support the democratically elected Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people as they face enormous challenges economically as well as from terrorism.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia
September 20, 2008

Mr. President, members of your delegation, members of my Cabinet, Members of the United States Senate and United States Congress, honored guests: Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are really pleased you all are here. Our nations share a faith in liberty, a willingness to defend it, and a confidence that freedom will define the future for our region. The American people, Mr. President, are proud to call the Colombian people our friends and our allies.

You, Mr. President, are a strong leader. You and your Government and the Colombian people have shown courage in freedom's cause by taking on the terrorists and the drug lords. This summer, our Nation was impressed by the daring rescue of 15 hostages, 3 of whom were American citizens. We appreciate your leadership. We are pleased to be your partner in strengthening the rule of law and combating the illegal drug trade and helping victims of violence rebuild their lives and communities.

We're also partners in the spread of prosperity. We have negotiated a fair free trade agreement that will benefit families and businesses in both our nations. And I appreciate your strong advocacy for this agreement. And my sincere hope is that the United States Congress will pass the Colombia free trade agreement as soon as possible.

Mr. President, Laura and I warmly remember our visits to your beautiful country. We were honored to visit a city liberated by the great Simon Bolivar. And in that visit we were honored to be with you and your lovely wife.

And so tonight I want to propose a toast to our friendship, the friendship between our countries. May God bless Colombia, and may God bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); and Lina Maria Moreno de Uribe, wife of President Uribe. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of

President Uribe. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the National Economy
September 22, 2008

Over the weekend, members of my administration and congressional leaders worked on legislation to address the crisis in our Nation's financial markets. They made good headway toward a bill that can pass the House and Senate in a timely manner, and the American people appreciate their efforts.

Obviously, there will be differences over some details, and we will have to work through them. That is an understandable part of the policymaking process. But it would not be understandable if Members of Congress sought to use this emergency legislation to pass unrelated provisions or to insist on provisions that would undermine the effectiveness of the plan. I appreciate Members of Congress in both parties resisting the urge to do so and keeping the rescue bill focused on solving the crisis in our financial markets.

Americans are watching to see if Democrats and Republicans, the Congress and the White House, can come together to solve this problem with the urgency it warrants. Indeed, the whole world is watching to see if we can act quickly to shore up our markets and prevent damage to our capital markets, businesses, our housing sector, and retirement accounts.

Failure to act would have broad consequences far beyond Wall Street. It would threaten small-business owners and homeowners on Main Street.

Everyone recognizes that it's not easy to write a bill of this magnitude in a timely manner, and all those who have worked so hard over the weekend and continue this morning deserve the thanks and appreciation of every American. Working together, I am confident we can enact the legislation necessary to prevent lasting damage to our economy and meet the unique challenge facing us today.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks During a Meeting With President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan in New York City
September 23, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, I thank you for coming. And I have really been looking forward to this meeting; after all, Pakistan is a close and important friend.

First of all, I want to express our deepest condolences to the victims of those who died as a result of the terrorist attack in Islamabad. I know that you—your heart went out to the families of those who suffer and so does the collective heart of the American people; we stand with you.

President Zardari. Thank you.

President Bush. Secondly, I got to know you a little bit in an interesting way when

I met your children at the Olympics. And it reminded me about the great suffering that they and you have been through with the loss of your beloved wife. And I thank you very much for staying involved in public service to honor her legacy.

Pakistan is an ally, and I look forward to deepening our relationship. We'll be discussing, of course, how to help spread prosperity. We want our friends around the world to be making a good living. We want there to be economic prosperity, and we can work together, and of course we'll be talking about security. And your words have been very strong about Pakistan's sovereign right and sovereign duty to protect your country, and the United States wants to help.

One of the things I've heard here in my stay thus far in New York is from world leaders wondering whether or not the United States has the right plan to deal with this economic crisis. And I've assured them that the plan laid out by Secretary Paulson is a robust plan to deal with a serious problem. And now they're wondering about our Congress, and I've assured them as well that having spoken to the leaders of the Congress from both political parties, there is the desire to get something done quickly.

Now, there's a natural give-and-take when it comes to the legislative process. There are good ideas that need to be listened to in order to get a good bill out that will address the situation. But I'm confident, Mr. President, and as I've told you and other leaders, that there will be a bipartisan bill, that the Republicans and Democrats will come together to get this piece of legislation passed, which is necessary to address the financial situation and provide a rescue plan to make sure that there's some stability in the markets.

Anyway, Mr. President, thank you for coming.

President Zardari. Thank you. Thank you for your kind words; thank you for your thoughts. As always, you prove to the world that your heart is in there for us Pakistanis. We respect your feelings, we respect the American ideals. And we bring to this the whole concept of your promise to the world of bringing democracy to Pakistan. Democracy has come full circle, and it's been the help of all the friends around the world. And we are thankful to the world for helping democracy.

And democracy is the answer. We will solve all the problems. We have a situation; we have issues; we've got problems. But we will solve them, and we will rise to the occasion. That's what my wife's legacy is all about. That's what democracy is all about, to take difficult decisions and do the right thing for the people of our country and our two great nations. We should come together in this hard time, and we will share the burden and the responsibility with the world.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bilawal, son, and Bakhtawar and Asifa, daughters of President Zardari and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who was killed in a suicide attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on December 27, 2007. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
September 23, 2008

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen: I'm pleased to be here to address the General Assembly.

Sixty-three years ago, representatives from around the world gathered in San Francisco to complete the founding of the Charter of the United Nations. They met in the shadow of a devastating war, with grave new dangers on the horizon. They agreed on a historic pledge: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and unite their strength to maintain international peace and security.

This noble pledge has endured trying hours in the United Nations history, and it still guides our work today. Yet the ideals of the charter are now facing a challenge as serious as any since the U.N.'s founding: a global movement of violent extremists. By deliberately murdering the innocent to advance their aims, these extremists defy the fundamental principles of international order. They show contempt for all who respect life and value human dignity. They reject the words of the Bible, the Qur'an, the Torah, or any standard of conscience or morality. They imperil the values of justice and human rights that gave birth to the United Nations, values that have fueled an unprecedented expansion of freedom across the world.

To uphold the world's—words of the charter in the face of this challenge, every nation in this chamber has responsibilities. As sovereign states, we have an obligation to govern responsibly, and solve problems before they spill across borders. We have an obligation to prevent our territory from being used as a sanctuary for terrorism and proliferation and human trafficking and organized crime. We have an obligation to respect the rights and respond to the needs of our people.

Multilateral organizations have responsibilities. For 8 years, the nations in this assembly have worked together to confront the extremist threat. We've witnessed successes and setbacks, and through it all, a clear lesson has emerged: The United Nations and other multilateral organizations are needed more urgently than ever. To be successful, we must be focused and resolute and effective. Instead of only passing resolutions decrying terrorist attacks after they occur, we must cooperate more closely to keep terrorist attacks from happening in the first place. Instead of treating all forms of government as equally tolerable, we must actively challenge the conditions of tyranny and despair that allow terror and extremism to thrive. By acting together to meet the fundamental challenge of our time, we can lead toward a world that is more secure and more prosperous and more hopeful.

In the decades ahead, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations must continually confront terror. This mission requires clarity of vision. We must see the terrorists for what they are: ruthless extremists who exploit the desperate, subvert the tenets of a great religion, and seek to impose their will on as many people as possible. Some suggest that these men would pose less of a threat if we'd only leave them alone. Yet their leaders make clear that no concession could ever satisfy their ambitions. Bringing the terrorists to justice does not create terrorism; it's the best way to protect our people.

Multilateral organizations must respond by taking an unequivocal moral stand against terrorism. No cause can justify the deliberate taking of innocent human life, and the international community is nearing universal agreement on this truth. The vast majority of nations in this assembly now

agree that tactics like suicide bombing, hostage-taking, and hijacking are never legitimate. This Security Council has passed resolutions declaring terror unlawful and requiring all nations to crack down on terrorist financing. And earlier this month, the Secretary-General held a conference to highlight victims of terror, where he stated that terrorism can never be justified.

Other multilateral organizations have spoken clearly as well. The G–8 has declared that all terrorist acts are criminal and must be universally condemned. And the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference recently spoke out against a suicide bombing, which he said runs counter to the teachings of Islam. The message behind these statements is resolutely clear: Like slavery and piracy, terrorism has no place in the modern world.

Around the globe, nations are turning these words into action. Members of the United Nations are sharing intelligence with one another, conducting joint operations, and freezing terrorist finances. While terrorists continue to carry out attacks like the terrible bombing in Islamabad last week, our joint actions have spared our citizens from many devastating blows.

The brutal nature of the extremists increasingly clear, the coalition of nations confronting terror is growing stronger. Over the past 7 years, Afghanistan and Iraq have been transformed from regimes that actively sponsored terror to democracies that fight terror. Libya has renounced its support for terror and its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Nations like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are actively pursuing the terrorists. A few nations—regimes like Syria and Iran—continue to sponsor terror. Yet their numbers are growing fewer, and they're growing more isolated from the world.

As the 21st century unfolds, some may be tempted to assume that the threat has receded. This would be comforting; it would be wrong. The terrorists believe time is on their side, so they made waiting out civilized nations part of their strategy. We must not allow them to succeed. The nations of this body must stand united in the fight against terror. We must continue working to deny the terrorists refuge anywhere in the world, including ungoverned spaces. We must remain vigilant against proliferation by fully implementing the terms of Security Council Resolution 1540 and enforcing sanctions against North Korea and Iran. We must not relent until our people are safe from this threat to civilization.

To uphold the charter's promise of peace and security in the 21st century, we must also confront the ideology of the terrorists. At its core, the struggle against extremists is a battle of ideas. The terrorists envision a world in which religious freedom is denied, women are oppressed, and all dissent is crushed. The nations of this chamber must present a more hopeful alternative, a vision where people can speak freely and worship as they choose and pursue their dreams in liberty.

Advancing the vision of freedom serves our highest ideals, as expressed in the U.N.'s Charter's commitment to the dignity and worth of the human person. Advancing this vision also serves our security interests. History shows that when citizens have a voice in choosing their own leaders, they are less likely to search for meaning in radical ideologies. And when governments respect the rights of their people, they're more likely to respect the rights of their neighbors.

For all these reasons, the nations of this body must challenge tyranny as vigorously as we challenge terror. Some question whether people in certain parts of the world actually desire freedom. This self-serving condescension has been disproved before our eyes. From the voting booths of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Liberia to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia to the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and the Tulip Revolution

in Kyrgyzstan, we have seen people consistently make the courageous decision to demand their liberty. For all the suggestions to the contrary, the truth is that whenever or wherever people are given the choice, they choose freedom.

Nations in this chambers have supported the efforts of dissidents and reformers and civil society advocates in newly free societies throughout the new United Nations Democracy Fund. And we appreciate those efforts. And as young democracies around the world continue to make brave stands for liberty, multilateral organizations like the United Nations must continue to stand with them.

In Afghanistan, a determined people are working to overcome decades of tyranny and protect their newly free society. They have strong support from all 26 nations of the NATO alliance. I appreciate the United Nations decision this week to renew the mandate for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The United Nations is also an active civilian presence in Afghanistan, where experts are doing important work helping to improve education, facilitate humanitarian aid, and protect human rights. We must continue to help the Afghan people defend their young democracy so the Taliban does not return to power and Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terror.

In Iraq, the fight has been difficult, yet daily life has improved dramatically over the past 20 months, thanks to the courage of the Iraqi people, a determined coalition of nations, and a surge of American troops. The United Nations has provided the mandate for multinational forces in Iraq through this December. And the United Nations is carrying out an ambitious strategy to strengthen Iraq's democracy, including helping Iraqis prepare for their next round of free elections. Whatever disagreements our nations have had on Iraq, we should all welcome this progress toward stability and peace, and we should stand united in helping Iraq's democracy succeed.

We must stand united in our support of other young democracies, from the people of Lebanon struggling to maintain their hard-won independence to the people of the Palestinian Territories, who deserve a free and peaceful state of their own. We must stand united in our support of the people of Georgia. The United Nations Charter sets forth the equal rights of nations large and small. Russia's invasion of Georgia was a violation of those words. Young democracies around the world are watching to see how we respond to this test. The United States has worked with allies in multilateral institutions like the European Union and NATO to uphold Georgia's territorial integrity and provide humanitarian relief. And our nations will continue to support Georgia's democracy.

In this chamber are representatives of Georgia and Ukraine and Lebanon and Afghanistan and Liberia and Iraq and other brave young democracies. We admire your courage; we honor your sacrifices; we thank you for your inspiring example. We will continue to stand with all who stand for freedom. This noble goal is worthy of the United Nations, and it should have the support of every member in this assembly.

Extending the reach of political freedom is essential to prevailing in the great struggle of our time, but it is not enough. Many in this chamber have answered the call to help their brothers and sisters in need by working to alleviate hopelessness. These efforts to improve the human condition are—honor the highest ideals of this institution. They also advance our security interests. The extremists find their most fertile recruiting grounds in societies trapped in chaos and despair, places where people see no prospect of a better life. In the shadows of hopelessness, radicalism thrives. And eventually, that radicalism can boil over into violence and cross borders and take innocent lives across the world.

Overcoming hopelessness requires addressing its causes: poverty, disease, and ignorance. Challenging these conditions is in

the interest of every nation in this chamber. And democracies are particularly well positioned to carry out this work. Because we have experience responding to the needs of our own people, we're natural partners in helping other nations respond to the needs of theirs. Together, we must commit our resources and efforts to advancing education and health and prosperity.

Over the years, many nations have made well-intentioned efforts to promote these goals. Yet the success of these efforts must be measured by more than intentions, they must be measured by results. My Nation has placed an insistence on results at the heart of our foreign assistance programs. We launched a new initiative called the Millennium Challenge Account, which directs our help to countries that demonstrate their ability to produce results by governing justly and fighting corruption and pursuing market-based economic policies, as well as investing in their people. Every country and institution that provides foreign assistance, including the United Nations, will be more effective by showing faith in the people of the developing world and insisting on performance in return for aid.

Experience also shows that to be effective, we must adopt a model of partnership, not paternalism. This approach is based on our conviction that people in the developing world have the capacity to improve their own lives and will rise to meet high expectations if we set them. America has sought to apply this model in our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Every nation that receives American support through this initiative develops its own plan for fighting HIV/AIDS and measures the results. And so far, these results are inspiring. Five years ago, 50,000 people in sub-Sahara Africa were receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS. Today, that number is nearly 1.7 million. We're taking a similar approach to fighting malaria, and so far, we've supported local efforts to protect more than 25 million Africans.

Multilateral organizations have made bold commitments of their own to fight disease. The G–8 has pledged to match America's efforts on malaria and HIV/AIDS. Through the Global Fund, many countries are working to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB. Lives in the developing world depend on these programs, and all who have made pledges to fight disease have an obligation to follow through on their commitments.

One of the most powerful engines of development and prosperity is trade and investment, which create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and help people rise out of poverty and reinforce fundamental values like transparency and rule of law. For all these reasons, many in these chambers have conducted free trade agreements at bilateral and regional levels. The most effective step of all would be an agreement that tears down trade barriers at the global level. The recent impasse in the Doha round is disappointing, but that does not have to be the final word. I urge every nation to seize this opportunity to lift up economies around the world and reach a successful Doha agreement as soon as possible.

Beyond Doha, our nations must renew our commitment to open economies and stand firm against economic isolationism. These objectives are being tested by turbulence in the global financial markets. Our economies are more closely connected than ever before, and I know that many of you here are watching how the United States Government will address the problems in our financial system.

In recent weeks, we have taken bold steps to prevent a severe disruption of the American economy, which would have a devastating effect on other economies around the world. We've promoted stability in the markets by preventing the disorderly failure of major companies. The Federal Reserve has injected urgently needed liquidity into the system. And last week, I announced a decisive action by the Federal

Government to address the root cause of much of the instability in our financial markets, by purchasing illiquid assets that are weighing down balance sheets and restricting the flow of credit. I can assure you that my administration and our Congress are working together to quickly pass legislation approving this strategy, and I'm confident we will act in the urgent timeframe required.

The objectives I've laid out for multilateral institutions—confronting terror, opposing tyranny, and promoting effective development—are difficult, but they are necessary tasks. To have maximum impact, multilateral institutions must take on challenging missions. And like all of us in this chamber, they must work toward measurable goals, be accountable for their actions, and hold true to their word.

In the 21st century, the world needs a confident and effective United Nations. This unique institution should build on its successes and improve its performance. Where there is inefficiency and corruption, it must be corrected. Where there are bloated bureaucracies, they must be streamlined. Where members fail to uphold their obligations, there must be strong action. For example, there should be an immediate review of the Human Rights Council, which has routinely protected violators of human rights. There should be a stronger effort to help the people of Burma live free of the repression they have suffered for too long. And all nations, especially members of the Security Council, must act decisively to ensure that the Government of Sudan upholds its commitment to address the violence in Darfur.

The United Nations is an organization of extraordinary potential. As the United Nations rebuilds its headquarters, it must also open the door to a new age of transparency, accountability, and seriousness of purpose.

With determination and clear purpose, the United Nations can be a powerful force for good as we head into the 21st century. It can affirm the great promise of its founding.

In the final days of the San Francisco Conference, the delegates negotiating the U.N. Charter received a visit from President Harry Truman. He acknowledged the enormous challenges they faced and said success was only possible because of what he called an unshakable "unity of determination." Today, the world is engaged in another period of great challenge. And by continuing to work together, that unshakable unity of determination will be ours. Together, we confront and defeat the evil of terrorism. Together, we can secure the Almighty's gift of liberty and justice to millions who have not known it. And together, we can build a world that is freer, safer, and better for the generations who follow.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Food Security in New York City
September 23, 2008

Today Laura and I and Condi and other members of the administration are really honored to be at a table with folks from

the private sector and the public sector and NGOs who are all concerned about hunger.

The United States has made a very strong and powerful commitment to help those who need food. We've committed about $5 billion of taxpayers' money over the next 2 years to make sure people don't go hungry. And it's our interest that we do that. On the other hand, it is also in our interest to promote a second Green Revolution.

And how do you do that? Well, you use good science to get farmers in sub-Sahara Africa, for example, the tools necessary to be able to deal with the conditions in which they have to farm. You use government aid to build infrastructure so farmers can get products to market. You have good trade policy so that farm goods can travel freely across national borders. You have good agricultural policy that—combined with good trade policy, which reduces the subsidies that sometimes make it hard for, you know, indigenous farming communities to take off. You have—promote value-added processing.

And so this is the strategy that's being discussed here at this table. The United States is a compassionate nation. When citizens around the world suffer, we suffer with them. We're a strong enough nation to help people in our own country who are having trouble, but we're also strong enough to help others as well. And a cornerstone of good foreign policy and a good compassionate philosophy is making sure that people don't go hungry.

And so I thank you all very much for sharing that passion. I thank you for the leadership roles you have taken. And may the Good Lord continue to bless your work. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. at the Millennium U.N. Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Remarks Following a Lunch With Human Rights Activists in New York City

September 23, 2008

The President. Laura and I and Secretary Rice and members of my administration have just had a wonderful lunch with democracy leaders, human rights activists, courageous men and women who have stood strong for freedom. I assured them that this Government—or my Government believes in the universality of freedom. We believe there's an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom.

They inspire us. Here in America, we have an obligation to help others realize the blessings of liberty. They have been on the frontlines of securing liberty. And so we want to thank you very much for your courage. We thank you for your set of beliefs that remain strong. Thank you for taking time to be with us today. And you might want to say something.

[*At this point, First Lady Laura Bush made brief remarks, concluding with the introduction of human rights activist, U Kovida.*]

U Kovida. Thank you very much for inviting me here. This is really a nice day and my friends—discussion with many people. In Burma, many hundred people, a lot. We all need human rights, all the world's people, because we are all human. So if—when people—there's no human rights, there's no people, and there's no human. So I hope so—I hope that we all—international community need—help the

Burmese people, and I hope to get help to others—international community and the U.S. and the European, every country. And I hope we can change the Government some without weapon in Burma and Tibet and other—Zimbabwe—other countries, so around the world, we all need peace for—need a change without weapon. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all. Thanks.

The First Lady. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:32 p.m. at Governors Island. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda in New York City
September 23, 2008

President Bush. I just had a very productive meeting with President Museveni of Uganda. He is—he's been a very strong leader on a number of fronts.

First, he's been very helpful in solving regional conflicts on the continent of Africa, and I want to thank you for your leadership.

Secondly, you gave me great confidence when it came to realizing the proper strategy in dealing with HIV/AIDS. Because of the success in Uganda, that showed the rest of the continent and the rest of the world how strong leadership and a good strategy can actually save lives in a very substantial way. The ABC program was implemented in your country; infection rate went from a lot to, you know, a much smaller number.

I also want to thank you very much for implementing the Malaria Initiative. There's been over 200,000 [2.2 million] * bed nets distributed in your country, Mr. President, and that's because of the leadership of you and the organization of your Government.

And so I thank you for coming by for what has been a very productive meeting.

President Museveni. Thank you, sir. Well, I thank President Bush for the support he has given Uganda through the AIDS fund, for the development contribution. That's how our people are able to get free ARVs, antiretrovirals. Many people have access to these drugs now. In fact, almost all the people that need to have them, have access to the drugs, do so now in the case of Uganda.

You should know that not everybody who has got AIDS needs to start on the ARVs; there's a certain threshold of resistance below which he should be able to access the drugs. And because of the money President Bush has provided, and also the money from the Global Fund, all our people who need to access ARVs do so now.

Then there's also the Millennium Challenge Account, although I don't fully access that money, but we have got a part of it. And that one is also very helpful.

Then there's the general support through the World Bank and other bilateral programs like USAID, supporting infrastructure. Because what we need in Africa is to lower the cost of doing business in Africa through investing in infrastructure and energy and so on, so that we can be able to attract FDI, foreign direct investment.

* White House correction.

This is really the way forward. And President Bush has been tremendous on that. He has actually been a very good friend of Africa, and we salute him our gratitude.

I thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Remarks During a Meeting With Members of the Iraq Coalition in New York City

September 23, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to be with you, and it's a pleasure to be with nations that have helped your democracy grow. A lot of people around the world have made sacrifices along with the Iraqi people to enable a country to emerge from the shadows of tyranny, become a hopeful example for nations around the world.

I applaud your leadership, Mr. President. And I want to thank those around the table for showing courage and vision and resolve. Many of the troops of the countries represented here have returned home, but they have done so on success. And I want to applaud your steadfast leadership and thank the people of your respective countries for making the sacrifices so that others can live in a free society.

Mr. President, we've still got work to do, but there is no doubt that the situation in Iraq has changed substantially. There's no doubt that mothers are able to send their child to school without fear of carnage. Oh, there's still killers amongst your—in your midst, but your Government has been steadfast in bringing people to justice who are trying to undermine your democracy.

So I look forward to working with you. And I want to thank you for being here, and I thank you for honoring those in this room today and the peoples of their country.

Mr. President. Yes, please.

President Jalal Talabani of Iraq. Mr. President, I am grateful for your kind words. And I'm here, on behalf of the Iraqi people, to express my deepest appreciation for all countries who participated in the breaking Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship.

Of course, noble and responsible nations must bear their sacrifice in order to free the oppressed and bring citizens from the worst kind of dictatorship. Nevertheless, on behalf of the people of Iraq, I want to express my deepest condolences for your brave soldiers and civilians who have lost their lives while standing up for our shared values of freedom and democracy.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your brave leadership and your decision to liberate Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship. And thanks for all friends and their countries and Governments who participated from the beginning to liberate our country and rebuild a new Iraq, a democratic, federated, united, independent Iraq, which will help to promote democracy in the Middle East and help peace and security in the Middle East.

Thank you again, all of you, and you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:08 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations in New York City
September 23, 2008

Mr. Secretary-General, this is my eighth chance to welcome you to New York, and I'm honored to do so. You did mention, I'm heading into retirement—[*laughter*]—but it has been a joy to work with you, the staff, and many of the leaders here in this hall.

It is my honor to propose a toast, Mr. Secretary-General, to you and to your hard work. May God bless all in the room, and, Mr. Secretary-General, may God continue to bless you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Ban.

Remarks to Leaders of the Western Hemisphere in New York City
September 24, 2008

Listen, thank you all very much for being here. I'm joined by leaders throughout our hemisphere to discuss trade and prosperity. I know they're going to want to hear about the rescue plan that we have submitted to the Congress. They can see our legislative process is full of give-and-take, that there's ample debate. But I am confident that when it's all said and done, there will be a robust plan, and there needs to be.

Each of the 11 countries here has a free trade agreement with the United States or one pending before Congress. Free and fair trade is in our mutual interests.

What's interesting about free and fair trade amongst the nations is that the people benefit. For example, the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement is in its early stages, but trade between participating countries with the United States is up 23 percent. That translates to jobs and prosperity. In the 5 years since the free trade agreement between the United States and Chile took effect, trade between our two nations has increased by more than 180 percent. And that's positive. In other words, these agreements are mutually beneficial. And most importantly, they help small-business owners and workers and farmers and ranchers.

In the nearly 15 years since NAFTA entered into force, trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico has increased by a combined total of more than 200 percent.

Today our countries are launching the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas Initiative to continue this progress. This initiative will provide a forum where leaders can work to ensure that the benefits of trade are broadly shared. It will deepen the connections among regional markets. It will expand our cooperation on development issues. This is a very promising initiative, and I expect positive results when our representatives meet on these issues later this year.

It's important for the American people to understand that exports benefit workers. Half of our growth last year was the result of trade. And therefore, it's in our interest to continue to open up markets, particularly in our own neighborhood. There are three free trade agreements pending in the Congress today: South Korea, Panama, and Colombia. Obviously, two of those are with

nations in our own hemisphere. The Colombia free trade agreement will be good for Colombia, it will be good for America. The President and I have worked diligently to make sure this is a fair agreement, and Congress needs to pass it.

The Panamanian agreement, it's good for Panama, it's good for America. And Congress ought to pass that agreement too. It's important that these agreements be passed as soon as possible.

I want to thank the leaders for joining us. I'm looking forward to our discussion. I appreciate your hard work in working to make sure your people and your countries have great opportunities. One such opportunity is access to jobs provided by markets.

Thank you for your vision, and thank you for your leadership. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 a.m. at the Council of the Americas Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks During a Discussion With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador in New York City
September 24, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you.

I want to let my friend know, and the people of El Salvador, that the United States will extend TPS status to El Salvadorans living in our country. This is a decision that was made to improve the lives of El Salvadorans.

I'm proud to make this announcement with you standing by my side. You've been a very strong and courageous leader, and you have been a friend. And I know this is an issue of concern to you because you care deeply about the people of your country. And so when you get back home, you can tell the people that TPS has been extended.

Thank you, sir.

President Saca. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, President, for extending for 18 months more the TPS for the people of El Salvador. This is going to benefit our Salvadoran people with—since we have been walking in liberty, in democracy, and in integration.

Thank you very much this morning for this extension.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:53 a.m. at the Council of the Americas Headquarters. President Saca spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Provincial Elections Legislation in Iraq
September 24, 2008

Today Iraq's parliament passed a Provincial elections law enabling Iraq to hold Provincial elections by January 31, 2009. Elections in Iraq can now be held under a new system that will give Iraqis more say in choosing their elected representatives.

Nothing is more central to a functioning democracy than free and fair elections. Today's action demonstrates the ability of Iraq's leaders to work together for the good of the Iraqi people and represents further progress on political reconciliation. I congratulate the members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives for coming together to pass this significant legislation.

Address to the Nation on the National Economy
September 24, 2008

Good evening. This is an extraordinary period for America's economy. Over the past few weeks, many Americans have felt anxiety about their finances and their future. I understand their worry and their frustration. We've seen triple-digit swings in the stock market. Major financial institutions have teetered on the edge of collapse, and some have failed. As uncertainty has grown, many banks have restricted lending. Credit markets have frozen, and families and businesses have found it harder to borrow money.

We're in the midst of a serious financial crisis, and the Federal Government is responding with decisive action. We boosted confidence in money market mutual funds and acted to prevent major investors from intentionally driving down stocks for their own personal gain.

Most importantly, my administration is working with Congress to address the root cause behind much of the instability in our markets. Financial assets related to home mortgages have lost value during the housing decline, and the banks holding these assets have restricted credit. As a result, our entire economy is in danger. So I proposed that the Federal Government reduce the risk posed by these troubled assets and supply urgently needed money so banks and other financial institutions can avoid collapse and resume lending.

This rescue effort is not aimed at preserving any individual company or industry; it is aimed at preserving America's overall economy. It will help American consumers and businesses get credit to meet their daily needs and create jobs. And it will help send a signal to markets around the world that America's financial system is back on track.

I know many Americans have questions tonight: How did we reach this point in our economy? How will the solution I've proposed work? And what does this mean for your financial future? These are good questions, and they deserve clear answers.

First, how did our economy reach this point? Well, most economists agree that the problems we are witnessing today developed over a long period of time. For more than a decade, a massive amount of money flowed into the United States from investors abroad because our country is an attractive and secure place to do business. This large influx of money to U.S. banks and financial institutions, along with low interest rates, made it easier for Americans to get credit. These developments allowed more families to borrow money for cars and homes and college tuition, some for the first time. They allowed more entrepreneurs to get loans to start new businesses and create jobs.

Unfortunately, there were also some serious negative consequences, particularly in the housing market. Easy credit combined with the faulty assumption that home values would continue to rise led to excesses and bad decisions. Many mortgage lenders approved loans for borrowers without carefully examining their ability to pay. Many borrowers took out loans larger than they

could afford, assuming that they could sell or refinance their homes at a higher price later on.

Optimism about housing values also led to a boom in home construction. Eventually, the number of new houses exceeded the number of people willing to buy them. And with supply exceeding demand, housing prices fell, and this created a problem. Borrowers with adjustable rate mortgages who had been planning to sell or refinance their homes at a higher price were stuck with homes worth less than expected, along with mortgage payments they could not afford. As a result, many mortgage holders began to default.

These widespread defaults had effects far beyond the housing market. See, in today's mortgage industry, home loans are often packaged together and converted into financial products called mortgage-backed securities. These securities were sold to investors around the world. Many investors assumed these securities were trustworthy and asked few questions about their actual value. Two of the leading purchasers of mortgage-backed securities were Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Because these companies were chartered by Congress, many believed they were guaranteed by the Federal Government. This allowed them to borrow enormous sums of money, fuel the market for questionable investments, and put our financial system at risk.

The decline in the housing market set off a domino effect across our economy. When home values declined, borrowers defaulted on their mortgages, and investors holding mortgage-backed securities began to incur serious losses. Before long, these securities became so unreliable that they were not being bought or sold. Investments banks such as Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers found themselves saddled with large amounts of assets they could not sell. They ran out of the money needed to meet their immediate obligations, and they faced imminent collapse. Other banks found themselves in severe financial trouble. These banks began holding on to their money and lending dried up and the gears of the American financial system began grinding to a halt.

With the situation becoming more precarious by the day, I faced a choice: to step in with dramatic Government action or to stand back and allow the irresponsible actions of some to undermine the financial security of all.

I'm a strong believer in free enterprise, so my natural instinct is to oppose Government intervention. I believe companies that make bad decisions should be allowed to go out of business. Under normal circumstances, I would have followed this course. But these are not normal circumstances. The market is not functioning properly. There's been a widespread loss of confidence, and major sectors of America's financial system are at risk of shutting down.

The Government's top economic experts warn that without immediate action by Congress, America could slip into a financial panic and a distressing scenario would unfold.

More banks could fail, including some in your community. The stock market would drop even more, which would reduce the value of your retirement account. The value of your home could plummet. Foreclosures would rise dramatically. And if you own a business or a farm, you would find it harder and more expensive to get credit. More businesses would close their doors, and millions of Americans could lose their jobs. Even if you have good credit history, it would be more difficult for you to get the loans you need to buy a car or send your children to college. And ultimately, our country could experience a long and painful recession.

Fellow citizens, we must not let this happen. I appreciate the work of leaders from both parties in both houses of Congress

to address this problem and to make improvements to the proposal my administration sent to them. There is a spirit of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans and between Congress and this administration. In that spirit, I've invited Senators McCain and Obama to join congressional leaders of both parties at the White House tomorrow to help speed our discussions toward a bipartisan bill.

I know that an economic rescue package will present a tough vote for many Members of Congress. It is difficult to pass a bill that commits so much of the taxpayers' hard-earned money. I also understand the frustration of responsible Americans who pay their mortgages on time, file their tax returns every April 15th, and are reluctant to pay the cost of excesses on Wall Street. But given the situation we are facing, not passing a bill now would cost these Americans much more later.

Many Americans are asking, how would a rescue plan work? After much discussion, there is now widespread agreement on the principles such a plan would include. It would remove the risk posed by the troubled assets, including mortgage-backed securities, now clogging the financial system. This would free banks to resume the flow of credit to American families and businesses. Any rescue plan should also be designed to ensure that taxpayers are protected. It should welcome the participation of financial institutions large and small. It should make certain that failed executives do not receive a windfall from your tax dollars. It should establish a bipartisan board to oversee the plan's implementation, and it should be enacted as soon as possible.

In close consultation with Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, and SEC Chairman Chris Cox, I announced a plan on Friday. First, the plan is big enough to solve a serious problem. Under our proposal, the Federal Government would put up to $700 billion taxpayer dollars on the line to purchase troubled assets that are clogging the financial system. In the short term, this will free up banks to resume the flow of credit to American families and businesses, and this will help our economy grow.

Second, as markets have lost confidence in mortgage-backed securities, their prices have dropped sharply. Yet the value of many of these assets will likely be higher than their current price, because the vast majority of Americans will ultimately pay off their mortgages. The Government is the one institution with the patience and resources to buy these assets at their current low prices and hold them until markets return to normal. And when that happens, money will flow back to the Treasury as these assets are sold. And we expect that much, if not all, of the tax dollars we invest will be paid back.

A final question is, what does this mean for your economic future? Well, the primary steps—purpose of the steps I have outlined tonight is to safeguard the financial security of American workers and families and small businesses. The Federal Government also continues to enforce laws and regulations protecting your money. The Treasury Department recently offered Government insurance for money market mutual funds. And through the FDIC, every savings account, checking account, and certificate of deposit is insured by the Federal Government for up to $100,000. The FDIC has been in existence for 75 years, and no one has ever lost a penny on an insured deposit, and this will not change.

Once this crisis is resolved, there will be time to update our financial regulatory structures. Our 21st-century global economy remains regulated largely by outdated 20th-century laws. Recently, we've seen how one company can grow so large that its failure jeopardizes the entire financial system.

Earlier this year, Secretary Paulson proposed a blueprint that would modernize our financial regulations. For example, the

Federal Reserve would be authorized to take a closer look at the operations of companies across the financial spectrum and ensure that their practices do not threaten overall financial stability. There are other good ideas, and Members of Congress should consider them. As they do, they must ensure that efforts to regulate Wall Street do not end up hampering our economy's ability to grow.

In the long run, Americans have good reason to be confident in our economic strength. Despite corrections in the marketplace and instances of abuse, democratic capitalism is the best system ever devised. It has unleashed the talents and the productivity and entrepreneurial spirit of our citizens. It has made this country the best place in the world to invest and do business, and it gives our economy the flexibility and resilience to absorb shocks, adjust, and bounce back.

Our economy is facing a moment of great challenge. But we've overcome tough challenges before, and we will overcome this one. I know that Americans sometimes get discouraged by the tone in Washington and the seemingly endless partisan struggles. Yet history has shown that in times of real trial, elected officials rise to the occasion. And together, we will show the world once again what kind of country America is: a nation that tackles problems head on, where leaders come together to meet great tests, and where people of every background can work hard, develop their talents, and realize their dreams.

Thank you for listening. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee; and Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Michel Sleiman of Lebanon
September 25, 2008

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the President of Lebanon here to the Oval Office. Mr. President, there are a lot of Lebanese Americans who are paying attention to this visit. They care deeply about their ancestors. They want Lebanon to be free and sovereign and independent, and so do I, and so do you.

I have watched very carefully your initial statements upon being sworn in as President, and it—your statement impressed me. And we're most impressed by the national dialogue that you're holding in attempt to seek reconciliation. The United States is proud to stand by your side. Our mission is your mission: a country that is strong and capable and a country where people can live in peace.

And so I welcome you. It's been a long time since the President of Lebanon has been in the Oval Office. And it has been my—it is my honor to host you for this occasion. So I welcome you, and I'm looking forward to our dialogue.

President Sleiman. Thank you. Well, I am delighted to be here visiting the White House and visiting with you, President Bush. I am here to thank you for all the efforts that you have undertaken in order to support Lebanon, particularly the military institutions of Lebanon.

We are also very proud of Lebanese Americans, who are around a million of them here, occupy very important position in the United States. And they work very

sincerely for their country here as well as for their original homeland.

Mr. President, we share with the United States many of the human values and many of the cultural values. We promote and we believe very strongly in democracy and the principles of democracy. We believe in the promotion of liberty, all liberties, as well as the protection of human rights.

Mr. President, we work against bigotry and those who try to promote it, and certainly, we work very hard to combat terror. There are so many things in common between the American people and the Lebanese people.

We are here also to reaffirm our right in having a prosperous Lebanon, a democratic Lebanon, a country that it is diverse in its nature and through its people, but that in itself is wealth—the wealth of the power—and the power of the people of Lebanon. And that adds to the value of the Middle East and the Arab world and the entire world.

Mr. President, we are also here to reaffirm the need to liberate all Lebanese territories and also to make it very clear that the future of Palestinian refugees is in their homeland, not in Lebanon. Mr. President, we believe that this is in the interest of Lebanon as well as it's in the interest of the Palestinian people themselves.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Sleiman spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority
September 25, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome back. You and I have met a lot since I have been the President and you have been the President. And I appreciate your determination and your desire to have a Palestinian state, and I share that desire with you.

It's not easy. No doubt it must be frustrating at times for you, because it's hard work to get a state after all these years. But nevertheless, there is a firm determination on your part and on my part to give the Palestinians a place where there can be dignity and hope.

We are working hard with you on security matters. We're working hard with you on helping the international community help you get the economy going in the West Bank. And I welcome you back.

As you know, I've got 4 more months left in office, and I'm hopeful that the vision that you and I have worked on can come to pass. And my only pledge to you is that I'll continue to work hard to see that it can come to pass. And so I welcome you back, and I think it's safe for me to say, I welcome you back, my friend.

President Abbas. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am delighted, as well as the members of my delegation, to come here again to Washington and meet with you. We've met together for numerous times. Mr. President, we know very well how important this issue is for you, and we will continue to work very hard together in order to realize your vision of two states living side by side.

There is no doubt that you have done a great deal, Mr. President, and you have exerted a great deal of efforts aiming at

achieving that vision that we will work together to achieve. Your efforts, Mr. President, as well as your vision, both help us and the Israelis to work very hard during the last year and since the convening of the Annapolis conference. Hope will remain, Mr. President. We cannot live without hope. We will continue to work to achieve and realize that hope.

And, Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and thank the United States for the help and the support and the aid that you have given us, and as well as the efforts that you led to mobilize the world to help the Palestinian Authority in—on the economic front as well as on the security front.

Mr. President, we will continue to work with you, and we will continue to keep the hope alive in order to reach a political solution for our issue and for the Middle East.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:13 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Members of Congress
September 25, 2008

I want to thank the leaders of the House and the Senate for coming. I appreciate our Presidential candidates for being here as well.

We are in a serious economic crisis in the country if we don't pass a piece of legislation. I want to thank the spirit of bipartisan cooperation that's taking place here in Washington. One thing the American people have to know is that all of us around the table take this issue very seriously, and we know we've got to get something done as quickly as possible. And this meeting is an attempt to move the process forward. My hope is that we can reach an agreement very shortly.

I want to thank the Secretary of the Treasury for working hard with the Members. I thank the Members for working long hours like they've been doing to come up with a solution that's bipartisan and that will solve the problem.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee; and Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India
September 25, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, once again, it's my honor to welcome you back to the Oval Office, and it will be my honor to share a meal with you tonight. I thank you for coming to Washington from New York. It's very kind of you to come. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your leadership.

You and I have worked hard to change the relationship between our countries. India is a great country with an incredibly bright future. And it's in the U.S. interests to have a good, strong strategic relationship with India. And we've worked hard to achieve that.

One such sign of that relationship is the India-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement. This has taken a lot of work on both our parts, a lot of courage on your part. And of course, we want the agreement to satisfy you and come—get out of our Congress. And so we're working hard to get it passed as quickly as possible.

We talked about trade. We talked about the environment and how technologies will make it such that we can grow our economies and be good stewards of the environment.

I'll never forget my visit to your country, Mr. Prime Minister. I remember telling my friends, when I got back, what an exciting place India is. There's a vibrancy and energy, and there's a entrepreneurial spirit that's very strong. And I congratulate you and your Government for enhancing that entrepreneurial spirit.

I thank you for your advice on a range of matters. I appreciated very much your briefing on the neighborhood in which you live. It's very informative, and it helps me make decisions and helps me formulate policy.

All in all, ours is a very strong relationship, at a state level and at a personal level. And I appreciate you coming.

Prime Minister Singh. Mr. President, I know how busy you are with problems relating to the management of the financial crisis. That despite all these enormous pressures on your time, you have found it possible to receive me is something I deeply appreciate, deeply value. And the last 4½ years that I have been Prime Minister, I have been the recipient of your generosity, your affection, the show of your friendship. It means a lot to me and to the people of India.

In these last 4½ years, there has been a massive transformation of India-United States relations. And, Mr. President, you have played the most important role in making all this happen. Your efforts towards cooperation with regard to civil nuclear energy, I know these were difficult issues, and at each stage, it was your leadership, your personal intervention which resolved all the difficulties that were affecting the progress of this negotiation.

I sincerely hope that the settlement which is now before the U.S. Congress will be approved in a manner which will be satisfactory from the point of view of both our countries. And when history is written, I think it will be recorded that President George W. Bush played an historic role in bringing our two democracies closer to each other.

I am mentioning civil nuclear initiative because for 34 years, India has suffered from a nuclear apartheid. We have not been able to trade in nuclear material, nuclear reactors, nuclear raw materials. And when this restrictive regime ends, I think a great deal of credit will go to President Bush. And for this I am very grateful to you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Singh. But there has been enormous transformation in our relationship in many other respects. The United States is India's largest trading partner. The United States is the largest investor in our country. And at President Bush's initiative, we set up a two-country CEOs forum which has come forward with many innovative ideas to bring the business communities of our two countries closer to each other.

We have taken new initiative in the field of education. We have today a new architecture of bringing the academic communities of our two countries—the new scheme of Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship will unite the intellectual community of our two countries in a manner which gives me immense satisfaction.

In areas of science and technologies, in areas relating to environment management, in the areas relating to climate change, in areas relating to health, in areas relating to knowledge initiatives in agriculture—all of these initiatives have emerged as a result of the historic meeting that I had with President Bush on 18 of July of 2005. These are the reasons we have now a strategic partnership with the United States. And all that has happened has happened because of the strong personal commitment of the President.

India is a functioning democracy. And I know how much President Bush appreciates that fact, that a country of a billion people with tremendous poverty, with all the diversities of the world, is yet trying to find its economic and social salvation in the framework of a functioning democracy. President Bush and I have discussed this aspect of India's functioning several times, and he has shown enormous respect for India, for Indian democracy.

So, Mr. President, this may be my last visit to you during your Presidency, and let me say that—thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Singh. The people of India deeply love you, and all that you have done to bring our two countries closer to each other is something history will not be able to destroy.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the National Economy
September 26, 2008

Good morning. My administration continues to work with the Congress on a rescue plan. And we need a rescue plan. This is—it's hard work. Our proposal is a big proposal, and the reason it's big and substantial is because we got a big problem.

We also need to move quickly. Now, any time you have a plan this big, that is moving this quickly, that requires legislative approval, it creates challenges. Members want to be heard. They want to be able to express their opinions, and they should be allowed to express their opinions.

There are disagreements over aspects of the rescue plan, but there is no disagreement that something substantial must be done. The legislative process is sometimes not very pretty, but we are going to get a package passed. We will rise to the occasion. Republicans and Democrats will come together and pass a substantial rescue plan.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. on the Colonnade at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the United States Ocean Action Plan
September 26, 2008

Thank you all. Please sit down. Thank you, Secretary Clough, for the introduction. And congratulations on the opening of the Sant Ocean Hall, which, by the way, opens tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock. The Secretary and I just had a fabulous tour. These

exhibits in this hall will remind people that our oceans are vital for our planet. This is going to heighten awareness of how important our oceans are and that we have a solemn duty to protect them.

And so I've come not only to see the hall and to herald its opening, but to spend a little time talking about ocean conservation. There are a lot of people in this room who care about ocean conservation, and I appreciate you working on—with us to help preserve a vital natural resource.

First of all, I do want to recognize the Chancellor of the Smithsonian Institute's Board of Regents—I call him the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court—Justice Roberts, thank you for coming. I appreciate very much the Sant family, Roger and Vicki. Roger turns out to be the Chairman of the Institute's Board of Regents and a big supporter obviously of the Smithsonian; otherwise, they probably wouldn't have named the hall for him. [*Laughter*] But thank you for your generosity and your support.

Cristian Samper is the Director of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, and he gave us a tour today. And he's a knowledgeable fellow, a biologist, and he will make sure that these exhibits remain relevant, you know, for the education of the American people. And I want to thank you, Cristian, for your service.

I'm proud to be here with a member of my Cabinet, Carlos Gutierrez, Department of Commerce, which oversees NOAA, which had something to do with this facility. I want to thank Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo; there she is. Madeleine, good to see you; thank you for coming. She is from Guam. I appreciate the winners of the National Ocean Art Contest who are here today; that would be you all. Yes.

I'm about to talk about some policy we've been implementing, and I want to thank all those in the room for helping. There's a lot of folks around the country and here in Washington who care deeply about the oceans. And many of the organizations that have worked constructively with our administration are here, and I thank you for your efforts, because the truth of the matter is that we have got a good record working with you. And I want to share some thoughts about it.

First of all, you got to know I like oceans. I didn't grow up in the ocean—as a matter of fact—near the ocean—I grew up in the desert. Therefore, it was a pleasant contrast to see the ocean. And I particularly like it when I'm fishing. It turns out, it's a—I'm not the first President liked to fish. It turns out, the first President really liked to fish. George Washington—I was reading where he one time caught 100,000 herring in a single day. That's either a lot of fish or a lot of fishing. [*Laughter*] But unlike that George W., I have not had that kind of luck before. [*Laughter*]

America is a maritime nation. Obviously, the—protecting the oceans are in our interest. It turns out that commercial and recreational fishing add more than $76 billion to our economy every year. Seaport-related businesses add an estimated $2 trillion in economic activity. And the oceans are important for our economic—you know, as an economic lifeline. They're important to our economy. Seas also offer limitless opportunities for recreation and transportation and education and research. It all adds up to the fact we got to be good stewards.

And so we developed what we've called the Ocean Action Plan. I'm a guy who likes—when people walk into my office, I like to say, you know, what are the specific steps, and how are we doing at achieving them? This particular plan started off with 88 different points of action, expectations; we've met 87 of them. When the Senate passes a treaty, we will have met 88 of them. And it's—[*applause*].

Many of you in this room helped develop the plan. Many of you helped implement the plan, and I thank you. The goal was to make our oceans, coasts, and Great

Lakes cleaner, healthier, and more productive. I want to spend a little time talking about some of the successes.

Under the Ocean Action Plan, we've worked to stop overfishing. Last year, I issued an Executive order protecting two of our Nation's most popular game fish, striped bass and red drum. I signed important legislation reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevenson [Magnuson-Stevens]* Act, which sets a firm deadline to end overfishing in America by 2011. Many in this hall helped pass that piece of legislation, and I thank you. Thanks to these and other efforts, we are beginning to see good progress toward ending overfishing.

At the beginning of my administration, 44 fish stocks were listed as overfished. Today, almost half of those stocks are no longer on the list. That's good news. Along the way, we've stepped up our efforts to identify additional fish stocks that are at risk, and we're going to take steps to protect them.

We're protecting and restoring vital wetland and marine habitats. In 2004, I set a goal of restoring, improving, and protecting 3 million acres of interior and coastal wetlands in 5 years. And we met that goal 1 year ahead of schedule. This effort includes our watershed restoration project in the Florida Everglades, which is the largest in the world. During my administration, we have put two-thirds of Federal waters, about 2.3 million square nautical miles, off limits to harmful bottom-trawling and dredging. We care what happens in the oceans.

We made a special effort to protect the tropical forests of the sea, coral reefs. Some of the most spectacular reefs are found in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, which I created in June of 2006, thanks to the efforts of many in this hall. This monument is the world's largest fully protected marine conservation area, and it covers more than 7,000 marine species, a quarter of which are found nowhere else on Earth.

We've promoted a culture of cooperative conservation. Through programs like the Coastal America Partnership, we joined with State and local governments, fishermen and tribal leaders and tens of thousands of volunteers to improve conservation from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast. One project, which is dear to my heart, is when folks from the private sector helped to restore 10,000 acres of tidal wetlands in my home State. For decades, this area could be the equivalent of a dust bowl, just neglected. Today, it's a thriving ecosystem filled with shorebirds and abundant fish.

Cooperative conservation works; it makes sense. It's a strategy that's easy to implement when you find people willing to step up and do their part.

We're increasing international cooperation to protect the ocean environment that affects all nations. Through the Coral Triangle Initiative, we're working with nations like Indonesia and Malaysia and the Philippines and Australia to identify and eliminate the threats to tropical reefs. President Yudhoyono of Indonesia gets a lot of credit for this initiative. He is bound and determined to protect coral reefs around his nation, and we are bound and determined to help him do so by providing money, strategy, expertise, and encouragement. At the United Nations, we succeeded in passing a resolution to help protect fish stocks and marine habitats from destructive fishing practices.

A lot of our citizens don't understand what's taking place in parts of the world, but people use dynamite to fish, or they poison the fish stocks in order to net them, or they use destructive bottom-trawling. And we're using our influence to stop those kind of practices.

We're expanding ocean research. There is more left to learn about the oceans; there's probably more to learn about the oceans than we need to learn about the

* White House correction.

Moon—or that we know about the Moon. And so to help unlock these mysteries, we've launched a 10-year Ocean Research Priorities Plan. Research supported by the plan is helping to reduce shipping's impact on the environment, improve our understanding of important ocean conditions like red tides, teach us more about the oceans' role in climate change, and improve our ability to protect Americans from natural disasters like hurricanes and tsunamis.

We're expanding educational programs to teach citizens more about the oceans. The truth of the matter is, there's a knowledge gap between what scientists and biologists understand about oceans and what our citizens understand about it. So we've ensured that teachers and students and the public have access to the most up-to-date marine science. Laura was particularly moved when she went out to the Hawaiian National Monument to learn about the effects of debris—you know, people just dropping stuff all over their boats, and it gets in these currents and kills birds and clogs the ecosystem. She's been very active about educating the young and old about the importance of making sure we're wise about marine—not—stopping marine debris. The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center network is a interesting, innovative idea where the public can learn hands on about sea life at more than 20 of America's top aquariums. So there will be kiosks in each aquarium that are connected to here, as well as around the Nation, and people can get information at their fingertips.

The great achievement, of course, is this new hall. It's built through a partnership between NOAA and the Smithsonian. It's going to introduce visitors to all kinds of interesting things: prehistoric predators, what life is like around the coral reef, an animated display of the oceans' impact on the global environment. It's worthwhile for our citizens to come here. I think you're going to learn a lot. As part of the exhibit's opening, a half-mile-long mural of ocean art by children from 110 countries will show visitors to the National Mall the beauty of sea life around the world. And of course, we thank those artists. My favorite exhibit was the 24-foot giant squid. That's—the squid was brought all the way from Spain as a joint operation between the Navy and the Air Force—[*laughter*]—appropriately called Operation Calamari. [*Laughter*] I do want to thank our military for bringing the deal here. It is—[*laughter*]—it's worth looking at it. [*Laughter*] Admiral, I don't know if you had anything to do with it, but it's—if you did, it must have been a heck of an operation. [*Laughter*]

And then people are going to come here and they're going to be amazed to see a 45-foot replica of a female right whale. There are fewer than 400 North Atlantic right whales left in the world. And the model in this hall is inspired by a whale that got tangled in fishing gear but got herself free. She was given the appropriate name of Phoenix. And under the Ocean Action Plan, we've worked hard to protect whales like her. Part of the 88 different actions we've taken was to work on smart whale policy. And people in this room have helped. For example, we now require fishermen to use more whale-friendly gear. Based on a careful study of where right whales and ships are most likely to collide, we've rerouted the shipping lanes near Boston Harbor. The action reduced the danger to right whales like the Phoenix by nearly 60 percent.

And there are going to be new regulations that will be coming to be shortly that require ships to slow down as they approach seaports where these whales are likely to be.

In all these ways, the Ocean Action Plan is helping to protect our planet's most essential natural resource. Yet we're going to do more. And so I've asked—I've told people I'm sprinting to the finish; I mean, 4 months, you can actually get a lot done. And so I've asked the Secretaries of the Interior, Commerce, and Defense as well

as the CEQ Chairman to work to find additional areas in the Pacific that could be eligible for Federal protection. We will improve our wetlands work by protecting, restoring, and improving an additional 4 million acres.

It's important to set clear goals. We have set clear goals in this administration, we have met those goals, and in this case, we're setting a new goal. We will expand the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the Davidson Seamount. This 585-square-nautical-mile addition will safeguard one of the largest known seamounts in U.S. waters, and it will protect an extraordinary array of ocean creatures.

All Americans have a responsibility and obligation to be good stewards of our environment. And one person who understands that is Pietro Parravano. I met Pietro today. He is a commercial fisherman in Half Moon Bay, California. He was as excited to see this exhibit as I was. When a project to expand the nearby Port of Oakland threatened the bay's fishing grounds, Pietro helped broker an agreement that allowed the expansion of the port while protecting Half Moon Bay. Pietro has continued his cooperative conservation work at the local, State, and Federal and international levels. This fisherman has been honored by NOAA and the EPA. He says, "Conservation needs to be everyone's priority, because the oceans belong to all Americans."

I don't know where you are, Pietro, but—somewhere around here—wherever you are—there he is. Thanks, Pietro. Only in America. We're sure glad you're here, and thanks for your work. Like, people—Pietro shows that, you know, you can make a difference in your communities; it's just not all that hard. And part of the purpose of this fantastic facility is to encourage people to do that when it comes to the oceans.

I believe that the research that's going on and the actions that will be taken by this administration and, hopefully, future administrations will say to our children and grandchildren, we saw our responsibility, and we met it; that those of us who work here in Washington came here to be a constructive force, to see problems before they became acute, and we did something about it. And for those of you in this room who are doing something about it, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and so will future generations of Americans. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Sant Ocean Hall at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. In his remarks, he referred to Pietro Parravano, secretary, San Mateo County Harbor District Board of Commissioners.

Remarks Following a Video Teleconference With Military and Civilian Leaders in Afghanistan
September 26, 2008

President Bush. President, welcome. I'm pleased to be joined by President Karzai and members of his Government, as we've just had a discussion with our fellow citizens represented here on the screen. We had a real-time SVTS with PRT members in Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces in Afghanistan, plus the Governors—the Afghan Governors.

My reaction to our conversation is, one, there was promise and progress. No question, it's difficult. But if you listen to the people who are actually on the ground working with the citizens of Afghanistan on matters such as agriculture or education or

infrastructure, you'll understand why I said that there is progress and promise and hope.

And so I want to thank my fellow citizens, Mr. President, in your presence, for their sacrifice and service. Three of the PRT members are here, Provincial Reconstruction Teams. This is a central part of a counterinsurgency strategy, which combines economic development, education, infrastructure with security, all aiming to help this young democracy not only survive, but to thrive, so that it never becomes a safe haven for those would do us harm again.

I've had a grand experience in dealing with President Karzai. He and I have known each other for a long time.

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Exactly.

President Bush. We—I can remember when I was informed that our special forces rescued President Karzai during the liberation of Afghanistan. He was stuck out there wondering whether he was going to make it——

President Karzai. Top of the mountain.

President Bush. We sent some good troops in and pulled him out. And he has served his country then, and he's served his country now as the President. And I admire your leadership and your determination to succeed. And I want to welcome you here. I want to let you know that the United States is committed to the people of Afghanistan. We will stand by your side and do the hard work necessary to achieve our objective. And our objective is for you to become a thriving democracy and to deny Al Qaida and other extremists a safe haven or a base from which to launch their murderous attacks.

Welcome.

President Karzai. Thank you, President. Mr. President, thank you very much for seeing me and my delegation once again, so graciously, and with tremendous hospitality, as always, in the White House.

Mr. President, my trip this time to Washington, as I insisted to be here with you, is for one reason alone, and that is to thank you and, through you, the American people for all that you have done for Afghanistan. You can't imagine here in Washington, especially at the White House, how much difference you have made to the lives of the Afghan people by your personal commitment to Afghanistan, by your commitment for the betterment of Afghan life, for the security of the Afghan people, the democracy of the Afghan people, for education and health and all that we discussed earlier with the PRTs and the Afghan Governors.

At times in this, the span of 7 years, we have come across issues that gives us a feeling as if things were slowing down. That is not the impression that we have in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has made progress that we would have not been able to make in 50 years or 60 years—what you have done in the past 6 or 7 years. We have rebuilt in 4 years more than 3,500 of our roads. We have millions of children. We have more than 85,000 of our babies, infants, and children now saved each year. Infant mortality is down; health care from 9 percent to 85 percent. National reserves, I will share that for you now, from $180 million of 2002 to $3.5 billion today—over $3 billion today.

Life is better. Of course we have challenges, and the challenges will continue to face us as we move ahead. The success is already there; the success will be completed. You will be leaving office, Mr. President, together with the Vice President, in a few months from today, but I would like you to remember as you leave office that Afghanistan will remember you tremendously, nicely, with affection. And you are there in our memory in a golden plate. Come and visit us so we can show it to you in a manner that we do traditionally in Afghanistan.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Karzai. It's an honor to have associated with you, to have had your friendship, and to have had your support

and to have had your patience with me and some of our habits up there. [*Laughter*]. Very, very nice of you. I have yelled at times, I've been angry at times, but you've always been smiling and generous, and that's so nice of you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Karzai. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom
September 26, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. The United States has got a great friendship with Great Britain, and you and I have worked hard to make sure that friendship stays strong. And I appreciate you coming down from New York, and I thank you for the consultations on this current economic issue.

What the Prime Minister wants to know is, is the plan we've devised big enough to make a difference, and is it going to be passed? And I told him the plan is big enough to make a difference, and I believe it is going to be passed. And I really want to thank you very much for staying in touch during this difficult period of time, not only for us, but for people all around the world.

Secondly, we talked about trade. There's no stronger advocate for free and fair trade than Prime Minister Brown has been. And I appreciate your strong support for trade; because he knows what I know: That if—the best way to help deal with poverty and hopelessness is to give people opportunity through free and fair trade.

And so I thank your steadfast support on Doha. I told him that we are still optimistic that the Doha round can be reinvigorated, and we strategized as to how to do that. And I thank you for your advice on that.

Finally, we talked about Iraq and Afghanistan. Both our nations still have troops in those two countries. We're helping young democracies not only survive, but grow and thrive. And I fully believe that when people look back at this period of history, they will say, thank goodness the United States and Great Britain stood strong, because we're helping to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

So I welcome you back to the Oval Office. Thank you for coming.

Prime Minister Brown. It's a great privilege to be here this afternoon. And I thank you for your hospitality, President Bush.

We talked about a number of issues: Iraq, Afghanistan, the trade talks, what's happening in Russia and in the—in Georgia, and about the general situation in the world economy. And we concentrated on the financial issues that are being raised in every country of the world by what's happening because of financial turbulence on the markets.

America and Britain have always stood together and as one in times of difficulty and challenge. And I said to President Bush this afternoon that facing this global turbulence, Britain supports the financial plan. And whatever the details of it, it's the right thing to do to take us through these difficult circumstances.

I was also able to tell President Bush that other countries whom I've talked to during the course of the last week in New York—every continent, all the members of the G–7, believe that America deserves the support of the rest of the world in the

action it's taking to secure stability and to deal with the turbulence in the financial markets. And we will continue to support the administration and the Government in everything that it's doing to try to restabilize the financial markets and to bring about economic growth in all our countries.

We also talked about what is the pathway forward. Our G–7 finance leaders—ministers will meet on October the 9th. The International Monetary Fund will meet on October the 10th. And the issues that have been raised by the problems in the financial system and the principles that might underlie future policy—transparency, good housekeeping, integrity, and at the same time, of course, international cooperation for the future—these are all issues that will be discussed in detail by our finance ministers, and they will bring proposals for the future to us.

Stability is the first duty of governments, and we are determined that our continuing cooperation will enhance the stability of our economies and bring the prosperity that is what we want for every single citizen of the world.

President Bush. Thank you, Gordon. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Message to the Senate Transmitting a Report and Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
September 26, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to accession, I transmit herewith the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, with Annexes. In addition, I transmit for the information of the Senate the report of the Department of State, which includes a detailed analysis of the Agreement.

The Agreement, done at Canberra on June 19, 2001, and that entered into force on February 1, 2004, was adopted pursuant to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (the "Convention"), done at Bonn on June 23, 1979. Although the United States is not a Party to the Convention, the United States may nonetheless become a Party to the Agreement. The Agreement's objective is to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels.

I believe the Agreement to be fully in the U.S. interest. Its provisions advance the U.S. goals of protecting albatrosses and petrels. As the Department of State's analysis explains, the Agreement is not self-executing and thus does not by itself give rise to domestically enforceable Federal law. Implementing legislation would be required, which will be submitted separately to the Congress for its consideration.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Agreement and give its advice and consent to accession.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 26, 2008.

The President's Radio Address
September 27, 2008

Good morning. This is an extraordinary period for America's economy. Many Americans are anxious about their finances and their future. On Wednesday, I spoke to the Nation and thanked Congress for working with my administration to address the instability in our financial system. On Thursday, I hosted Senator McCain, Senator Obama, and congressional leaders from both parties at the White House to discuss the urgency of passing a bipartisan rescue package for our economy.

The problems in our economy are extremely complex, but at their core is uncertainty over mortgage-backed securities. Many of these financial assets relate to home mortgages that have lost value during the housing decline. In turn, the banks holding these assets have restricted credit, and businesses and consumers have found it more difficult to obtain affordable loans. As a result, our entire economy is in danger. So I proposed that the Federal Government reduce the risk posed by these troubled assets and supply urgently needed money to help banks and other financial institutions avoid collapse and resume lending.

I know many of you listening this morning are frustrated with the situation. You make sacrifices every day to meet your mortgage payments and keep up with your bills. When the Government asks you to pay for mistakes on Wall Street, it does not seem fair, and I understand that. And if it were possible to let every irresponsible firm on Wall Street fail without affecting you and your family, I would do it. But that is not possible. The failure of the financial system would mean financial hardship for many of you.

The failure of the financial system would cause banks to stop lending money to one another and to businesses and consumers. That would make it harder for you to take out a loan or borrow money to expand a business. The result would be less economic growth and more American jobs lost. And that would put our economy on the path toward a deep and painful recession.

The rescue effort we're negotiating is not aimed at Wall Street, it is aimed at your street. And there is now widespread agreement on the major principles. We must free up the flow of credit to consumers and businesses by reducing the risk posed by troubled assets. We must ensure that taxpayers are protected, that failed executives do not receive a windfall from your tax dollars, and that there is a bipartisan board to oversee these efforts.

Under the proposal my administration sent to Congress, the Government would spend up to $700 billion to buy troubled assets from banks and other financial institutions. I know many Americans understand the urgency of this action but are concerned about such a high price tag. Well, let me address this directly.

The final cost of this plan will be far less than $700 billion. And here's why: As fear and uncertainty have gripped the market for mortgage-related assets, their price has dropped sharply. Yet many of these assets still have significant underlying value, because the vast majority of people will eventually pay off their mortgages. In other words, many of the assets the Government would buy are likely to go up in price over time. This means that the Government will be able to recoup much, if not all, of the original expenditure.

Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have contributed constructive proposals that have improved this plan. I appreciate the efforts of House and Senate Democratic and Republican leaders to bring a spirit of bipartisan cooperation to these discussions. Our Nation's economic

well-being is an issue that transcends partisanship. Republicans and Democrats must continue to address it together. And I am confident that we will pass a bill to protect the financial security of every American very soon.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:10 a.m. on September 27 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on the morning of September 27, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee; and Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of India-United States Nuclear Cooperation and Nonproliferation Legislation
September 27, 2008

I congratulate the House of Representatives for passing H.R. 7081, the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act. The passage of this legislation by the House is another major step forward in achieving the transformation of the U.S.-India relationship.

I thank the Members of Congress who helped to pass this legislation, especially House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman (D–CA) and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R–FL). In addition, I would like to recognize the contributions of two great Americans and legislators, Congressmen Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, who saw early on the importance of a strategic partnership with India and of bringing the people of our two great nations together through this initiative.

I urge the Senate to quickly take up and pass this important piece of legislation before their October adjournment. Signing this bipartisan bill will help strengthen our partnership with India.

Statement on Congressional Action on Economic Stabilization Legislation
September 28, 2008

Today a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, working with my administration, reached agreement on economic rescue legislation that is urgently needed to address a crisis in our financial system that threatens the entire U.S. economy.

I appreciate the leadership shown by Members on both sides of the aisle, who came together to write a very good bill. This bill provides the necessary tools and funding to help protect our economy against a system-wide breakdown. The bill will help allow access to credit so American families can meet their daily needs and American businesses can make purchases, ship goods, and meet their payrolls. And this plan sends a strong signal to markets around the world that the United States is serious about restoring confidence and stability to our financial system. Without this rescue plan, the costs to the American economy could be disastrous.

Many Members of Congress contributed important ideas to improve the legislation my administration proposed. I appreciate the negotiators considering those ideas and incorporating them in this agreement.

Members of Congress will vote on this legislation soon. This is a difficult vote, but with the improvements made to the bill, I am confident Congress will do what is best for our economy by approving this legislation promptly.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3997.

Remarks on Economic Stabilization Legislation
September 29, 2008

Good morning. Yesterday leaders here in Washington reached an extraordinary agreement to deal with an extraordinary problem in our economy. Working closely with my administration, congressional leaders from both parties produced the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, a bold bill that will help keep the crisis in our financial system from spreading throughout our economy.

This legislation deals with complex issues, and negotiators were asked to address them in a very short period of time. I appreciate the leadership of Members on both sides of the aisle who came together when our Nation was counting on them. Negotiations are sometimes difficult, but their hard work and cooperation paid off.

The bipartisan economic rescue plan addresses the root cause of the financial crisis, the assets related to home mortgages that have lost value during the housing decline. Under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, the Federal Government will be authorized to purchase these assets from banks and other financial institutions, which will help free them to resume lending to businesses and consumers.

The bill also includes other important ideas put forward by Members of Congress from both parties. For example, the bill requires the establishment of a guarantee program that will insure assets at no cost to the taxpayer. The bill provides strong bipartisan oversight, so Americans can be certain that their tax dollars are used carefully and wisely. The bill ensures that failed executives do not receive a windfall from your tax dollars.

With this strong and decisive legislation, we will help restart the flow of credit so American families can meet their daily needs and American businesses can make purchases, ship goods, and meet their payrolls. We'll make clear that the United States is serious about restoring confidence and stability in our financial system.

I know many Americans are worried about the cost of the bill, and I understand their concern. This bill commits up to 700 billion taxpayer dollars, because a large amount of money is necessary to have an impact on our financial system. However, both the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget expect that the ultimate cost to the taxpayer will be far less than that. In fact, we expect that over time, much, if not all, of the tax dollars we invest will be paid back.

Now that this legislation has been agreed to by leaders of both parties, it must be passed by Houses—both Houses of Congress. And I fully understand that this will be a difficult vote. But with the improvements made to this bill, I'm confident that members of both parties will support it. Congress can send a strong signal to markets at home and abroad by passing this bill promptly. Every Member of Congress and every American should keep in mind:

A vote for this bill is a vote to prevent economic damage to you and your community.

This has been a volatile time for our financial system and our economy. Even with the important steps we're taking to address the current crisis, we will continue to face serious challenges. The impact of the credit crisis and the housing correction will continue to pressure our financial system and impact the growth of our economy for some time. But I'm confident that this rescue plan, along with other measures taken by the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve, will begin to restore strength and stability to America's financial system and overall economy. And I'm confident that in the long run, America will overcome these challenges and remain the most dynamic and productive economy in the world.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:34 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 3997. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the 2007 National Medals of Science and Technology and Innovation
September 29, 2008

Please be seated. Thanks. Welcome. This is a joyous day for the White House as we honor some of our Nation's most gifted and visionary men and women. I congratulate you all on your achievements. I'm looking forward to presenting you with the National Medals of Science and Technology and Innovation. And I welcome your friends, but most importantly, I welcome your family members. We are glad you're here, and thank you for standing by these—by the side of these pioneers and doers and achievers.

I want to thank members of the administration who've joined us, particularly Deputy Secretary John Sullivan; Dr. Arden Bement, Director of the National Science Foundation. I welcome the chairs and members of the 2007 and 2008 nominating committees. These recipients welcome you as well. [*Laughter*] They appreciate your good judgment. [*Laughter*] And I welcome the previous medal recipients who are here. But most of all, thank you all for coming.

You know, it's very interesting that we're having this in the East Room. It turns out that Thomas Jefferson reportedly used this room as a place to lay out his fossils. [*Laughter*] Three hundred fossils and bones were catalogued right here in the East Room, including a tusk of nearly 10 feet. Barney has been looking for that tusk for a long time. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, our history is rich with pioneers and innovators who have used their God-given talents to improve our Nation. After all, it was Benjamin Franklin who invented the bifocals, and you will see his picture hanging here in the White House—or Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone.

Creative men and women are building on the foundation laid by those geniuses, and the same thing is going to happen in the future with the foundation laid by these geniuses. I mean, after all, Franklin's bifocals are giving way to LASIK surgery—[*laughter*]—and Alexander Graham Bell's telephone plays MP3s. [*Laughter*]

We're proud to honor a new generation of people who have strived for excellence, people whose discoveries have changed America and the world. And that's what we're here to honor: discovery and hard work and creative minds.

The men and women we honor here hold more than 100 patents. They are the leaders in business and industry. They public—publish influential books. They chair academic departments in some of our country's finest universities. Our honorees have made breakthroughs in the range of—in a range of fields, including polymer chemistry, neurobiology, condensed matter physics—all a little esoteric for a history major, I might add. [*Laughter*]

Each of our honorees has extended the frontiers of knowledge, and in so doing, they've inspired a wave of innovation. We're an innovative society, and one of the main reasons why is we got very capable people who are willing to use their talents to push for new innovations. The work has helped inspire new medicines to treat diseases, strengthen security in Americans' airports, build new jet engines. They have helped create a global marketplace through a single phrase: "Find it on eBay." [*Laughter*]

Each of these folks up here has earned the appreciation of our country. And one way to express our appreciation is to present a medal, and that's what we're doing.

I do want to thank the members of our academic community for helping youngsters understand the importance of math and science and engineering. Today we've got students from Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Banneker Academic High Schools. And I know that some of the recipients here took time out to inspire, and I hope scientists and mathematicians and engineers all across the country will serve as mentors and role models to encourage young folks to take a serious interest in academics—in the academic of engineering and physics and sciences and biology so that someday another American President will be able to hang a medal around their neck.

All in all, this is an important day for our country, because it reminds people that innovation and science are important for our future and that good education is important for that future as well. I want to thank you all again for your many contributions to our Nation. I want to thank you all for coming to witness this important ceremony.

And now I ask the military aide to read the citations.

[*At this point, Maj. Curtis Buzzard, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania
September 29, 2008

President Bush. I'm honored to welcome my friend the President of Lithuania here to the Oval. Welcome back, Mr. President. I've come to admire your courage, your straightforwardness, and the job you've done for your country.

President Adamkus. Thank you.

President Bush. I have enjoyed working with you on a variety of issues. Lithuania's ascension into NATO is a very important part of our foreign policy, yours and mine. It's important for the people of Lithuania to know that when the United States makes a commitment through, for example, Article 5 of the treaty, we mean it. I'm proud of the alliance we've established and your contribution to that alliance.

We also talked about Georgia-Russia and the need for, you know, democracies to be able to stand on their own feet without

fear of bullying. And you've made some very courageous statements on that issue, and I appreciate that very much.

We talked about energy independence, and you explained to me your situation with your present power and your future strategies. And I want to thank you very much for being forthright with your strategy and understanding that the more independent you are from an energy perspective, the more independent you are from a political perspective. And I thought that was very wise, and we'll try to help you as best as we can.

And finally, our hope and—is that by mid-October, there will be visa waiver granted to the citizens of Lithuania. You've worked hard for that issue, and it's—I think you can take back to your people a very positive report about this very important initiative. And you and your Government deserve a lot of credit for it.

All in all, I've really enjoyed working with you. There's a lot more to do in 4 months, and I plan on doing it. And I know you and I will be, you know, working together. So thank you very much for coming.

President Adamkus. Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to express the gratitude by the entire Lithuanian nation for your constant support, and if that would not be for you, I don't believe we would be the members of NATO and that the entire security question in the region would be at doubt.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Adamkus. Now, we definitely have some problems, like you just indicated with the press, about energy. We're trying to resolve it. Hopefully, we will, with your help. And since we need United States presence more, as I indicated to you, European Union is coming up with own foreign policies and policies for Europe. But without United States presence, definitely that will be job not completed. So I hope that the United States will be visible, just like I ask you if the United States will be more visible in the Baltic region over there, just to show our neighbors that we're definitely not alone.

And we are building the democracy together, not, I mean, by individually, state by state. And all those years I have worked with you here, those over there—memorable, great years. Thank you very much, on behalf of all the Lithuanian people.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine

September 29, 2008

President Bush. I was disappointed in the vote with the United States Congress on the economic rescue plan. We put forth a plan that was big because we got a big problem. I'm going to be talking to my economic advisers after my meeting here with the President, and we'll be working with Members of Congress—leaders of Congress on the way forward. Our strategy is to continue to address this situation—economic situation head on. And we'll be working to develop a strategy that will enable us to continue to move forward.

Mr. President, welcome. I welcome you here to the Oval Office. I admire your steadfast support for democratic values and principles. A lot of Americans have watched with amazement how your country became

a democracy. We strongly support your democracy. We look forward to working with you to strengthen that democracy.

You and I just had a good discussion about a variety of issues. We discussed, you know, the NATO and the membership application process. We discussed energy independence. We discussed ways that we can work together to bring stability and peace to parts of the world. And I thank you for joining us here in Washington in the Oval Office, and I send my respects to the people of Ukraine.

President Yushchenko. First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank for the atmosphere that our negotiations were held in. We had our conversation in a very constructive manner. We touched upon the range of issues, starting from our bilateral relations and the implementation of U.S.-Ukraine action plan. And we consider this roadmap as being implemented in a successful way. A lot of attention was paid to security component and security itself, and a special attention was paid towards Ukraine integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

We raised the issue of energy cooperation, which is a very urgent issue for us. And we believe that we've done excellent job on the adaptation of American nuclear fuel for our nuclear power units, and we intend to continue that.

We also discussed the domestic political situation in Ukraine, which in my opinion is far away from being tragic, and nondramatic. Ukraine has enough democratic resource and tools to give sufficient response to any crisis that may occur in the Ukrainian Parliament. And this is probably where the Ukrainian strength and optimism is.

I also asked Mr. President to delegate the high-ranking delegation from the United States of America to participate in the commemorating events of the great famine in Ukraine of 1932 and 1933. The commemoration day will be on November the 22d, and this will be the commemoration of the biggest humanitarian catastrophe in our country. And we need to do everything for that issue to be included in the UNGA agenda.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Yushchenko. Thank you.

President Bush. You're welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Yushchenko spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah, 5769
September 29, 2008

I send greetings to those celebrating Rosh Hashanah.

On this occasion of spiritual reflection, people of the Jewish faith in our country and around the world recognize the blessings from the Almighty as they commemorate the anniversary of the creation of the world. During this holy time, men and women take time to remember the past, contemplate the sweetness of the new year, and look forward to a promising future.

This special occasion is also an opportunity to celebrate the history of the Jewish people and the values that bind us all together.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a meaningful Rosh Hashanah and L'shanah tovah.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Memorandum on Use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund To Support the Money Market Mutual Fund Guaranty Facility
September 29, 2008

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund to Support the Money Market Mutual Fund Guaranty Facility

Pursuant to section 10(b) of the Gold Reserve Act of 1934, as amended, 31 U.S.C. 5302(b), I approve the use of funds from the Exchange Stabilization Fund as a guaranty facility for certain money market mutual funds, consistent with your recommendation to me and the terms and conditions set out in your memorandum to me dated September 26, 2008. This memorandum supersedes the Presidential Memorandum of September 19, 2008, entitled, "Use of the Department of Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund to Support a Guaranty Facility for Certain Money Market Mutual Funds."

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks on Economic Stabilization Legislation
September 30, 2008

Good morning. Yesterday the House of Representatives voted on a financial rescue plan that had been negotiated by congressional leaders of both parties and my administration. Unfortunately, the measure was defeated by a narrow margin. I'm disappointed by the outcome, but I assure our citizens and citizens around the world that this is not the end of the legislative process.

Producing legislation is complicated, and it can be contentious. It matters little what a path a bill takes to become law; what matters is that we get a law. We're at a critical moment for our economy, and we need legislation that decisively address the troubled assets now clogging the financial system, helps lenders resume the flow of credit to consumers and businesses, and allows the American economy to get moving again.

I recognize this is a difficult vote for Members of Congress. Many of them don't like the fact that our economy has reached this point, and I understand that. But the reality is that we are in an urgent situation, and the consequences will grow worse each day if we do not act. The dramatic drop in the stock market that we saw yesterday will have a direct impact on the retirement accounts, pension funds, and personal savings of millions of our citizens. And if our Nation continues on this course, the economic damage will be painful and lasting.

And I know many Americans are especially worried about the cost of the legislation. The bill the House considered yesterday commits up to 700 billion taxpayer dollars to purchase troubled assets from banks and other financial institutions. That, no question, is a large amount of money. We're also dealing with a large problem. But to put that in perspective, the drop in the stock market yesterday represented more than a trillion dollars in losses.

Furthermore, both the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget expect that the legislation considered would ultimately cost the taxpayer far less than the 700 billion, because the Government would be purchasing troubled assets and selling them

once the market recovers. It is likely that many of the assets would go up in value over time. Ultimately, we expect that much, if not all, of the tax dollars we invest will be paid back.

As much as we might wish the situation were different, our country is not facing a choice between Government action and the smooth functioning of the free market. We're facing a choice between action and the real prospect of economic hardship for millions of Americans. And for the financial security of every American, Congress must act.

My administration will continue to work closely with leaders of both parties on Capitol Hill. I appreciate their determined efforts. While Congress is out today for the Jewish holiday, my administration will be talking to congressional leaders today about how we can move legislation forward when Members begin returning to the Capitol tomorrow. Our economy is depending on decisive action from the Government. The sooner we address the problem, the sooner we can get back on the path of growth and job creation. This is what elected leaders owe the American people, and I am confident we'll deliver.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 3997. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009
September 30, 2008

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2638, the "Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009." The Act, consisting of five divisions, consolidates into a single Act several appropriations bills. It provides through emergency supplemental appropriations additional Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 resources needed for relief and recovery from hurricanes, floods, and other disasters, and other supplemental appropriations.

The Act also includes full-year FY 2009 appropriations for the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security and for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs. Furthermore, the Act provides FY 2009 appropriations to continue operations of the Federal Government through March 6, 2009, for projects and activities not otherwise covered in the full-year bills. This Act lifts the legislative moratoria on oil and gas leasing on significant portions of the Outer Continental Shelf and the prohibition on the completion of regulations for commercial leasing of oil shale, which will allow us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

I am disappointed that the Congress passed a long-term continuing resolution. There is much work to be done, and the Congress should not adjourn for the year without finishing important business on spending, taxes, and free trade agreements.

Finally, this legislation contains certain provisions similar to those found in prior appropriations bills passed by the Congress that might be construed to be inconsistent with my Constitutional responsibilities. To avoid such potential infirmities, the executive branch will interpret and construe such provisions in the same manner as I have

previously stated in regard to similar provisions.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 30, 2008.

NOTE: H.R. 2638, approved September 30, was assigned Public Law No. 110–329.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr
September 30, 2008

I send greetings to Muslims everywhere celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking the Fast.

During the three-day festival of Eid al-Fitr, Muslims celebrate the completion of their fast and the blessings of a renewed faith. On this special occasion, families and friends around the globe gather to share traditional foods and congratulate each other on meeting the test of Ramadan.

Our Nation has millions of citizens who practice Islam, and our country benefits from their many contributions. This holiday is also an opportunity for Muslims to reflect on Islam's vibrant culture, which has enriched civilization for centuries.

Laura and I send our best wishes. Eid Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks Following a Briefing on the Security Situation in Afghanistan
October 1, 2008

I want to thank General McKiernan for giving me a briefing on Afghanistan.

Economic Stabilization Legislation

Before I talk about our visit, I do want to say this: I appreciate Senator Harry Reid's leadership in the United States Senate when it comes to the financial rescue plan. I also appreciate Mitch McConnell's leadership as well. The Senate will be voting on a very important measure tonight. It's a—the rescue plan—the bill has been improved by raising—well, by other things, raising—temporarily raising the cap of—on FDIC insurance.

It's very important for Members to take this bill very seriously. It's important to get credit flowing again so that small businesses in our communities will be able to finance their operations, so that local municipalities will be able to get the money they need to take care of the needs of local citizens, so that States will be able to meet their needs.

It's very important for us to pass this piece of legislation so as to stabilize the situation so that it doesn't get worse and that our fellow citizens lose wealth and work.

The Senate is going to take this bill up tonight. I'm hopeful they'll pass it, and then the House will have a chance to vote on it Friday morning. As I say, the bill is different, it's been improved, and I'm confident it will pass.

General, thank you for coming. I appreciate your service to the country. General McKiernan is briefing me on the situation

in Afghanistan, what he is going to need to make sure that we continue helping this young democracy succeed.

Obviously, this is a situation where there's been progress, and there are difficulties. There's been progress when you consider the fact that millions of young girls go to school that didn't have a chance to go to school before in Afghanistan. That's incredible progress. There's progress when you realize that health care needs are being met for the first time in—around Afghanistan. There's progress when there are roads being built so farmers can get product to market. That's progress.

There's difficulties, of course, because killers can't stand this progress. And the general's job is to work with obviously not only our troops, but the thousands of troops from NATO countries there to provide the security so the progress continues. And there's been some tough fighting, and we honor our American troops who have sacrificed so that Afghanistan never becomes a safe haven again for extremists who would harm our citizens.

We talked about the comprehensive strategy necessary to succeed. I've announced more troops for Afghanistan, and the general, of course, is continuing to assess his needs. But we also must make sure there's a civilian component that runs alongside our military, that there's good governance, and that there's aid programs that are effective and focused on the people of Afghanistan, and that the infrastructure progress continues to be made.

And so I want to thank you for your service; thank you for your candid briefing, General. I want to thank your family as well as all the other families who are standing by the—those who wear the uniform, as this Nation continues to defend her own security and defend young democracies.

General, you and your troops are laying the foundation for peace. You're making a sacrifice today so that future generations of Americans don't have to worry about harm coming from a place like Afghanistan and future generations of Afghans can grow up in a hopeful society. And I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David D. McKiernan, USA, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. He also referred to H.R. 1424.

Statement on Senate Action on Economic Stabilization Legislation
October 1, 2008

I applaud the Senate for its strong bipartisan vote in favor of the financial rescue plan. I especially appreciate the efforts of Majority Leader Harry Reid, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senators Chris Dodd and Judd Gregg, and the senior members of the relevant committees from both parties. They worked across the aisle to make vital improvements to the rescue package I sent Congress last month, including an expansion of deposit insurance that will help protect the savings of American families and small businesses.

The bill the Senate passed is essential to the financial security of every American. It is aimed at helping American families who need to borrow money to buy a car or fund a college education. It is aimed at helping small businesses that depend on financing to meet their payrolls and stock their shelves. And it is aimed at helping State and local governments that rely on

the credit markets to fund basic services and meet the needs of their citizens.

The House will now take up this rescue legislation. With the improvements the Senate has made, I believe members of both parties in the House can support this legislation. The American people expect, and our economy demands, that the House pass this good bill this week and send it to my desk.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 1424.

Statement on Senate Passage of India-United States Nuclear Cooperation and Nonproliferation Legislation
October 1, 2008

I congratulate the Senate on passing the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act, H.R. 7081. In particular, I commend the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for their leadership in crafting this important bipartisan legislation. I also thank Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell for bringing this bill to a vote prior to the Senate's adjournment. This legislation will strengthen our global nuclear nonproliferation efforts, protect the environment, create jobs, and assist India in meeting its growing energy needs in a responsible manner.

I look forward to signing this bill into law and continuing to strengthen the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

Remarks at the 2008 United Service Organizations World Gala
October 1, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you very much. I'm proud to be here on this special night. The USO sure knows how to make a fellow feel at home; after all, that's what you've been doing for six decades. You've been making those who wear our uniform feel at home, providing them a home away from home while they defend our Nation overseas. Through many conflicts across many continents, the USO has formed a warm and loving bond with the men and women who wear our uniform. And you know what I know: They are our finest citizens, and we owe them a debt that can never be repaid.

This job comes with plenty of privileges. I haven't seen a traffic jam in 7¾ years. [*Laughter*] But no perk bestowed on a President is more satisfying than the honorary title of USO. President 41 understands that as well.

I don't know if you know this or not, but my dad and I were not the only members of my family affiliated with the USO. It turns out my grandfather, Senator Prescott S. Bush, was one of the very first chairmen of the USO, and his title wasn't even honorary. [*Laughter*]

During this time of war, I've had the opportunity to witness the USO's good works firsthand. I want to thank you for your commitment to our troops and for your energy and enthusiasm and for your devotion to our wonderful country.

I do want to thank Sloan Gibson for leading this fantastic organization and for the kind introduction. I thank Ned Powell, the outgoing president; Bill Moll, chairman

of USO world board of governors. I thank all the governors for joining tonight and for working for this fantastic organization.

I welcome the Members of Congress—you got a little work to do. [*Laughter*] I do want to congratulate my friend Senator John Warner, who won the Spirit of USO Award—no finer Member of the United States Senate than John Warner.

I am proud to be here with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, and his wife Deborah; the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Jim "Hoss" Cartwright; the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen.

I appreciate the other military leaders, members of the Armed Forces, and their families who are here tonight. I am some kind of proud to be your Commander in Chief.

I had the honor of having my picture taken with the USO award recipients and their families, and I congratulate them on setting such a fine example.

I extend my deepest sympathies and my highest respect to the wounded warriors from Walter Reed and Bethesda who are here tonight. I welcome the members of the diplomatic corps.

And I have taken note of the master of ceremonies—God, I miss you, Sam. [*Laughter*] Well, not really. [*Laughter*]

The USO was established in 1941, as our allies were fighting for their survival against powerful armies driven by toxic ideologies. As Americans heard the approaching thunder of war, we were undertaking every effort to be ready. Young men would soon offer their lives in freedom's defense. And as they deployed to theaters of battle around the world, they could count on the USO to follow.

Once we entered World War II, the newly established USO was given an urgent mission: to coordinate civilian war efforts, enlist communities in the fight, and give our forces all the love, care, and support we could offer. And this was vital to our eventual victory. As General Eisenhower put it, "Morale is the greatest single factor in a successful war." USO centers in thousands of communities were quickly established in churches and storefronts, railroad cars and museums, mansions and yacht clubs. These centers helped families stay in contact with loved ones going off to fight in the war. And the USO enlisted the biggest celebrities of the age to show their support for the troops overseas.

Legendary stars made dangerous treks. Entertainers like Marlene Dietrich, Fred Astaire, Diana [Dinah]* Shore, John Wayne, and many others offered the troops their talents, brought memories of joy—brought moments of joy and laughter and memories of home. Looking back on these war-torn days, a former serviceman once said, "I'll never forget the USO's positive impact during those dark and perilous times." Well, that statement holds a special meaning to me because it was uttered by Navy pilot George H.W. Bush.

Dad's generation was the first to find strength and solace in the USO, but thankfully, it was not the last. The USO has been on duty whenever America has been deployed in conflict. One memorable moment came in the USO's notable history in 1954: Marilyn Monroe interrupted her honeymoon with Joe DiMaggio to perform for the troops in Korea. As she stood before a sea of soldiers, one officer called her the greatest hit the Yankee Clipper ever made. [*Laughter*] One awestruck sergeant who had the privilege of driving her around couldn't help but note that, "In my 14 years of Army driving, this will be the most curves I've ever taken in one car." [*Laughter*] Marilyn Monroe performed in subzero temperatures and became ill as a result, yet she called her visit with the troops the best thing that ever happened to her.

No celebrity is more closely associated with the USO than the man who was first

* White House correction.

introduced to the troops as a relatively unknown radio entertainer. Over the decades, Bob Hope became known to everyone. After a quarter century performing for the USO, he estimated that he had traveled 2 million miles to entertain 11 million troops. He loved every minute of it, including the traveling partners he was able to recruit. As he put it, "How else would I get to travel with Lana Turner, Ann-Margret, and Raquel Welch, and have my wife wish me, 'Bon voyage'?" [*Laughter*]

Bob Hope's love for the troops won America's lasting respect. In 1963, President Kennedy presented him with the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his service to the troops. At the ceremony, Hope told him, "I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it." [*Laughter*] Bob Hope liked to joke about Hollywood's reputation for self-involvement. But the truth is that he took his responsibility to the troops very seriously. He was proud of the chance to make them feel better, at least for a while. And he once said that whenever the troops applauded, it was the best sound in the world.

We may never have an entertainer so closely linked to the USO, but we can be grateful that a new generation of performers is stepping forward to support our men and women in uniform. Some of these generous entertainers are with us tonight. Many of you have gone to dangerous war zones to support our troops. And your love and support has made a world of difference. I think we all know the moment things began to turn around in Iraq: It's when the USO decided to deploy Jessica Simpson. [*Laughter*]

As Commander in Chief, I greatly appreciate all the entertainers supporting the USO. I thank you for what you're doing, and I encourage more to step forward and join you.

And I appreciate the thousands of USO volunteers who are supporting the war effort and lifting morale. These volunteers are providing vital aid to members of America's Armed Forces in service centers around the world. They're helping our troops get in touch with their loved ones back at home. They're easing the burdens on our military families by offering them an open hand and a shoulder to lean on.

To all the supporters of the USO: Our Nation is grateful for your dedication to our men and women in uniform. I join you in prayer for the safety of our troops and the success of their missions. May the USO continue to stand with our troops in times of war, and may we all live to see a world that stands in peace.

Thank you for having me, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:21 p.m. at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sloan D. Gibson IV, president and chief executive officer, USO; Sam Donaldson, correspondent, ABC News, in his capacity as master of ceremonies for the 2008 USO World Gala; entertainers Ann-Margret Olsson, Raquel Welch, and Jessica Simpson.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders on Economic Stabilization

October 2, 2008

I want to thank the job creators who have joined me here today to talk about the state of the economy and the need for the House of Representatives to pass the bill that passed the Senate last night with an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

Our discussion today centered around credit. I know there's a lot of discussions

in the newspapers and on TV about the credit freeze. Well, let me tell you what this means. It means that if you're running a small company and you need to make payroll or you need to make sure you got inventory to be able to sell a product or you want to expand so you can hire somebody, you need to have credit. You need to be able to have money on a regular basis from your local banker.

And the problem is, because people are worried about the future, they're worried the Government won't act, credit is frozen. People aren't lending money from bank to bank, or they're not lending money to our medium- and small-sized businesses.

And that means people's jobs are in jeopardy. And the bill that's before the House of Representatives tomorrow is a bill that has got the best chance of providing liquidity, providing credit, providing money so small businesses and medium-sized businesses can function.

A lot of people are watching the House of Representatives now to determine whether or not they will be able to act positively on a bill that has been improved. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, the insurance for the FDIC goes up to $250,000. That's an improvement to the legislation, not only for banks, but for credit unions as well.

And so I'm talking to people who are, you know, who come from the heartland, that understand what's taking place in our economy today, people who understand that the House of Representatives needs to pass this piece of legislation.

And I want to thank you all for going up and telling these Members of Congress what's on your mind and how this affects your businesses at home and how it affects the communities in which you live. This thing—this issue has gone way beyond New York and Wall Street. This is an issue that's affecting hard-working people. They're worried about their savings; they're worried about their jobs; they're worried about their houses; they're worried about their small businesses. And the House of Representatives must listen to these voices and get this bill passed so we can get about the business of restoring confidence.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 1424. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of General David D. McKiernan as Commander of United States Armed Forces in Afghanistan
October 2, 2008

Today the Senate confirmed General David D. McKiernan as commander of U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. This newly created position and realignment of the command structure provides General McKiernan authority over nearly all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, ensuring greater coordination in operational planning and execution. General McKiernan will continue to serve as commander of the International Security Assistance Force.

General McKiernan's new responsibilities will strengthen both U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan. I congratulate General McKiernan on his confirmation and commend the Senate for its quick action on this important nomination.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of James Jeffrey as United States Ambassador to Turkey
October 2, 2008

I am pleased that the Senate confirmed Jim Jeffrey to be the United States Ambassador to Turkey. Jim is a man of intellect, integrity, and commitment. His work as my Deputy National Security Adviser, as United States Ambassador to Albania, and in three previous assignments to Turkey make him superbly qualified to represent the United States to our friend and NATO ally.

I thank Jim for his continued service to our Nation and congratulate him and his family on today's confirmation.

Message to the Congress Extending the Period of Production of the Naval Petroleum Reserve
October 2, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 7422(c)(2) of title 10, United States Code, I am informing you of my decision to extend the period of production of the Naval Petroleum Reserves for a period of 3 years from April 5, 2009, the expiration date of the currently authorized period of production.

Attached is a copy of the report investigating continued production of the Reserves, consistent with section 7422(c)(2)(B) of title 10. In light of the findings contained in the report, I certify that continued production from the Naval Petroleum Reserves is in the national interest.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 2, 2008.

Remarks on Economic Stabilization Legislation
October 3, 2008

A short time ago, the House of Representatives passed a bill that is essential to helping America's economy weather the financial crisis; the Senate passed the same legislation on Wednesday night. And when Congress sends me the final bill, I'm going to sign it into law.

There were moments this week when some thought the Federal Government could not rise to the challenge. But thanks to the hard work of members of both parties in both Houses—and the spirit of cooperation between Capitol Hill and my administration—we completed this bill in a timely manner. I'm especially grateful for the contributions of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader John Boehner, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Minority Whip Roy Blunt, Chairman Barney Frank, Ranking Member Spencer Bachus.

By coming together on this legislation, we have acted boldly to help prevent the crisis on Wall Street from becoming a crisis in communities across our country. We

have shown the world that the United States of America will stabilize our financial markets and maintain a leading role in the global economy.

A major problem in our financial system is that banks have restricted the flow of credit to businesses and consumers; many of the assets these banks are holding have lost value. The legislation Congress passed today addresses this problem head on by providing a variety of new tools to the Government, such as allowing us to purchase some of the troubled assets and creating a new Government insurance program that will guarantee the value of others. The bill also ensures that these new programs are carried out in a way that protects taxpayers. It prevents failed executives from receiving windfalls from taxpayers' dollars. It establishes a bipartisan board to oversee the plan's implementation.

Taken together, these steps represent decisive action to ease the credit crunch that is now threatening our economy. With a smoother flow of credit, more businesses will be able to stock their shelves and meet their payrolls, more families will be able to get loans for cars and homes and college education, more State and local governments will be able to fund basic services.

The bill includes other provisions to help American consumers and businesses. It includes tax incentives for businesses to invest and create jobs. It temporarily expands Federal insurance for bank and credit union deposits from 100,000 to $250,000, a vital safeguard for consumers and small businesses. It provides families with relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax, which would otherwise increase taxes for 26 million taxpayers by an average of $2,200.

I know some Americans have concerns about this legislation, especially about the Government's role and the bill's cost. As a strong supporter of free enterprise, I believe Government intervention should occur only when necessary. In this situation, action is clearly necessary. And ultimately, the cost to taxpayers will be far less than the initial outlay. See, the Government will purchase troubled assets, and once the market recovers, it is likely that many of the assets will go up in value. And over time, Americans should expect that much, if not all, of the tax dollars we invest will be paid back.

Americans should also expect that it will take some time for this legislation to have its full impact on our economy. Exercising the authorities in this bill in a responsible way will require a careful analysis and deliberation. This will be done as expeditiously as possible, but it cannot be accomplished overnight. We'll take the time necessary to design an effective program that achieves its objectives and does not waste taxpayer dollars.

Our economy continues to face serious challenges. This morning we learned that America lost jobs again in September, disappointing news that underscores the urgency of the bill that Congress passed today. It will take more time and determined effort to get through this difficult period. But with confidence and leadership and bipartisan cooperation, we'll overcome the challenges we face, return our Nation to a path of growth and job creation and long-term economic prosperity.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:03 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–343. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Visit to the Treasury Department
October 3, 2008

The President. I just had the honor of talking to Treasury Department employees. I thanked them for their hard work over the past 6 weeks in dealing with a serious financial crisis.

I do want to thank the Secretary too. Mr. Secretary, you and your team have worked incredibly hard. You've worked with the Congress; you've worked with the financial markets, both domestically and internationally. I know that your people are exhausted in there, and I'm—really appreciate the fact that I'm going to sign a piece of legislation that'll be a part of solving this crisis—an important part of solving the crisis.

And so I just went up to thank people. Sometimes people in Government never get thanked enough for all the hours they keep. And I've got a lot of confidence in you, Mr. Secretary, and your team. And I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by, and looking forward to getting this plan in place. I just told the people in the Rose Garden that, you know, it's complicated, and we're going to make sure that whatever we do is done in a deliberate fashion and one that will be effective and be mindful of the taxpayers. Appreciate serving with you.

Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson, Jr. Thank you very much.

The President. Appreciate serving with you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–343. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address
October 4, 2008

Good morning. This week, Congress passed a bipartisan rescue package to address the instability in America's financial system. This was a difficult vote for many Members of the House and Senate, but voting for it was the right choice for America's economy and for taxpayers like you. I appreciate their efforts to help stop the crisis in our financial markets from spreading to our entire economy. And I appreciate their willingness to work across party lines in the midst of an election season.

The legislation Congress passed provides the necessary tools to address the underlying problem in our financial system. The root of this problem is that, as assets that banks hold have lost value, their ability to provide credit has been restricted, making it more difficult for businesses and consumers to obtain affordable loans.

Without decisive action, this credit crunch threatens to harm our entire economy. With this legislation, the Federal Government can help banks and other financial institutions resume lending. This will allow them to continue providing the capital that is essential to creating jobs, financing college educations, and helping American families meet their daily needs.

Though the $700 billion dedicated to this plan is a large amount, the final cost to taxpayers will actually be much lower. Many of the assets that the Government

will be purchasing still have significant underlying value. As time passes, they will likely go up in price. And this means that the Government should eventually be able to recoup much, if not all, of the original expenditure.

This package will also increase the safety of Americans' personal finances. For 75 years, the FDIC has provided insurance for savings accounts, checking accounts, and certificates of deposit. A similar insurance program is in effect for deposits in credit unions. And since these programs were instituted, no one has ever lost a penny on an insured deposit. The rescue package expands this protection by temporarily increasing the amount insured by the Federal Government in banks and credit unions from $100,000 to $250,000. These steps should reassure Americans, especially small-business owners, that their money is safe, and it should restore confidence in the health of our banking system.

In addition to addressing the immediate needs of our financial system, this package will also help to spur America's long-term economic growth. This week, we learned that our Nation lost more jobs in September. Under these circumstances, it is essential for the Government to reduce the burdens on workers and business owners. And that is why the rescue package includes relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax, which would otherwise increase taxes for 26 million taxpayers by an average of $2,200. And that is why it includes tax relief for businesses, which can use these savings to hire new employees and finance new investment.

By taking all these steps, we can begin to put our economy on the road to recovery. While these efforts will be effective, they will also take time to implement. My administration will move as quickly as possible, but the benefits of this package will not all be felt immediately. The Federal Government will undertake this rescue plan at a careful and deliberate pace to ensure that your tax dollars are spent wisely.

I know many of you listening this morning are anxious about the state of our economy and what it means for your personal finances. I am confident that the implementation of this relief package can begin to address those concerns. I'm confident by getting our markets moving, we will help unleash the key to our continued economic success, the entrepreneurial spirit of the American people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on October 3 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 4. In the address, the President referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–343. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 3, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in Midland, Texas
October 4, 2008

It's an amazing experience to come back to a place where you were raised. Laura was raised in Midland; I was raised in Midland. I was—this is one of the three homes I lived in, and I kind of remember it. [*Laughter*] The bedroom—actually, I do remember the wood on the wall that—in the bedroom.

You know, I love Midland and Texas. We've got a lot of friends here. I learned

a lot of values that I hold dear here. It's good to see mom's—Laura's mom here. And it's the first time I've been back here since I've been the President, and it was just a very heartwarming experience.

You know, I've told my friends here, I said, you know, I'm not going to change as a person because of politics of Washington—that's what I said when I left. And I think they appreciate that. I want them to know that, you know, even though I had to deal with a lot of tough issues, that I'm still the same person that they knew before, and that, you know, I'm wiser, more experienced, but my heart and my values didn't change.

And so it's great to see our friends. You know, we got a couple more hard months to go, and obviously we've got to deal with this financial situation. Congress took a big step in the direction of at least giving us the tools necessary to bring some stability into the marketplace. Got to get credit flowing of course so that people feel comfortable about conducting business. And so it's—there's a lot of work to be done. But it's—in the meantime, it's good to come back here to where it all started for us.

Anyway, thank you all. You're welcome to pay the fee to go in and see the house. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m at the George W. Bush Childhood Home Presidential site. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Jenna Welch.

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in San Antonio, Texas
October 6, 2008

It's nice to be here in San Antonio. I've just had a very illuminating conversation with small-business owners here. We have a car dealer, a automobile repair shop, a restauranteurs—two restauranteurs. And it's clear that these small-business owners are dealing with the effects of a credit crunch. And by that I mean that they're having trouble getting money to be able to continue to either expand their business or to be able to—money to help their consumers be able to buy their products. And it's—and I told them one of the reasons why, you know, I was so strongly for this rescue package was, inherent in the strategy of the rescue package is to free up credit, is to get money moving.

And it's going to take a while. I signed the bill on—last week, but it's going to take a while to get in place a program that, one, is effective; two, that doesn't waste taxpayers' money. We don't want to rush into this situation and not have the program be effective. It's going to take a while to restore confidence in the financial system. But one thing people can be certain of is that the bill I signed is a big step toward solving this problem.

A lot of people here in Texas and around the country are not pleased with the Government having to take the steps they took. Their question is, "I pay my bills, I pay my mortgage, why are you helping Wall Street?" And the answer is because had we not done anything, people like the folks behind me would be a lot worse off. We will make sure, as time goes on, this doesn't happen again. In the meantime, we got to solve the problem. And that's why people sent me to Washington, DC. When you see a problem, put a team together and solve it.

And I want to thank you all for your time. I'm glad to be back here in Texas. I miss my friends in Texas. I am—you know, people say, "Are you looking forward to coming home?" Yes, I'm looking forward to living here, but in the meantime, it looks

like I'm going to have a lot of work to do between today and when the new President takes office. But Laura and I are glad to be with our friends, and thank you for your time. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. at Olmos Pharmacy. In his remarks, he referred to Betty Garza, owner, Olmos Pharmacy.

Remarks to the Cincinnati Chapter of the Federalist Society in Cincinnati, Ohio

October 6, 2008

Thank you very much. Peter, thank you very much for the introduction and the invitation.

Laura and I are thrilled to be with you. We have just come from Texas. I spent this morning in San Antonio with some small-business owners. They were rightly concerned about our economy and their ability to get credit. They were wondering about a man they know who believes strongly in free markets and wondering why I promoted a significant piece of legislation to deal with what I believe and others believe is a significant problem, and that is the inability of credit to move as freely as we want.

And I told them, if I thought that the problem would be contained only to Wall Street, I would have taken a particular point of view, but I told them I was concerned about them—just like I'm concerned about you—and therefore proposed with the Congress a big rescue plan to deal with a big problem.

I believe that this plan will work over time. I signed the bill on Friday. It's going to take time for the Treasury Department to put a plan in place that won't waste your money and that will achieve the objective.

I believe in the long run this economy is going to be just fine. It's a resilient economy; it's a productive economy with good workers. This is a reminder that we have been through tough times before, and we're going to come through this just fine. And so I'm telling my fellow citizens, like the three people I had coffee with there in San Antonio, that this plan is big for a reason. And the plan is going to take time to implement. And I—in the meantime, I told them to keep selling their products and working hard.

So I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about judges, but before I did so I wanted to share with you my morning. And I'm sure you hear the same thing; people are just wondering, are these banks going to freeze up? And my answer is, we got a plan to deal with it.

And we got a plan to deal with judges too. It's something I've been implementing for 7½ years. And so today I want to thank Peter and Chip Miller—happens to be the president of the Cincinnati lawyers chapter of the mighty Federalist Society; Fred Finks, the president of Ashland University; Gene Meyer, the president of the Federalist Society, for giving me a chance to come and talk about the judiciary.

I appreciate Ed Meese, former Attorney General, for joining us; Paul Clement. The former secretary of State of Ohio—thanks for coming, Mr. Secretary. And thank you all. I understand there are members of the Federalist Society who are viewing this program from afar, over the Internet. So we welcome you via the wonders of modern technology.

Before Oliver Wendell Holmes took his seat on the Supreme Court, he met a supporter who wished him well in his new duties. The supporter expressed satisfaction that Holmes would be going to Washington to administer justice. Holmes replied, "Don't be too sure. I'm going there to administer the law." Holmes was trying to make clear what he believed was the proper role of judges: to apply the laws as written and not to advance their own agendas. He knew that it was up to elected officials, not appointed judges, to represent the popular will.

Our Founders gave the judicial branch enormous power. It's the only branch of Government whose officers are unelected. That means judges on the Federal bench must exercise their power prudently, cautiously, or some might even say, conservatively. [*Laughter*] And that means that the selection and confirmation of good judges should be a high priority for every citizen.

We've seen the profound impact that judges can have on the daily lives of every citizen. We saw the power of judges in 2002, when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals declared the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional because it contained the words "under God."

We saw the power of judges in the *Kelo* decision, a 5–4 majority of the Supreme Court that ruled that governments could seize people's homes for private development. The government decided the seizure was for the greater good.

We saw the power of judges in *Boumediene* v. *Bush*. There, a 5–4 majority rejected the carefully crafted procedures Congress established for detainees held at Guantanamo Bay in response to a prior Supreme Court decision. And for the first time, the Court awarded foreign terrorists held overseas legal rights previously reserved for American citizens.

Recently we've also seen the important role of judges in the rulings of a very different 5–4 majority. We saw this last year, when five members of the Supreme Court upheld a law banning the grisly practice of partial-birth abortion. We saw it again this June, when that same slender majority stood up for the plain meaning of our Constitution and upheld the rights of citizens under the Second Amendment.

The lesson should be clear to every American: Judges matter. And that means the selection of good judges should be a priority for all of us. I appreciate that many people listening today and here in this room have worked hard to recruit more Americans to this cause. This work is in all our interests, but the truth of the matter is, the belief in judicial restraint is shared by the vast majority of American citizens.

A lot has happened since 2000, yet I can still remember the heated debate over the kinds of judges Presidents should appoint. One group said that judges ought to look at the Constitution as a document that grows with our country and our history. This concept of a living Constitution gives unelected judges wide latitude in creating new laws and policies without accountability to the people.

And then there was another side, which I happened to be a part of, that said we needed judges who believed that the Constitution means what it says. When asked if I had any idea in mind of the kinds of judges I would appoint, I clearly remember saying, "I do." That would be Judges Scalia and Thomas.

Judge Scalia recently gave an interview on the TV show "60 Minutes." I don't know if you're supposed to call it a TV show, kind of—[*laughter*]—newsworthy show. [*Laughter*] He talked about the schoolchildren who visit the Supreme Court and proudly recite what they had been taught about the living Constitution. Judge Scalia noted that he usually had the sad duty of telling the children that the Constitution was never alive. [*Laughter*] He believed, as I do and many in this hall believe, that the Constitution is not a living document, it is an enduring document, and good judges know the difference.

And I made a promise to the American people during the campaign that if I was fortunate enough to be elected, my administration would seek out judicial nominees who follow that philosophy. We would search from a diverse array of candidates and nominate those who met the highest standards of competence. We would not impose any litmus tests concerning particular issues or cases. Instead, we would seek judges who would faithfully interpret the Constitution and not use the courts to invent laws or dictate social policy. And with your support, we have kept that pledge. I have appointed more than one-third of all the judges now sitting on the Federal bench, and these men and women are jurists of the highest caliber, with an abiding belief in the sanctity of our Constitution.

The judicial philosophy that I brought to Washington, DC, is demonstrated most clearly by the—some of the judges I have named to the bench—matter of fact, all the judges I've named to the bench. [*Laughter*] One of them is the son of an Italian American—schoolteachers from Trenton, New Jersey. He graduated from Princeton and Yale Law. He worked in Ronald Reagan's Justice Department, was the U.S. Attorney for New Jersey, and served as a distinguished circuit court judge. When I announced his nomination, this good man was hailed by Democrats and Republicans alike for his keen mind and impeccable credentials. And America is well served by the 110th Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Samuel A. Alito.

And serving with Justice Alito on the High Court is the former captain of a high school football team who worked summers in the steel mill to help pay for college. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in just 3 years and was managing editor of the Harvard Law Review. He later clerked for William H. Rehnquist, the man he would replace as Chief Justice. At his confirmation hearing, this outstanding jurist put his philosophy this way: "Judges are like umpires. Umpires don't make the rules, they apply them. It is a limited role. Nobody ever went to a ball game to see the umpire." I was very proud to nominate for the Supreme Court a really decent man and a man of good judgment, and that would be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Roberts.

Chief Justice Roberts was so obviously well qualified that he received overwhelming support from Members of the Senate, including many Senators generally considered to be well left of center.

Unfortunately, the broad, bipartisan, and timely support for Chief Justice Roberts has increasingly become the exception. Over the years, the advice and consent clause of our Constitution has been subjected to serious abuse. Members of the Senate seem to embrace the advice part; it's the consent part that seems to be the problem.

Perhaps the best demonstration of this problem is the story of Miguel Estrada. Miguel was one of my first nominees to the courts, and he had an inspiring personal history. He was an immigrant from Latin America who came to the United States with little knowledge of English. He came to live the dream. He studied hard, and he worked hard, and he made his way to Columbia Law School and then Harvard Law School. He was a Supreme Court clerk. He prosecuted crimes in the U.S. attorney's office in New York, and he served in the Justice Department under President Bill Clinton.

When Miguel Estrada was nominated for a seat on the DC Circuit Court, he received a unanimous well-qualified rating from the American Bar Association. Yet for more than 2 years, he awaited a simple up-or-down vote in the United States Senate; he never got one. For the first time in history, the Senate used a filibuster to block a nominee to the Court of Appeals. This fine American endured years of delay; he had his character unfairly attacked and

ultimately withdrew his name from consideration, all because a minority of Senators thought they would not like his rulings on the bench and worried that a President might one day elevate him to the Supreme Court.

Miguel Estrada deserved better. He deserved a more dignified treatment from the United States Senate. And the American people deserve better behavior from those they send to represent them in Washington, DC.

Unfortunately, Miguel Estrada's experience is not an isolated one. Many other well-qualified nominees have endured uncertainty and withering attacks on their character simply because they've accepted the call to public service. Those waiting in limbo include Peter Keisler for the DC Circuit Court, Rod Rosenstein for the Fourth Circuit, and dozens of other nominees to district and circuit courts across this country.

Some of these nominees waiting for a simple up-or-down vote would fill court vacancies that have been designated judicial emergencies. While these vacancies remain unfulfilled—unfilled, legal disputes are left unresolved, the backlog of cases grows larger, and the rule of law is delayed for millions of Americans.

The broken confirmation process has other consequences that Americans never see. Lawyers approached about being nominated will often politely decline because of the uncertainty and delay and ruthlessness that now characterizes the confirmation process. Some worry about the impact a nomination might have on their children, who would hear their dad or mom's name dragged through the political mud. This situation is unacceptable, and it's bad for our country. A judicial nomination should be a moment of pride for nominees and their families, not the beginning of an ugly battle. And the confirmation process should befit the greatest democracy in the world and not look like a bad episode of "Survivor." [*Laughter*]

It is clear we need to improve the process for confirming qualified judicial nominees. This process will always be somewhat contentious. But there are a few things that the American people expect us to agree on.

First, the American people expect nominees and their families to be treated with dignity. Nominees should not have to wait years for the up-or-down vote that the Senate owes them.

The American people expect their elected officials to do the job of screening judicial nominees. We should not cede to any one legal association the exclusive power to veto a nominee before he or she can make their case to Members of the Senate.

The American people expect the nomination process to be as free of partisanship as possible and for Senators to rive [rise]* above tricks and gimmicks designed to thwart nominees. For example, Senators have invented a new rule that bans the election-year confirmation of anyone not considered a consensus nominee, with consensus defined as only the nominees they happen to choose. In the end, the people hurt most by these partisan maneuvers are the American people. And that is not what our Founders intended, and Presidents and Senators from both parties ought to say so.

In Washington, it can be easy to get caught up in the politics of the moment. Yet if we do not act to improve the confirmation process, those who are today deploying harmful tactics and maneuvers to thwart nominees will sooner or later find the tables turned. There are things more important, even in Washington, than politics as usual.

Next month, the Senate will hold a lame duck session to finish their legislative business for the year. One item that should be at the top of their agenda is a long list of qualified judicial nominees still waiting for Senate action. If Democrats truly

* White House correction.

seek a more productive and cooperative relationship in Washington, then they have a perfect opportunity to prove it, by giving these nominees the up-or-down vote they deserve.

Our democracy requires us to come together and to get things done for the citizens of this great republic. I'm confident we can do that. And I'm grateful that there are dedicated people like you all who are working so hard to help us put good judges on the courts and, equally important, to help invest the American people in the process.

I salute you for your good work. Appreciate the chance to come and visit with you. May God bless you, and may God bless the American people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Peter W. Schramm, executive director, Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs, Ashland University, who introduced the President; former U.S. Solicitor General Paul D. Clement; and former Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell. He also referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110–343. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 United States Summer Olympic and Paralympic Teams
October 7, 2008

The President. Thank you. Welcome. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. This is a special day for the White House. Laura and I are proud to welcome the greatest Olympic and Paralympic team ever assembled. And I bring greetings from the honorary captain of the Olympic teams, President George H.W. Bush; we call him 41.

I want to thank the members of the Cabinet who are here and the administration. I want to thank the coaches and the team leaders, and the U.S. Olympic Committee leadership and staff for being here. We welcome the representatives of Chicago 2016 who are here. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, moms, dads, girlfriends, boyfriends, supporters of the mighty Olympic team, we're glad you're here.

I do want to welcome members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports——

Audience member. Whoo! [*Laughter*]

The President. ——including John Burke, the Chairman; Dot Richardson, the Vice Chairman—by the way, member of the 1996 and 2000 U.S. Olympic gold medal softball teams. And the reason I want to mention them is today the Health and Human Services is issuing its Physical Fitness Guidelines, and there's no better time to remind our fellow citizens that physical fitness will lead to a healthy America. Just look what's happened to the people surrounding me. [*Laughter*] And so we urge our fellow citizens to look at these guidelines and to take time out of your days to exercise. Now, not every one of you has to ride a mountain bike, but if you walk just 20 minutes a day, you'll help America and help yourself.

Attending the Beijing Olympics was one of the great experiences of our lifetime. Laura and I had a fantastic experience. We will never forget the first night at the Bird's Nest for the spectacular opening ceremony. When the Team USA was announced, there was a notable increase in the cheers.

And then came the greatest sight of all: more than 500 America's—of America's finest athletes marching behind our flag, carried by Bernard Lagat [Lopez Lomong]. It was an incredible sight, and I know it was a moment that all of our athletes looked forward to, and it's a moment that we were so honored to share with you.

In the weeks that followed, our Olympic team took part in the largest games ever held. Over 100,000 [10,000] * athletes competed in more than 300 events. An unprecedented 87 countries brought home medals. Forty-three world records were broken. About 4.7 billion viewers watched the Olympics.

And with the eyes of the world turned on Beijing, our teams rose to the occasion. The Olympic team finished with the top medal count of 110 medals.

But more impressive was the decency and character that these Olympics brought on the world stage. I know you worked hard—the Olympics and Paralympic teams worked hard to get to this moment. Whether you won a medal or not, it really doesn't matter in the long run. What really matters is the honor you brought to your sports and to your families and to your country.

And we thank you for the lasting memories that you gave us all. And so here are some of the lasting memories that I will take with me forever. First of all, the Water Cube—watching Jason Lezak touch out, I think it was the French team—[*laughter*]—on the 4x100 freestyle relay, and then watching the joy of his teammates, including Michael Phelps.

People say, "Did you ever get to meet Michael Phelps?" I said, "I did." "So that was the highlight?" I said, "Not really; meeting his mother was more of a highlight." [*Laughter*] She reminded me of my mother—plain-spoken and full of love.

So, Michael, we congratulate you. We thank you for joining us today, and we congratulate all the swimmers for the Olympic team.

And how about our gymnasts, Nastia Liukin and Shawn Johnson? What I found interesting was that these champions were roommates while they were competing for gold. And one wonders whether or not that friendship would be damaged in the heat of the competition. The truth of the matter is, it wasn't. They showed the true Olympic spirit of being competitors in the gym but being friends in the dorm. And so we welcome these two champions here today, and we thank you for setting such a good example.

So, as you know, I'm a baseball guy and have come to admire women's softball a lot.

Audience member. Whoo!

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] So I know with us today are Finch, Duran, Abbott, Galindo, Lappin, Lowe, Berg, and Watley, members of the U.S. Olympic women's softball team.

I bring this up because I really think that these women are an inspiration to young girls all across the globe, and the Olympics would be smart to keep women's softball as a part of its program. And I want to thank you for welcoming to your practice.

I also want to welcome today a fellow Texan named Laura Wilkinson. And at Sydney, she stunned the world by taking gold. This summer, she returned to the Olympic stage for the third and final time, and she was fighting through injuries. But she brought such class to the arena. There was never any of this, "woe is me, how pitiful is life." She said she was honored to compete. She and her husband have returned home to the great State of Texas to raise money for a new diving center in The Woodlands, Texas. In other words, she had put something back into the community. And I urge all of us, whether we're Olympic—Olympians or not, to recognize the opportunity to make the communities in

* White House correction.

which we live a better place. Laura, welcome, and thank you for the example you have set.

So I spent a little time at the beach volleyball arena. [*Laughter*] I got to meet Todd Rogers and Phil Dalhausser. These two men are incredible athletes, and they—it was really interesting to be there to watch them warm up. And then they introduced me to the Brazilian team and to the Italian team. And it was really a lot of fun, but not nearly as much fun as spending time with Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh. [*Laughter*]

These two women are not only great athletes, they're really great people. And I'm just so sorry that Misty May got injured on Dancing for the Stars. [*Laughter*] God, if only she had me as a partner, you know? [*Laughter*] Except I can't dance. [*Laughter*] But I wish those—you know, it's interesting, I read a comment from Misty May today. She said, "Yes, I got hurt Dancing on the Stars, but I'll be back at the 2012 Olympics." [*Laughter*]

I also know that all of us were deeply touched by what happened to Hugh McCutcheon and his family. Nevertheless, we were greatly inspired when the men's volleyball team rallied. They won an incredible gold medal against all odds to really help lift up the coach's family and his spirits, as well as the whole Nation's spirits.

I congratulate the men and women's basketball teams. You can just imagine what it was like when the men's basketball team asked me to get in one of their huddles right before the game against China. I was like a jockey. [*Laughter*] But they brought a lot of class to the courts, both teams did. What impressed me and Laura was that the men were there cheering on the women, and the women were there cheering on the men. There was ample opportunity for people to "big shot" it at the Olympics. Not our athletes. They were there for the right reason, to support their teams and to support their nations—our Nation.

Now, one of the things that we really regret missing was the—being in the Bird's Nest for the 13th Paralympic Games. And we congratulate the athletes who are here as well. We recognize your hard work, and we're proud to call you Olympians.

I'm particularly pleased to be here with those who have worn the uniform of our country. On the America team were 16 men and women who served the Nation in uniform, one of whom was Army Lieutenant Melissa Stockwell. She lost her leg while serving our country in Iraq. Four years after hard work, 4 years after significant rehabilitation, she qualified as a swimmer. And her teammates elected her as the flag bearer for the closing ceremonies. We welcome you, Melissa, and we welcome you all.

Long after we leave the White House, Laura and I will remember the extraordinary spirit and kindness of the athletes that we have met here at the White House and in Beijing. One unforgettable moment came after swimmer Larsen Jensen won the bronze medal in the 400 freestyle relay. When he was presented his bouquet of flowers, he looked around the Water Cube, and he made a special delivery; he climbed into the stands, and he gave the bouquet to Laura. It was an incredibly kind gesture—and by the way, Larsen, our anniversary is next month if you'd like to go—[*laughter*]. He also told me something in private, where he said he looks forward to serving our country.

Our Olympic athletes have served our country in many ways. But you have a chance to continue to serve. And we honor your service as athletes, and we look forward to honoring your service as worthy citizens of our great country.

You amazed the world with your talent and grace and sportsmanship. You've inspired children to chase their dreams. You will be champions forever. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the following members of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams: runner Bernard Lagat; runner Lopez Lomong, in his capacity as flag bearer for the Olympic opening ceremony; swimmers Jason Lezak, Michael Phelps, and Larsen Jensen; gymnasts Nastia Liukin and Shawn Johnson; women's softball players Jennie Finch, Andrea Duran, Monica Abbott, Vicky Galindo, Lauren Lappin, Caitlin Lowe, Laura Berg, and Natasha Watley; diver Laura Wilkinson; men's beach volleyball players Todd Rogers and Philip Dalhausser; women's beach volleyball players Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh; men's volleyball head coach Hugh McCutcheon; and swimmer Melissa Stockwell, in her capacity as flag bearer for the Paralympic closing ceremony. He also referred to Deborah Phelps, mother of Michael Phelps; and Eriek Hulseman, husband of Laura Wilkinson.

Remarks on the National Economy and a Question-and-Answer Session in Chantilly, Virginia
October 7, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Thank you very much. David, thank you for the introduction, and thank you for the warm welcome. I'm pleased to be here at Guernsey Office Products. I want to thank all of you all for working hard to make this visit as comfortable as it is. It's not easy to host the President; I understand. [*Laughter*] But thank you very much, David, for being an entrepreneur, a dreamer, a doer, and for providing people stable work.

It's interesting to know that Guernsey is a trusted name throughout the Washington area. You sell everything from office supplies to coffee products to furnishings. David's a good marketer. He said, "Listen, I understand you're going to be retiring here pretty soon." [*Laughter*] "Do you need some furniture in your new digs in Texas?" [*Laughter*]

I met David at the White House earlier, and I—it was my honor to welcome him to the White House compound. And I appreciate you welcoming me here to your business.

I know that small businesses like Guernsey around the Nation are feeling the impact of the financial crisis. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit with you about what the Government is going to do, how we're going to address the challenge, and how we're going to get this economy back on track.

There's no doubt that people from all walks of life and all aspects understand that we're having serious times. Families are squeezed by the high price of gasoline and feeling the pinch of food prices and monthly mortgage payments. Workers are anxious about whether their paychecks will stretch. Some workers are anxious about whether or not they're going to keep their jobs.

We also know that we're the most dynamic economy in the world, that we have been through tough times before, and that we're going to come through this time again. Our entrepreneurial system has delivered unparalleled levels of productivity and growth and prosperity. During my Presidency, we have faced tough times after the terrorist attack of 9/11, and we came through strongly. And we're going to come through this. No question, the times are tough, but no question, America will emerge. And yet we got some work to do, and that's what I want to share with you.

The immediate challenge facing the economy is a lack of credit. The problem

became clear when the housing market declined and complex financial assets related to home mortgages dropped in value. People put together securities based upon mortgages, and when the mortgages' value went down, so did those securities. And this led banks that owned the securities to suffer losses. And then they found themselves short on capital. Some banks have failed. And other banks, in reaction, have restricted lending to businesses and to each other. And that's the definition of a credit crunch: People just are not lending.

Nations around the world, especially in Europe, are facing severe credit shortages of their own. So this isn't a problem just in the United States; it's a problem that is worldwide.

To some people, the credit crunch might sound just simply like technical talk; it's a technical matter. But the people who work in Guernsey, you understand that credit is the fuel that drives economic expansion and job creation. And here's how. See, when credit runs dry in one part of our economy, there's a chain reaction. So you want to sell a desk to somebody. That person needs to borrow the money in the short term to buy the desk. And yet because the credit has tightened, because of some banks aren't lending, a potential customer doesn't have the money to buy your desk, and that affects you. So a lot of the talk that you're hearing about credit crunches applies directly to your business here at Guernsey. It hurts your suppliers; it affects the entire economy.

Similar stories play out not only in businesses like Guernsey, but all across the economy. And if the credit crunch were allowed to worsen, the outcome would become much worse, with widespread job losses, and this country could be in a—possibly a painful and deep recession.

So I decided to do something about it. As you know, I'm a market-oriented person. I believe markets ought to be allowed to work, until I was convinced that this time the Government needed to act and needed to act boldly in the face of a significant problem. So I went to Congress, and I asked Congress to pass a rescue package. And there were some tough moments in the negotiations, as you might remember. Nevertheless, Republicans and Democrats did come together to pass a good bill that will enable us to handle this challenge head on.

Now, the plan will provide the Government a range of tools to help banks rebuild capital, for example, so they can help move credit that will enable people to buy your desks, that it will make it more likely people are going to have less job insecurity. When you're building desks and selling desks, you find work, and you keep work.

The bill ensures that responsible, hard-working Americans are protected. I mean, one thing is for certain: We don't want your money to reward failed executives. There's oversight as the bill gets implemented. In other words, people in Washington will worry whether there's too much power in the Treasury; therefore, let's have reasonable oversight. And I agree. I think that makes a lot of sense.

It temporarily expands Federal insurance; bank and credit union deposits of up to $250,000. That's important. In essence, it's a safeguard for a lot of small businesses and a lot of families. In other words, if you've got cash in a bank of up to $250,000, it's safe. The FDIC has never failed to make good on its promise, and it won't fail to make good on its promise.

And these are urgently needed steps. They will help bring stability to the volatile markets. They'll help protect 401(k)s and retirement accounts. And as the markets begin to stabilize, it will help markets overseas.

I have been in close contact with European leaders—I was on the phone with them this morning—to ensure that our actions are closely coordinated. We live in a globalized world. We want to make sure that we're effective at what we do. Once we made the decision that there is a role

for the Federal Government to move to stabilize the markets, we want to make sure that all of us move in the best coordinated way as possible.

Interestingly enough, the finance ministers from the G–7 and other leading nations will be here in Washington this weekend to make sure that the response is coordinated.

It's going to take time for these actions that I've described to you in the bill to have full effect. You want to make sure that when we move, we move effectively. You want to make sure that the plan is well thought out and well delivered. Thawing the freeze in the financial system is not going to happen overnight, but it will be a process that unfolds over several stages. And obviously, the first stage began last Friday, when I signed the rescue package into law.

And so the Treasury Department is moving aggressively to implement the new authorities. In the meantime, the Federal Reserve and the FDIC will use their powers to help stabilize the markets. Just this morning, the Federal Reserve announced action to provide additional liquidity to credit markets. The Federal Government moved—Federal Reserve moved to try to free up liquidity so that this credit crisis begins to unwind.

A few weeks from now, the main elements of the new legislation will begin to kick into gear. And as banks rebuild their capital, they'll be able to increase lending to each other and begin approving new loans for families and businesses. It's not going to happen all at once; it will be a gradual process, and it's going to take time to have its full effect.

As the banking sector and the market for troubled assets recover, the Government will begin to recoup some of the taxpayers' funds invested in the recovery. In other words, some of these assets that were taken are at a depressed value. Homeownership—homeowners—home prices are down, the value of the assets are down. Eventually, we expect that much, if not all, of the tax dollars will be recouped.

The financial troubles are the most urgent challenges facing our economy today, but they're not the only ones. And we'll spend a little time talking about them, and then I'll be glad to answer some questions, if you have any.

One pressing concern is obviously the cost of energy. The cost of energy affects families, but it affects businesses as well, like Guernsey, which rely on energy to ship and make your products. High energy costs obviously are attributable to the high price of oil and natural gas. And that's why this administration, in working with Congress, has dramatically expanded funding for research into alternatives, including hybrid car batteries, fuels like ethanol and biodiesel, solar and wind power, and safe and nuclear power—safe and clean nuclear power.

The rescue package I signed last week extended tax incentives to alternative energy sources. In other words, the rescue package was just not aimed at dealing with the financial issues; it was aimed at dealing with the energy issues too, to help encourage alternative energy so we become less dependent on foreign oil. However, in the meantime, we need to be drilling. I mean, I'd rather us drill here than send our money overseas. And we can do so in environmentally friendly ways. Congress responded to the will of the people by lifting the ban on offshore energy exploration, which is good. It's going to take a while to go through all the permitting and all the environmental regulations, but nevertheless, a step was—a positive step was taken to become less dependent on foreign oil.

Another issue is home foreclosures, and there's a smart way to deal with that. The truth of the matter is, people—some people bought homes far beyond their means. Some people bought homes to simply speculate. But there's also a lot of sensible homeowners who can make mends—ends

meet with just a little bit of help, and that's what we want. We want people—to help people stay in their homes. And so we've created what's called HOPE NOW, which brings together homeowners, lenders, mortgage servicers, and others to find ways to prevent foreclosures, to help people work through the current mortgage issues.

I told you that mortgages were bundled up into securities that banks bought, and as those securities went down in value, it affected the banks' balance sheets. Well, interestingly enough, when you securitize mortgages and sell them, it means that the people who originated your mortgage is—no longer owns the paper. And so a lot of people say: "Who can I talk to to help me refinance my home? Where do I go?" And so the HOPE NOW allowance—Alliance is an opportunity to say to folks, here's how you can find the ways to renegotiate your paper—renegotiate your note. And it's working.

And by the way, we got another initiative out of the Federal Housing Administration, and all these programs have so far helped more than 2 million Americans stay in their homes. In other words, there's an ongoing attempt to help people who need just a little help to be able to pay off their mortgages. And by the way, most people are paying off their mortgages, which ultimately means these mortgage-backed securities, the value that we may end up owning will be recouped. And that's why I say there's a good chance the taxpayers will get their money back.

Every American knows the burden of taxes during the tough economic time, that burden that falls especially hard. A lot of people are wondering whether or not their taxes are going to go up. One of the interesting things about the package I signed is that it does prevent the Alternative Minimum Tax from kicking in, which would have cost 26 million Americans $2,200 apiece. During this economic uncertainty, we don't need to be raising taxes.

And so the bill was more than just the rescue plan. The bill helped deal with Alternative Minimum Tax that would have kicked in, that would have affected a lot of you in this room. And the truth of the matter is, I think Congress ought to send a signal when they come back next year and say, look, we're going to make all the tax relief we passed permanent, so there's not any doubt in anybody's mind.

Finally, we need to deal with exports. A bright spot in the economy has been that we've exported a lot of goods overseas. People are buying our products. They should; we make great products, and we got great workers. Last year, about half of our growth was attributable to exports, and so it makes sense for Congress to continue to open up markets in places like Colombia or Panama or South Korea. Take Colombia, for example. Most of their goods come into our economy duty free, and yet our goods are taxed in Colombia. I can't understand why Congress wouldn't want to at least level the playing field for our workers, to simply send them a message: Treat us the way we treat you. That's all we want. Give us a fair chance so we can export our goods.

Exports are a very important part of our economy, and Congress ought to work hard to expand markets. We'll work through this. We're taking aggressive steps. And it's not an easy problem. No question about it, it's tough times. But I am confident in the long term for this country. I'm confident that the steps we've taken are bold and necessary. And more importantly, I'm confident in the resiliency and the spirit of the American people and the workers.

This isn't the first time the American economy has faced challenges. And it's not going to be the first time that we have in—a recovery come out better either. You got a motto here at Guernsey that says, "No matter what your clients need, your answer is the same: We can do that." That ought to be a good motto for the United States right now. We can do it.

Let me—I'll answer some questions. So, like, it's hard to ask the President questions, I know. [*Laughter*]

Yes, David.

National Economy/Small Businesses

Q. Mr. President, your words are certainly very reassuring. Every time we open up a newspaper or we turn on the TV today and see all this impending financial doom—and I think it's enough to make people want to dig a foxhole and hide under. What would be your advice to the small-business community, in terms of the actions going forward, to dovetail with what you're trying to accomplish here?

The President. Well, first of all, I would—I think it's, first, important to recognize what the problem is. And if a small-business owner is worried about getting credit to be able to roll over inventory or to make payroll, my first question as a small-business owner is, "What are you going to do about it, President Bush?" And the answer is, one, recognize the problem and start freeing up some capital—some credit into the economy to start unsticking it.

And it's going to take a while. And the truth of the matter is, until you see that credit begin to get easier, you're going to have doubts as to whether or not the Government has got an effective plan. But I believe the steps we're taking will free up the credit. It took a while to get it frozen; it's going to take a while to get it unstuck. And the Fed took a big step today.

And my—the other thing is, David, is that obviously there's something resilient in your spirit; otherwise, you wouldn't have started this business in the first place. And as you will—can testify, running a small business is full of all kinds of challenges. And it hasn't been an easy path to success. You've met challenges before, and a successful businessperson will meet them again. And I know you'll adjust your business according to the circumstances. In the meantime, have faith that this economy is going to recover over time. And when it does, you're going to be in a good position to take advantage of an expanding economy.

I wish I could snap my fingers and make what happened stop. But that's not the way it works. And I told you, I made a decision that is really opposite of my philosophy. I basically believe if people make bad decisions in the marketplace, they ought to fail. The problem is, in this case, failure would have cost you. What appeared to be something that might have been isolated in New York would have cost you the job. And that was unacceptable to me.

And that's why I made the decision I made. And believe me, I fully understand a lot of small-business owners saying, "Wait a minute, I met the payroll"—or people such as yourself—"I pay my mortgage, I pay my bills, what are you doing?" And what I'm doing is I'm taking the action necessary to make sure that this financial system doesn't collapse, so you don't get hurt.

And listen, I understand America's frustrations, better than you can possibly know. I went home out there to west Texas where I was raised. Some old guy said, you know, "Hey, man, what are you doing?" [*Laughter*] And I said, I'm recognizing reality, that this is a serious economic situation that requires strong Government action. And that's what we've taken.

And so the answer to your question is, let's give this time—give this plan time to get these credit markets eased up so that normal business can begin. And it's—you know, there's a lot of uncertainty and a lot of worry, and I understand that. It's one of the reasons I came here to talk about the deal.

Yes, ma'am.

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, thanks for being here. And thank you for being on the spot for questions; this is a wonderful opportunity. I am Georgia Graves, the president of

Bridgman Communications. We're a small-business telephone company installing phone systems in the region. But just as importantly, I'm chairman of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce. We're a chamber made up of small- and medium-sized businesses. We're located here in the Dulles corridor. We know that this is one of the key places in the country to locate your business. We are very proud that last week we hit the 1,000 mark with members, meaning we're the largest chamber in Fairfax County.

What our board of directors would like to ask you today—on their behalf, today I'd like to know, what would you recommend and give us as advice that we can do to help our members sustain the next period of time in this economic climate? What would you advise us to do as a chamber of commerce?

The President. I would advise you—a week ago I would have advised you to write your Congressman and tell him to vote for the plan. [*Laughter*] Now I would advise the president to make sure that which you do—that which the—the powers inherent in the bill, when we do something, they're effective.

It's interesting, I met with some of the local business folks today. And a man wisely said, "Okay, now that you've got the plan, where's the action?" And as I said in my remarks, that we're—we want to make sure that when we move, we move effectively and so that the consequences are positive. And so what I would do is I would tell your president to not be hasty and have a good team of people put together a strategy that will address the root cause of the problem.

In the meantime, I would remind people that we have been through tough times before. You know, one of the things I'm concerned about is the psychology of people. They're basically saying, "Oh, this is just too tough." The good news is, in America, we generally don't do that. The good news in America is, we say, we're going to deal with the circumstances, and we're going to deal with them in a resolute fashion.

But, you know, we're just going to have to work our way through this. And it's—and I'm confident we'll succeed. I really am. It's not going to be easy, because all this—everybody got kind of interwoven. And it's hard to explain to people how this happened. The truth of the matter is, the Government, in good conscience, tried to encourage people to buy homes. But the problem is that the financial institutions in Washington, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, just were basically unregulated to the point where they wrote a lot of product that was untrustworthy over time.

And you know, the tendency in politics is to try to blame somebody else—and I'm certainly not doing this at this point in time—but we did try to pass regulation that basically said to Fannie and Freddie, stay in your lane and focused on your core mission. But that's not what happened, and now we have to deal with the consequences. And a lot of people own this paper that devalued in value, which is causing financial institutions to recoup.

There's very little that you can advise your members of until this credit crisis eases, because your members are going to be asking you, "What did he tell you about easing the credit?" Because until credit eases, it's going to be hard for businesses to feel confident to move. And that's—the whole purpose of coming today was to tell you, one, we recognize the credit problem, and two, we're taking bold action to deal with it.

Yes, ma'am. You got a follow—that's what we call a follow-up. [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, I think it's also important that as members that we learn to work together, and that we relook at everything that we buy and look within our membership, and that all of us in America become partners with each other to help each other's business, because we're all in it together.

The President. Yes. You answered your own question very well. [*Laughter*] No

wonder you're the head of the chamber of commerce. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Stock Market/Retirement Plans

Q. Mr. President, what do you think is going to happen to my 401(k) and other people's retirement plan?

The President. Yes, I think in the long run they're going to be fine, because the stock markets will reflect real value. In the short term, they're going to take a hit.

And so the question is, how fast can we get credit in the economy to get this economy moving again? And there's a lot of aspects of the economy that are suffering right now—housing market, for example. A lot of people wonder what happened. Well, what happened was, they overbuilt—or we overbuilt—built too many homes relative to the number of buyers. And until that overhang gets worked off, the housing market is going to remain soft. The positive news is, long-term mortgage rates are dropping. In other words, money is becoming cheaper to buy a mortgage. And over time, the housing market will begin to recover. That'll help the economy recover. Easing the credit will help the economy recover, and the values in the stock market will recover as well.

But no question, in the short term, if you're—the value of your 401(k), if you're in stocks, is going to go down. Question is, how fast can we recover this economy? I believe we got—I know we've had a very powerful economy. After all, we grew 52 uninterrupted months of job growth. And when we recover, we're going to have a powerful recovery—economy again. We're a productive country. We're an entrepreneurial country. The small-business sector is strong. And right now we're in a tough, tough times, no question about it. But you can't convince me that in the long run, that we're not going to get back on our feet again. And if anybody ever says that, they don't understand the American spirit.

Yes, sir.

Credit Situation

Q. Mr. President, and I've followed your whole tenure in office pretty closely, and I was pretty surprised that you signed the bill. But you just made a very strong argument as to why you signed it, and you laid out the different——

The President. You sound like the guys I grew up with in west Texas, you know. [*Laughter*]

Q. You really did a great job, because I was—I really wasn't convinced until I just heard you speak.

The President. Well, thank you.

Q. Does anything in the bill or anything that you're working with right now have—to simplify the understanding of the general public, in terms of the Fair Credit Act, passed in 1970, and the amendment passed in 2003, as to how people can understand credit? Because it's very difficult to understand credit unless you do your homework.

The President. Yes, I'm telling you, it's really hard to understand credit——

Q. I mean, yes, it's just very difficult, and I mean, unless, you know, unless you know how to use the Internet very well, unless you have the—you know, unless you have the ambition to do so, you're not really going to take the initiative. And then that's how you can get in a credit crunch, because you might have something on your credit report or something that reflects negatively, and the CRAs, the credit reporting agencies, they're not going to do anything about it.

The President. Yes. No, that's an interesting question. I'm sure Congress will revisit the 2003 law. One of the things we pressed is financial literacy so that people understand what they're dealing with in the first place. And I really suspect that when we dig into the mortgage issue, that people were buying mortgages that they had no idea they're going to reset. In other words, somebody went out there and said, "Here, you got yourself low interest rates," but they forgot to tell them, in 2 or 3 years

time that interest rate was going to bump up, and it caught people by surprise.

And we need to have a full analysis of the credit rules and on how people are dealt with, as well as transparency in the mortgage industry. But a lot of it has to do with financial literacy. People just aren't sure what the language is that they're dealing with.

I appreciate your comments on the rescue package. I really meant what I said, that I'm a firm believer that if people make mistakes in the business world, that—if you make bad decisions, that they ought to suffer the economic consequences. But the problem was, in this case, you would suffer them.

My pals say—and I understand this, I fully believe this—that, "How can you possibly stand there and let Wall Street do what they did?" Listen, people are angry about the fact that people look like they're dragging out money when there's failure. I understand that. I don't mind rewarding success. It's when people make money on failure. And I think there's going to be a—there needs to be a reassessment of these packages. There needs to be a reassessment of how interconnected people get—people became; how they made promises that they were not in a capital position to fix.

Step one is to fix the immediate, solve this thing. And step two is to make sure we don't get tomorrow where we are today, without creating a regulatory regime that inhabits—inhibits small-business growth. And I think it's going to be—it's a real challenge.

But my immediate concern is solving today, is to make sure the plan—first of all, last week was getting the plan passed, which happened last Friday—it may seem like a month ago, but it's—[*laughter*]—last Friday—and getting it implemented and working with our partners overseas to make sure the effort is as coordinated as possible so we can be effective.

And the definition of "effective" from a small-business perspective is when you begin to see credit ease. And we understand that. And we're trying to move as quickly as we can to get credit moving in a way that people say, "Okay, now I see what they're trying to do."

Yes, sir.

Credit Situation

Q. First of all, I want to just say thank you very much for understanding the importance of credit. My name is Mike Gray. We're next door. The company's called Exhibit Edge. My wife is the owner, Bev Gray, of the company.

The President. That's a smart move. [*Laughter*] She just doesn't want to talk in front of all the cameras, so you're her spokesperson.

Q. Yes, sir. I just want you to emphasize how important freeing up credit is.

The President. Yes, thank you.

Q. I mean, just to give you some quick numbers. We're a $3½ million company, and we rely on a $500,000 home credit line to support our business, which means we have to roll this money over six, seven times a year. That's how much we need this credit. And now the—we've got a notice or a letter from a bank—or from the bank that runs our credit line that says home values are going down a little bit, and if you pay down your principle a little, we're not going to give you quite as much back. And so our strategy is, don't pay it down, to keep it maxed out all the time.

And so we're comfortable now, and we're able to take care of our business by doing this. But it's so important for you to emphasize the need that small businesses have for the use of that credit. And I thank you so much. You're really working hard——

The President. Thanks for hanging in there.

Q. Absolutely. You too.

The President. It's also important for obviously consumers to be able to borrow

money to buy a car. It's just—credit is what makes our system go. And when credit freezes, it creates a standstill. And when people stand still, it just begins to shut down the economy. And that's why we're moving as hard as we're moving. And somebody asked me, "Is it going to work?" This is the best shot we've got. And it's a big, bold move. And it's—I listened to a lot of smart people about what to do. And it was a—hard for Congress to swallow, because I understand there's a lot of skepticism about the Government making a big, bold move. But you're the kind of guy that was represented by the yes votes when they said, I'm worried about credit freezing; what are you going to do about it?

And so what I'm trying to describe to you today—I hope I'm getting through to the people listening as well—is that we're trying to address this guy's problem and trying to address small-business people's problem all around the country with something that will be effective when it comes to freezing up credit.

All right, you know what—yes, sir. About to say I enjoyed it, but—[*laughter*].

Insured Bank Deposits

Q. Mr. President, is my bank account safe?

The President. Yes, it is, up to $250,000. We went from 100,000 to 250. That is a very good question. You know, a lot of Americans are hearing these stories and they're wondering whether or not their money is safe. And you're insured up to $250,000. We raised it from 100 to 250. And it's just essential that the American people know that the FDIC has never failed on meeting that obligation, and it's darn sure not going to fail now.

It's—these are tough times, no question about it. I know a lot of folks around the country have got questions. And part of addressing these tough times is to, you know, is to focus on the core problem. And the core problem, as this good man talked about, was getting credit moving so consumers and businesses have got the capability of realizing their—in the case of a small business, their plans and their ability to grow and to meet demand. And that's what we're addressing.

I thank you for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. I love coming to places where we're on the frontlines of economic progress. The truth of the matter is, the small-business owner and the small-business sector really provide the backbone of the American system. You've been asked a lot during these times, but I've got great faith in the small-business sector. And when Government gives you that—helps you get that capital you need, the small-business sector is going to help us lead out—help lead us out of the situation we're in today.

I know that the days are dim right now for a lot of folks, but I firmly believe tomorrow is going to be brighter. And I thank you for having that resiliency and that drive to hang in there and help this economy grow and recover.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at Guernsey Office Products, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to David Guernsey, president and chief executive officer, Guernsey Office Products, Inc., who introduced the President.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 5769
October 7, 2008

For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 16:30

Yom Kippur is the Jewish Day of Atonement and the most holy day in the Jewish faith. From the time the Kol Nidre is recited until the Shofar is sounded, Jews around the world will draw nearer to God through acts of atonement, fasting, and prayer. Jewish tradition teaches that on Yom Kippur, God remembers every name, listens to every petition, and offers forgiveness to the repentant.

On this day, Americans are reminded of the great blessings of religious freedom and the unalienable rights bestowed upon all people by the Creator of life. May God grant us peace, comfort, and hope for all the challenges we may face in the year ahead.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed day and a most meaningful fast.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks on Signing the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act
October 8, 2008

Thank you for coming. Welcome to the White House. Today I have the honor of signing legislation that builds on the growing ties between the world's two largest democracies, India and the United States. This legislation will enhance our cooperation in using nuclear energy to power our economies; it will help us work together even more closely to reduce the danger of nuclear proliferation across the world.

This legislation represents more than 3 years of hard work by a lot of people. I appreciate the work of the Indian-American leaders from across the Nation. I thank the Members of the United States Congress for working hard on this piece of legislation. I'm especially grateful for the leadership provided by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, who worked hard to make sure this bill made it through both Houses at the very end of the session. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Foreign Affairs—[*applause*]. I thank the leaders of the Foreign Affairs Committees in the House and the Senate: Senator Joe Biden; Dick Lugar; Chris Dodd, who's with us; as well as Representatives Howard Berman and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. I also welcome the Members of Congress here on the stage who worked hard to get this legislation done. I appreciate so very much the contributions of two leaders who played an important role in crafting this legislation, the late Henry Hyde and the late Tom Lantos.

Other Members who've joined us: John Warner, Senator from Virginia; Eliot Engel, Democrat, House Foreign Affairs committee member from New York; Congressman Joe Crowley from New York. I thank the members of the administration who have joined us—Mr. Vice President, thank

you. I appreciate the hard work that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice did to bring this deal to fruition, as well as Secretary Sam Bodman at the Department of Energy.

I am so honored here that—to have the Ambassador of India to the United States with us; Ambassador Sen, thank you for joining us. And I appreciate very much the incredibly efficient work of our Ambassador, David Mulford, and his wife Jeannie; thank you for being here. You didn't do so bad yourself, Ambassador Blackwill—[*laughter*].

I thank the congressional staff who worked hard on this legislation. I congratulate you for the constructive work. I appreciate the supporters of the U.S.-India Nuclear Civil Agreement that are here today. All in all, welcome. This is a—it's a big deal.

Even though the United States and India are separated by half the globe, we are natural partners as we head into the 21st century. Both our nations emerged from a colonial past to establish vibrant democracies. We have welcomed investment and private enterprise to become leaders in the global economy. We have stood against the dangers posed by extremists, who have carried out attacks in both our countries. We have demonstrated that we cherish liberty, honor human dignity, and respect the rule of law.

Despite these common interests and values, it was not long ago that relations between the United States and India were strained. In recent years, we've worked to transform our relationship into a strong strategic partnership. One area where we saw tremendous potential for cooperation is energy. As our economies have grown, our demands for energy have grown as well. It's become increasingly clear that we need to generate that energy in ways that are safe and clean and secure.

One energy source that can generate large amounts of electricity with zero emissions of air pollution or greenhouse gases is nuclear power. So 3 years ago, Prime Minister Singh—who I consider a dear friend—and I resolved to work together on a landmark agreement paving the way for our nations to cooperate on nuclear power. By undertaking new cooperation on civil nuclear energy, India will be able to count on a reliable fuel supply for its civilian reactors, meet the energy demands of its people, and reduce its independence [dependence] * on fossil fuels.

For our part, the United States will gain access to a growing market for civilian nuclear technologies and materials, that will help American businesses create more jobs for our people here at home.

Our agreement will also strengthen global nonproliferation efforts. India has committed to operate its civil nuclear energy program under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international guidelines. India will continue to build on its strong record of responsibility in operating its nuclear facilities. And India and the United States will cooperate more closely to keep the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of extremists and terrorists.

The bill I sign today approves the 123 Agreement I submitted to Congress and establishes the legal framework for that agreement to come into effect. The bill makes clear that our agreement with India is consistent with the Atomic Energy Act and other elements of U.S. law. By passing this legislation, my administration and Congress demonstrate our common view that nuclear cooperation is in the interests of both the United States and India.

The legislation makes no changes to the terms of the 123 Agreement I submitted to Congress. It enables me to bring that agreement into force and to accept on behalf of the United States all the obligations that are part of the agreement. This legislation does not change the fuel assurance

* White House correction.

commitments that the United States Government has made to the Government of India, as recorded in the 123 Agreement. The agreement also grants India advance consent to reprocessing, which will be brought into effect upon the conclusion of arrangements and procedures for a dedicated reprocessing facility under IAEA safeguards.

This agreement sends a signal to the world: Nations that follow the path of democracy and responsible behavior will find a friend in the United States of America. The American people are proud of our strong relationship with India. And I am confident that the friendship between our two nations will grow even closer in the years ahead.

Laura and I send our best wishes to the hundreds of millions of people in India and around the world who will begin celebrating the ancient festival of Diwali later this month. As we offer our prayers for a happy new year, we can be thankful that the relationship between the United States and India has never been more vibrant and more hopeful.

And it's now my honor to sign the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to India's Ambassador to the U.S. Ranendra Sen; U.S. Ambassador to India David C. Mulford and his wife Jeannie; former U.S. Ambassador to India Robert D. Blackwill; and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. H.R. 7081, approved October 8, was assigned Public Law No. 110–369.

Statement on Signing the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act
October 8, 2008

I am pleased today to sign into law the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act, which approves the U.S.-India 123 Agreement. The passage of this legislation by the Congress marks another major milestone in achieving the vision that Prime Minister Singh and I set forth on July 18, 2005, to transform the relationship between our two countries and to establish a strategic partnership. This act will strengthen the relationship between the United States and India and deliver valuable benefits to both nations.

The legislation does not change the terms of the 123 Agreement as I submitted it to the Congress. That agreement is consistent with the Atomic Energy Act and other elements of U.S. law. This legislation is important as it enables me to bring the 123 Agreement into force and to accept on behalf of the United States the obligations contained in the agreement.

The agreement grants India advance consent to reprocessing, which will be brought into effect upon conclusion of arrangements and procedures for a dedicated reprocessing facility under IAEA safeguards.

In addition, the legislation does not change the fuel assurance commitments that the U.S. Government has made to the Government of India, as recorded in the 123 Agreement.

The passage of this legislation reflects the common view of my administration and the Congress as to the value of nuclear cooperation and is in the interest of the United States and India.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. H.R. 7081, approved October 8, was assigned Public Law No. 110–369.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ivan Gasparovic of Slovakia
October 9, 2008

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the President of Slovakia to the Oval Office. Slovakia is an ally and friend of the United States. And in my time as President, I have come to admire this President. He's an easy man to talk to. He's got good, strong opinions, and I appreciate his values.

We talked about a variety of subjects. I assured him that the United States will take strong action in dealing with the current economic situation. And I also talked about our common desire to have a—to work with our European friends to develop as best as possible common policy.

During my Presidency, I was pleased to support Slovakia's ascension into NATO. I was confident that Slovakia would be an excellent partner and ally in NATO, and history has proven me correct. And I thank the people of Slovakia for supporting the Government's decision to deploy troops into Afghanistan to help that young democracy never again be a safe haven for terrorists and to serve as an example of the transformative power of freedom.

Finally, we talked about visa waiver. I told the President that Slovakia has made a lot of progress on visa waiver. And I expect that in mid-November there will be a positive decision for the people of your good country, Mr. President. And I congratulate you and your Foreign Ministry for working hard on this issue. And I'm glad to welcome you to the Oval Office.

President Gasparovic. Mr. President, allow me to start by thanking you for inviting me. This is an extraordinary day for me. And I believe it is also a satisfaction to the people of Slovakia for them to see that Slovakia has a favorable disposition towards our country, and that we have good relations. I believe that in the history of our relations, we are currently at our highest point.

It was during his Presidency that President Bush supported Slovakia on its way to NATO, which in turn helped Slovakia to become a member of the European Union. These were two very important steps and decisions that allowed Slovakia to build its reputation as a credible country. And it is this credibility that allows Slovakia to attract foreign investment into our country. Slovakia continues to be a prosperous country and a country that has and maintains its credibility in foreign policy as well.

We talked about many difficult issues. We talked also about the financial crisis and about the steps that need to be taken in order to overcome this crisis and to reinvigorate the financial system.

I'm very glad that Slovakia and its economy is currently in a situation where we will not likely be taking a direct hit from this financial crisis. Slovakia is in a position where we're able to mitigate many impacts of this crisis. On the other hand, Slovakia is the world's largest per capita car producer. This means that Slovakia's exports and foreign trade will suffer. However, we believe that we can take steps to mitigate this impact.

I was glad that in my capacity as the President of the Slovak Republic, I was able to reassure the President that Slovakia will continue to stand behind its commitments and its dedication to NATO and that we will continue to be present in Afghanistan. Moreover, Slovakia will increase the

number of troops deployed to Afghanistan by 100 percent.

In closing, I want to say that I believe, Mr. President, our meeting today was a very strong message of the good relations that Slovakia has with the United States, and vice versa.

I believe that this will continue——

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Gasparovic spoke in Slovak, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month
October 9, 2008

Hola! Sientese. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca. [Laughter] *Este es el ultimo "Mes de la Hispanidad" que paso como presidente, y por eso, le dije a mi personal que hoy queria hablarles solo en espanol. Me contestaron: "Senor presidente, antes de dar un discurso en espanol, por que no llega primero a dominar el ingles?"* [Laughter]

I am proud to be with you. I am proud to be with current and former Latino members of my administration. I want to thank the Ambassadors from the diplomatic corps for joining us today. We're proud to be your friends. I want to thank the members of the United States Armed Forces who have joined us. I want to thank my friend Emilio Estefan, president of Estefan Enterprises. And I want to thank Andres Cabas from Colombia, who is going to sing a couple of songs for us. Thank you and your band for joining us.

Every year at this time, we recognize the great contributions Hispanic Americans make to our country, and we should. From coast to coast, people of Hispanic descent enrich our culture and make our Nation a better place. They serve in top positions throughout business and government. They bring their strong values of faith and family to our communities. My family is proud to have Latino blood, *mi cunada.* Jeb and I both married very well. [*Laughter*] Hispanic Americans cherish the limitless promise of our Nation. During the past 8 years, I've been proud to work with you to ensure *que todos puedan alcanzar las promesas de los Estados Unidos.*

One promise is good education. I mean, you can't have a hopeful nation unless you've got a good education system. And so we worked with Congress to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. This act raises standards and accountability across schools in the country, and I'm pleased to report Hispanic students are scoring at alltime highs on tests, and therefore, an achievement gap is narrowing.

For hundreds of thousands of Hispanic children, the best hope for good education is found in America's faith-based schools. Earlier this year, I proposed a new program called Pell Grants for Kids, which would help low-income children in underperforming public schools attend a private, a parochial, or out-of-district public school of their choice.

Earlier this year, I met a very interesting young woman at the White House Summit on the Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools. The whole purpose was to help these schools realize a comeback and make sure our communities were able to have these schools as a part of their future. The woman I met is a woman named Katrina [Karina]* Ramirez. She grew up in Chicago neighborhood. It was plagued by gang violence, and she had a tough time

* White House correction.

in school because she didn't speak English. But at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Karina received a top-notch education. She received real work experience, and she got herself a ticket to college. Karina says, "My dad went from garbage picking in Mexico to having a daughter going to Georgetown." Karina, thank you for coming. She is proof that *el Sueno Americano es para todos*.

Economic opportunity is a promise of our country. And the truth of the matter is, for generations, people have found opportunities in this country that would have been impossible in the places where they were born, and that has made us a vibrant country, and it's encouraged entrepreneurship. Today, the economy obviously is going through a very tough stretch, and that's why the administration will work with Congress to pass a financial rescue plan.

The goal of this plan is to free up the flow of capital to help all Americans get the capital and loans necessary to help weather these difficult times. Part of the plan is to free up capital for small businesses. After all, small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and interestingly enough, according to the most recent data, more than 1.5 million small businesses are owned by Hispanic owners.

In times of economic uncertainty, we need to be promoting free trade, particularly with friends in our neighborhood. During my time as President, we've opened up trade agreements with a lot of nations, including nations in Central America and in South America. But there's a couple of them that need to be approved by the United States Congress. We approved the free trade agreement with Peru, but we're waiting on Congress to approve the free trade agreements with Panama and Colombia.

I'm confident in our economy's long-term prospects. We'll get through this deal. And the reason why I'm confident is because we got the most talented and productive workers in the world. And many are Hispanic men and women who work hard every single day to support their families.

One promise of America is the compassion of our people. And during my time in office, I've been proud to work with Hispanic Americans to lift up *nuestros hermanos y hermanas* in need. I established the USA Freedom Corps to foster a culture of citizenship and responsibility and service. And today, nearly 61 million Americans volunteer their time to help our fellow citizens, many of them Hispanics.

Through our Faith-Based and Community Initiative, we are harnessing the compassion of religious groups to reduce homelessness and break the chains of addiction, give prisoners a second chance, and alleviate suffering at home and abroad.

Recently I met a woman from San Diego whose life has been transformed by America's armies of compassion. Edith Espinoza suffered terrible abuse from her husband. She turned to El Nido program, an interfaith shelter network supported by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. El Nido is a place where Edith received counseling and learned how to get a job and save money. She and her daughters now live in an apartment that she pays on her own. Her goal is to become a social worker so she can help other families like hers. She is showing that because of the good hearts of our citizens, *el Sueno Americano es por todos*.

One promise of America is freedom, freedom for all. Hispanic Americans are extending this country's promise of freedom and liberty to others. Hispanics serving in Afghanistan and Iraq to help those young democracies realize the blessings of freedom. I particularly want to thank those who are working to hasten the day of freedom for the Cuban people.

I'm especially proud to be the Commander in Chief of a military in which there's 225,000 Hispanic men and women. One of these *hispanos* is an Army Lieutenant Colonel named Enrique Guerra. Listen to his story. Enrique fled Cuba with his

parents when he was an infant. They wanted their young child to grow up in a society that was free and hopeful. He spent more than 22 years in the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. Today, he is a battalion commander at Camp Cropper in Iraq, helping the people in the Middle East secure their own freedom and therefore lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

Enrique puts it this way: "As a Cuban America, I was born with a strong sense of patriotism, and that is why I serve." And today I'm proud to honor his service and the service of all Hispanic Americans who ensure that freedom is available to all. Enrique, *bienvenidos*. Thank you for coming. Thank you, sir.

And so today we celebrate the many contributions that generations of Hispanics have made to the American Dream. Their creativity and determination help our country to live up to its promise of opportunity and prosperity and freedom for all our citizens.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, we give thanks for these blessings, and we ask for God's continued blessings on you and your families *y los Estados Unidos*.

And now it's my honor to welcome one of Latin America's most popular young vocalists, Colombia's Andres Cabas.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida and his wife Columba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The National Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation of September 12 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the National Economy
October 10, 2008

Good morning. Over the past few days, we have witnessed a startling drop in the stock market, much of it driven by uncertainty and fear. This has been a deeply unsettling period for the American people. Many of our citizens have serious concerns about their retirement accounts, their investments, and their economic well-being.

Here's what the American people need to know: that the United States Government is acting; we will continue to act to resolve this crisis and restore stability to our markets. We are a prosperous nation with immense resources and a wide range of tools at our disposal. We're using these tools aggressively.

The fundamental problem is this: As the housing market has declined, banks holding assets related to home mortgages have suffered serious losses. As a result of these losses, many banks lack the capital or the confidence in each other to make new loans. In turn, our system of credit has frozen, which is keeping American businesses from financing their daily transactions and creating uncertainty throughout our economy.

This uncertainty has led to anxiety among our people, and that is understandable. That anxiety can feed anxiety, and that can make it hard to see all that is being done to solve the problem. The Federal Government has a comprehensive strategy and the tools necessary to address the challenges in our economy. Fellow citizens, we can solve this crisis, and we will.

Here are the problems we face and the steps we are taking.

First, key markets are not functioning because there's a lack of liquidity, the grease necessary to keep the gears of our financial system turning. So the Federal Reserve has

injected hundreds of billions of dollars into the system. The Fed has joined with central banks around the world to coordinate a cut in interest rates. This rate cut will allow banks to borrow money more affordably, and it should help free up additional credit necessary to create jobs and finance college educations and help American families meet their daily needs. The Fed has also announced a new program to provide support for the commercial paper market, which is freezing up. As the new program kicks in over the next week or so, it will help revive a key source of short-term financing for American businesses and financial institutions.

Second, some Americans are concerned about whether their money is safe. So the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the National Credit Union Administration have significantly expanded the amount of money insured in savings accounts and checking accounts and certificates of deposit. That means that if you have up to $250,000 in one of these insured accounts, every penny of that money is safe. The Treasury Department has also acted to restore confidence in a key element of America's financial system by offering Government insurance for money market mutual funds.

Thirdly, we are concerned that some investors could take advantage of the crisis to illegally manipulate the stock market. So the Securities and Exchange Commission has launched rigorous enforcement actions to detect fraud and manipulation in the market. The SEC is focused on preventing abusive practices, such as putting out false information to drive down particular stocks for personal gain. Anyone caught engaging in illegal financial activities will be prosecuted.

Fourth, the decline in the housing market has left many Americans struggling to meet their mortgages—and are concerned about losing their homes. My administration has launched two initiatives to help responsible borrowers keep their homes. One is called HOPE NOW, and it brings together homeowners and lenders and mortgage servicers and others to find ways to prevent foreclosure. The other initiative is aimed at making it easier for responsible homeowners to refinance into affordable mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration. So far, these programs have helped more than 2 million Americans stay in their home. And the point is this: If you are struggling to meet your mortgage, there are ways that you can get help.

With these actions to help to prevent foreclosures, we're addressing a key problem in the housing market: The supply of homes now exceeds demand. And as a result, home values have declined. Once supply and demand balance out, our housing market will be able to recover, and that will help our broader economy begin to grow.

Fifth, we've seen that problems in the financial system are not isolated to the United States. They're also affecting other nations around the globe. So we're working closely with partners around the world to ensure that our actions are coordinated and effective. Tomorrow I'll meet with the finance ministers from our partners in the G–7 and the heads of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Secretary Paulson will also meet with finance ministers from the world's 20 leading economies. Through these efforts, the world is sending an unmistakable signal: We're in this together, and we'll come through this together.

And finally, American businesses and consumers are struggling to obtain credit because banks do not have sufficient capital to make loans. So my administration worked with Congress to quickly pass a $700 billion financial rescue package. This new law authorizes the Treasury Department to use a variety of measures to help bank rebuild capital, including buying or insuring troubled assets and purchasing equity of financial institutions. The Department will implement measures that have

maximum impact as quickly as possible. Seven hundred billion dollars is a significant amount of money. And as we act, we will do so in a way that is effective.

The plan we are executing is aggressive. It is the right plan. It will take time to have its full impact. It is flexible enough to adapt as the situation changes, and it is big enough to work.

The Federal Government will continue to take the actions necessary to restore stability to our financial markets and growth to our economy. We have an outstanding economic team carrying out this effort, led by Secretary of the Treasury Hank Paulson, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, SEC Chairman Chris Cox, and FDIC Chair Sheila Bair. I thank them and their dedicated teams for their service during this important moment in our country's history.

This is an anxious time, but the American people can be confident in our economic future. We know what the problems are, we have the tools to fix them, and we're working swiftly to do so. Our economy is innovative, industrious, and resilient because the American people who make up our economy are innovative, industrious, and resilient. We all share a determination to solve this problem, and that is exactly what we're going to do. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Cuban American Community Leaders in Coral Gables, Florida

October 10, 2008

I have been privileged to know many around this table for nearly 8 years, as I've been President. I got to know them when I was campaigning for President. My little brother introduced me to these Cuban Americans with whom I work with one goal in mind, and that is the freedom of Cuba.

The policies we have in place are all aimed at giving the people in Cuba a chance to worship freely and to speak freely and to go in the public square and express themselves without fear of repression. And so I want to thank you all for your friendship during these years. And my encouragement is, of course, to continue to stand strong for the dignity of the people in Cuba.

You know, our Government has been very clear about our strategy, and that is, is that we will change the embargo strategy only when the Government of Cuba lets the people of Cuba express themselves freely. We will change our policy when the people running Cuba free people of conscience from the prisons. But until then, we won't change, because our message is to the Cuban people: You're being repressed by a handful of elites that are holding back your great potential. And we will not put policies in place that allow them to benefit personally at the expense of the Cuban people.

You know, recently Ike hit Cuba very hard, and all Americans, whether they be Cuban Americans or otherwise, grieve deeply about the damage done to the average Cuban citizen. And so my Government, under the leadership of Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, offered aid from the United States to the Cuban people. But that aid was rejected by the Castros, which should tell the people of Cuba and the

people around the world that the Castro people are only interested in themselves and their power and not to the benefit and welfare of the Cuban people.

It's so sad that right off the shores of our great, you know, Nation that believes in human rights and human dignity exists this dungeon. But someday Cuba will be free. Someday the people who are there will realize the blessings of freedom, and I want to thank the people around this table for working to see that day comes. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:09 p.m. at Havana Harry's restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and former President Fidel Castro Ruz and President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With G–7 Finance Ministers and the Heads of International Finance Institutions
October 11, 2008

Thank you all very much. Good morning. Secretary Paulson, Secretary Rice, and I just had a productive discussion with finance ministers of America's partners in the G–7: Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan. I'm pleased to be with Prime Minister Juncker of Luxembourg, who is the President of the Eurogroup of countries, Managing Director Strauss-Kahn of the International Monetary Fund, President Zoellick of the World Bank, Chairman Draghi of the Financial Stability Forum. Thank you all for coming.

I appreciate the spirit and common purpose that these leaders have brought to Washington. We recognize that the turmoil in the financial markets is affecting all our citizens. Citizens are rightly concerned about the crisis. And we understand that in dealing with the financial crisis, we're really helping people be able to have a better future themselves.

In my country, it is important for our citizens to have understood, that which affects Wall Street affects Main Street as well. And all of us recognize that this is a serious global crisis and therefore requires a serious global response for the good of our people. We resolve to continue our strong efforts to return our economies to the path of stability and long-term growth.

The United States has a special role to play in leading the response to this crisis. That's why I convened this morning's meeting here at the White House, and that is why our Government will continue using all the tools at our disposal to resolve this crisis. At our meeting, Secretary Paulson and I described the bold actions the United States has taken over the past few weeks.

To help thaw frozen markets, the Federal Reserve has taken unprecedented measures to boost liquidity. The Securities and Exchange Commission has cracked down on abusive practices in the markets. Federal agencies have significantly expanded the amount of money insured in bank and credit union accounts. My administration worked with the Congress to pass legislation authorizing the Government to recapitalize banks by purchasing troubled assets or providing insurance or purchasing equity in financial institutions. These extraordinary efforts are being implemented as quickly and as effectively as possible. The benefits will not be realized overnight. But as these actions take effect, they will help restore stability to our markets and confidence to our financial institutions.

I'm pleased that other G–8—7 countries are making strong—are taking strong measures. Finance ministers and central bankers have acted to provide new liquidity to markets, strengthen financial institutions, protect citizens' savings, and ensure fairness and integrity in the financial markets.

As our nations confront challenges unique to our individual financial systems, we must continue to work collaboratively and ensure that our actions are coordinated. The joint interest rate cut earlier this week was a good example of effective cooperation. Yesterday G–7 finance ministers and central bankers agreed to a plan of action.

The G–7 nations have pledged to take decisive action to support systemically important financial institutions and prevent their failure, provide robust protection for retail bank deposits, and ensure financial institutions are able to raise needed capital. We've agreed to implement strong measures to unfreeze credit, ensure access to liquidity, and help to restart the secondary markets for mortgages and other assets. We've all agreed that the actions we take should protect our taxpayers. And we agree that we ought to work with other nations such as those that will be represented this afternoon in the G–20 forum.

As our nations carry out this plan, we must ensure the actions of one country do not contradict or undermine the actions of another. In our interconnected world, no nation will gain by driving down the fortunes of another. We're in this together; we will come through it together.

I'm confident that the world's major economies can overcome the challenges we face. There have been moments of crisis in the past when powerful nations turned their energies against each other or sought to wall themselves off from the world. This time is different. The leaders gathered in Washington this weekend are all working toward the same goals. We will stand together in addressing this threat to our prosperity, we will do what it takes to resolve this crisis, and the world's economy will emerge stronger as a result.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:54 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

The President's Radio Address
October 11, 2008

Good morning. Over the past few days, we have witnessed a startling drop in the stock market, much of it driven by uncertainty and fear. Many Americans have serious concerns about their economic well-being.

Here's what the American people need to know. The United States Government is acting and will continue to act to resolve this crisis and restore stability to our markets. The Federal Government has a comprehensive strategy and the tools necessary to address the challenges in our economy.

Here are the problems we face and the steps we are taking.

First, key markets are not functioning because there is a lack of liquidity, so the Federal Reserve has injected hundreds of billions of dollars into the system. The Fed has joined with central banks around the world to coordinate a cut in interest rates, a step that should help free up credit. The Fed has also announced a new program to provide support for a vital tool that many American businesses use to finance their day-to-day operations, the commercial paper market, which is freezing up. As this

program kicks in over the next week or so, it will help revive a key source of short-term financing for businesses and financial institutions.

Second, some Americans are concerned about whether their money is safe. So the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the National Credit Union Administration have significantly expanded the amount of money insured in savings accounts and checking accounts and certificates of deposit. That means that if you have up to $250,000 in one of these insured accounts, every penny of that money is safe. The Treasury Department has also acted to restore confidence in a key element of America's financial system by offering Government insurance for money market mutual funds.

Third, we are concerned that some investors could take advantage of the crisis to illegally manipulate the stock market. So the Securities and Exchange Commission is launching rigorous enforcement actions to detect fraud and manipulation in the market.

Fourth, the decline in the housing market has left many Americans concerned about losing their homes. My administration launched the HOPE NOW Alliance, which brings together homeowners and lenders and mortgage servicers and others to find ways to prevent foreclosure. We're also making it easier for responsible homeowners to refinance into affordable mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Americans listening today can know that if you're struggling to meet your mortgage, there are ways you can get help.

These actions are helping to address a key problem in the housing market: The supply of homes now exceeds demand, and as a result, home values have declined. Once supply and demand balance out, our housing market will be able to recover, and that will help our broader economy begin to grow.

Fifth, we have seen that problems in the financial system are not isolated to the United States. So we're working closely with partners around the world to ensure that our actions are coordinated and effective. Today I'm meeting with the finance ministers from our partners in the G–7 and the heads of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and Treasury Secretary Paulson is also hosting finance ministers from the world's 20 leading economies.

Finally, American businesses and consumers are struggling to obtain credit. So my administration worked with Congress to pass a $700 billion financial rescue package. This new law authorizes the Treasury Department to use a variety of measures to help banks rebuild capital, including buying or insuring troubled assets and purchasing the equity of financial institutions. The Department will implement measures that have maximum impact as quickly as possible. Seven hundred billion dollars is a significant amount of money, and as we act, we will do it in an effective way.

In the short term, we'll continue to face challenges. But in the long run, Americans have reason to be confident. We have the strongest and most resilient economy in the world. When we have faced difficult tests in the past, the American people have always risen to meet them. And that is exactly what we're going to do again.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:40 a.m. on October 10 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10, 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 Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy
October 13, 2008

Buon giorno. [*Laughter*] Fellow citizens, distinguished guests, thank you all for being here as we receive a wonderful visitor, the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, Silvio Berlusconi. He is a man of accomplishment, a statesman from a great nation, and a warm friend of the United States. Mr. Prime Minister, you honor us with your visit, and Laura and I are so pleased to have you come to the White House on Columbus Day.

On this national holiday, America remembers the explorer from Genoa who led a fleet of three tiny ships on a great journey of discovery. Christopher Columbus earned his place in history by introducing the Old World to the New. And in the story of his life, Americans see qualities that are so much a part of our Nation: the vision to take a risk and to explore the unknown, the courage to persevere through difficulty, and the optimism to greet every new day with confidence and joy.

Italy is rightly proud of Christopher Columbus. And America is proud that so many other Italians have journeyed across the Atlantic and made this land their home. Generations of Italian immigrants have strengthened America with their own traditions of faith in God, pride in family, devotion to country, and love of life. In more ways than can be counted, the United States is a better place for the influence of the sons and daughters of Italy.

With the visit today of Prime Minister Berlusconi, we reaffirm the close and trusting friendship between our two countries. For more than six decades, America and Italy have been partners in the work of freedom and progress. We look to the future with confidence.

Together, we have worked to build a strong transatlantic alliance that helps guard the lives and liberty of our peoples. We know that further growth of NATO will serve the interest of all who cherish freedom, security, and peace.

Together, we're standing firm against the forces of brutality and instability in our world. Our countries and other peaceful nations have been targeted by terrorists. We will fight those enemies until they are defeated. Our security is threatened by the proliferation of deadly technologies, and we're acting to remove that danger. Civilization is challenged by extremist ideologies with a will to power, and we are determined to overcome hatred and intolerance with the values of decency and justice and democracy.

Together, we are giving support to rising democracies and defending the innocent against the violent. Italy has shown that commitment by deploying forces to the NATO mission in Afghanistan and by leading NATO training operations in Iraq. Italian forces are also serving the cause of peace and stability in Lebanon and Kosovo and Bosnia. And, Mr. Prime Minister, America is proud to be your ally in missions that will bring forth a better and a safer world.

As allies and friends, the United States and Italy have formed strong bonds of commerce and understanding. By our commitment to free markets and the spirit of enterprise, we've helped ourselves and others to succeed and prosper. And in these times of economic turmoil, we're working with other governments to resolve the troubles of the financial markets. Just this weekend, I met with the Finance Minister of Italy and his counterparts from the G–7 and G–20 nations. All of us will continue taking responsible, decisive action to restore credit and stability and return to vigorous growth.

Despite many challenges, the United States and Italy know that we are very fortunate countries. We count our blessings, and we share a belief that material wealth brings responsibilities. So we've joined with other industrial powers to fight hunger and disease in Africa and to promote the development that can lift nations out of poverty and despair. We have been generous, and we've given new hope to millions who suffer. We will not grow tired in the cause of progress and human rights and human dignity.

At this crucial time in history, with so much yet to do, relations between the United States and Italy are superb. There's a genuine respect between our peoples, and Prime Minister Berlusconi and I have shared that respect in all our dealings. In these years, I have deeply appreciated his friendship and his wisdom. The Prime Minister is a man of sincerity and principle, who speaks his mind and keeps his word. And because of his high spirits and boundless optimism, it is always good to see him and to spend time with him.

So on this beautiful Columbus Day, Laura and I are proud to greet him on behalf of our whole Nation. Mr. Prime Minister, *mio caro amico, benvenuto*—my dear friend, welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Prime Minister Berlusconi was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Economy and Finance Giulio Tremonti of Italy. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Berlusconi.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy
October 13, 2008

President Bush. Good morning. Prime Minister Berlusconi and I just had a very good discussion. That's exactly the kind of meeting that you would expect when good friends get together.

Mr. Prime Minister, I appreciate your leadership. I want to thank you for your gracious words earlier today.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you.

President Bush. I want to thank you for giving the American people the honor of celebrating Columbus Day with the leader of Italy.

For more than 60 years, the United States and Italy have worked together to strengthen transatlantic alliances and to help freedom expand across Europe. Today, we're addressing global challenges with determination and vision and with confidence. America and Italy are working to stabilize global financial markets. People all over the world are understandably concerned about the global financial crisis and about how it will affect their families and their businesses.

I appreciate Italy's participation in the meeting of the G–7 and G–20 finance ministers over the weekend. Both the G–7 and G–20 issued important statements committing to work together to help resolve the crisis. I welcome the bold and specific follow-up actions by European nations to pursue the G–7 action plan. And the United States is also acting, and we will continue to implement measures consistent with the G–7 action plan to help banks gain access to capital, to strengthen the financial system, and to unfreeze credit markets and restore confidence in our financial system.

These are tough times for our economies, yet we can be confident that we can work our way through these challenges. And America will continue to work closely with the other nations to coordinate our response to this global financial crisis.

America and Italy are working with other nations to fight terror and maintain stability and secure their democratic future. More than 8,300 Italian troops are deployed in regions of conflict around the world. They're helping to fight extremism and to defend liberty and give more people the hope of a better future. About 2,100 Italian troops are supporting the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Italy leads Regional Command West as well as a Provincial Reconstruction Team.

I appreciate the Prime Minister's willingness to modify restrictions on where Italian forces can operate in Afghanistan. Italy has deployed Carabinieri to support the NATO training mission in Iraq. They're doing a fine job. These are highly professional, highly skilled folks that are helping the Iraqi people.

In Lebanon, Italy is the single largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping mission. We discussed the need for Syria to respect Lebanon's sovereignty, to cease its support for terror, and to open full diplomatic relations with Lebanon's elected Government.

Italy has deployed more than 2,300 troops to maintain stability in the Balkans. Our two nations support an independent and democratic Kosovo, and we're working to ensure that the new European Union mission deploys throughout that country. We agree that all Balkan nations should be invited to join the EU and other transatlantic institutions as they qualify for membership.

We discussed Iran. And we agreed that Iran must not be allowed to have a nuclear weapon. We discussed the importance of full implementation of United Nations sanctions on the regime in Tehran.

America and Italy are working closely to end the conflict in Georgia. We firmly support Georgia's democracy and sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States and the EU agree that the territory of Georgia includes the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We're working to meet the humanitarian needs of the Georgian people and help displaced families return to their homes.

To earn the respect of the international community, Russia must show respect for the sovereignty and territory of its neighbors. Russia must accept the responsibilities and obligations of international leadership.

Mr. Prime Minister, Laura and I are looking forward to our dinner with you tonight. We look forward to celebrating the enormous contributions that the sons and daughters of Italy have made in America, and we look forward to honoring the strong alliance that binds our two nations together. Welcome.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you for this extraordinary invitation. My presence in Washington today is also the tribute of a friendship—personal friendship which binds me to President Bush, as well as the friendship between our two peoples.

And the fact that I'm here on the occasion of the celebration of the Columbus Day gives me opportunity of paying homage not only to America, but also to Italian Americans. It is also a thank to that America which has welcomed and made them part of this country, which offered them the opportunity to enjoy wealth and offered them the opportunity to give a contribution, which I think has been an important one. Many of the Italian Americans now are leading the country. They are—sit in Congress and the Supreme Court, in the State government buildings and key roles of this administration, the administration of the biggest democracy in the world.

Our two countries have tackled together also recently the challenges and the problems. Our friendship is a special friendship

which has its roots in common values, in sharing a world which is inspired by love for democracy and freedom. This is the deep meaning of this bond, not only a personal bond, which I have for President Bush, but also the bond which unites our two countries and our two peoples.

Today more than ever, values do matter, in a moment when two visions—opposing visions of the world are confronted. The vision of ignorance, of prevarication, violence on the one hand, and the vision of freedom, of respect of right and equality of all human beings on the other side.

Over these years, we have shared a difficult historical moment, the tragic September—9/11, which has changed the world. We have been called upon to tackle difficult challenges, being aware of the fact that enemies must be defeated with every means available, with the strength of our beliefs and our heritage of ideals. The globalized world continues to test us by submitting us to bigger and new challenges—that we can't but give concrete answers to these challenges.

And once again was the fact of being concrete and the efficacy of the actions we agree upon, which is helping us to solve one of the most recent crises, which have affected our countries, that of the financial crisis, which we must absolutely prevent from being a crisis affecting real economy as well.

Upon indication of the other leaders of the countries which in Europe share the single—the same currency, I reported and briefed President Bush about what we decided yesterday during the summit meeting of the Euro area countries. This proposal will be then submitted to the European Council meeting, which will be held on Wednesday. And I also informed the President Bush that today at 3 o'clock, in various countries—Germany, U.K., Italy, France—council of ministers meetings were hold, which have concretely implemented through low regulations provisions the decisions which were made yesterday, in order to support real economy, in order to make it possible for liquidity to be guaranteed to our banking systems, so that banks can continue to play their role and do their job, that is, support investments by businesses and companies and support consumption.

I think this is really the objective we must pursue with a coordinated and concerted action, that is, what has been developed over the world—in the world of markets, which have moved away from reality, should not affect the reality of economies. And the concerted and common action between the United States and Europe will certainly have chances to make the real economy—to prevent real economy from being affected by what has happened all over the world in the financial markets.

So we will continue to work together. President Bush has also expressed the intention to have a meeting among the leaders in—within the G–8 in the next few weeks. I absolutely agree with him. I think that everything which can be done for a coordinated action, just to pursue a common method and behave in the same way versus this global crisis, is something which is positive.

I would like to close my statement by telling President Bush and expressing my appreciation, my friendship, my congratulations, and my love and esteem. I've been working with him very well. There has never been a moment when I saw in him interests which are not general interest. I never saw biased interest. There has never been a moment when I saw in him something different from a very sincere and pure feelings and sentiment.

He is a person—he is a man of vision. He is an idealist. And also, he has the courage of implementing what he believes is right, what he thinks needs to be done to pursue the ideals which he considers to be right for himself, his people, and the world. The United States has taken over the responsibility of taking care of the world.

I would like to express special thanks to President Bush and to his people for what America and United States have been doing over these years. And not only did they save us, save Europe from communism, nazism many years ago, but it—also, the United States has helped us to achieve welfare, wealth, and well-being. They were next to us over the cold war years. Every time that wounds opened in the world, the United States sent its troops, paying a very high price in terms of human lives, to guarantee freedom—not only the United States, but the rest of the world as well.

And I think we—all European citizens must be grateful to the United States for this. We must be grateful to the American people. We must bow in front of the sacrifices and the sacrifices of so many lives. And we have to state and say that never, ever—the U.S. troops continued to stay in countries where they had intervened to help people save their lives, so they did never stay there to occupy out of interest. And this has to be remembered by all Europeans.

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for being here. And believe me, believe me that my feelings are shared by the great majority of Italians and European citizens as well.

Thank you very much. Thank you again.

President Bush. Thank you. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. Prime Minister Berlusconi spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy

October 13, 2008

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Vice President, Mrs. Cheney, Madam Speaker, Members of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, members of my Cabinet, honored guests: Laura and I are so pleased to welcome you to the White House.

Every year on Columbus Day, we remember the remarkable history that unites America and Italy. That history began more than five centuries ago when an Italian explorer sighted land after a long ocean voyage. Many believed Christopher Columbus had reached the Far East, but another Italian explorer helped show otherwise. Amerigo Vespucci's journeys revealed that the land was a new world, and America will always be proud to carry his name.

Through the years, generations of Italian immigrants have made their own voyage to the New World. They brought with them a vibrant culture and a strong sense of family. And today, their children and grandchildren have risen to some of the highest offices in our land. Among our guests tonight is the first Italian American Speaker of the House, and first woman, Nancy Pelosi. And we're also honored to be joined by the first Italian American Justices of the United States Supreme Court, Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito.

The ties between the people of America and the people of Italy run deep, and the friendship between our countries has never been stronger. The United States and Italy are standing together against the forces of tyranny and terror. We're partnering to meet the challenges in our economies and expand trade and prosperity. And we share a vision of a future of freedom and hope for all the people.

Mr. Prime Minister, you're a strong leader. I admire your enterprising spirit, your

visionary leadership, and your commitment to your word. I've enjoyed serving with you on the world stage. I'm honored to call you a close friend.

And it is now my privilege to offer a toast to the Prime Minister of Italy, Silvio Berlusconi.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:06 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Berlusconi.

Remarks on the National Economy
October 14, 2008

Good morning. I just completed a meeting with my Working Group on Financial Markets. We discussed the unprecedented and aggressive steps the Federal Government is taking to address the financial crisis. Over the past few weeks, my administration has worked with both parties in Congress to pass a financial rescue plan. Federal agencies have moved decisively to shore up struggling institutions and stabilize our markets, and the United States has worked with partners around the world to coordinate our actions to get our economies back on track.

This weekend, I met with finance ministers from the G–7 and the G–20, organizations representing some of the world's largest and fastest growing economies. We agreed on a coordinated plan for action to provide new liquidity, strengthen financial institutions, protect our citizens' savings, and ensure fairness and integrity in the markets. Yesterday leaders in Europe moved forward with this plan. They announced significant steps to inject capital into their financial systems by purchasing equities in major banks, and they announced a new effort to jump-start lending by providing temporary government guarantees for bank loans. These are wise and timely actions, and they have the full support of the United States.

Today I am announcing new measures America is taking to implement the G–7 action plan and strengthen banks across our country.

First, the Federal Government will use a portion of the $700 billion financial rescue plan to inject capital into banks by purchasing equity shares. This new capital will help healthy banks continue making loans to businesses and consumers, and this new capital will help struggling banks fill the hole created by losses during the financial crisis, so they can resume lending and help spur job creation and economic growth. This is an essential short-term measure to ensure the viability of America's banking system. And the program is carefully designed to encourage banks to buy these shares back from the Government when the markets stabilize and they can raise capital from private investors.

Second, and effective immediately, the FDIC will temporarily guarantee most new debt issued by insured banks. This will address one of the central problems plaguing our financial system. Banks have been unable to borrow money, and that has restricted their ability to lend to consumers and businesses. When money flows more freely between banks, it will make it easier for Americans to borrow for cars and homes and for small businesses to expand.

Third, the FDIC will immediately and temporarily expand Government insurance to cover all noninterest-bearing transaction accounts. These accounts are used primarily

by small businesses to cover day-to-day operations. By insuring every dollar in these accounts, we will give small-business owners peace of mind and bring stability to the—and bring greater stability to the banking system.

Fourth, the Federal Reserve will soon finalize work on a new program to serve as a buyer of last resort for commercial paper. This is a key source of short-term financing for American businesses and financial institutions. And by unfreezing the market for commercial paper, the Federal Reserve will help American businesses meet payroll and purchase inventory and invest to create jobs.

In a few moments, Secretary Paulson and other members of my Working Group on Financial Markets will explain these steps in greater detail. They will make clear that each of these new programs contains safeguards to protect the taxpayers. They will make clear that the Government's role will be limited and temporary. And they will make clear that these measures are not intended to take over the free market, but to preserve it.

The measures I have announced today are the latest steps in this systematic approach to address the crisis. I know Americans are deeply concerned about the stress in our financial markets and the impact it is having on their retirement accounts and 401(k)s and college savings and other investments. I recognize that the action leaders are taking here in Washington and in European capitals can seem distant from those concerns. But these efforts are designed to directly benefit the American people by stabilizing our overall financial system and helping our economy recover.

It will take time for our efforts to have their full impact, but the American people can have confidence about our long-term economic future. We have a strategy that is broad, that is flexible, and that is aimed at the root cause of our problem. Nations around the world are working together to overcome this challenge. And with confidence and determination, we will return our economies to the path of growth and prosperity.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2007 Stanley Cup Champion Detroit Red Wings
October 14, 2008

Please be seated—not you all. [*Laughter*] It is a pleasure to welcome the Stanley Cup Champion Detroit Red Wings back to the White House. Yes, please hold your applause. [*Laughter*] I am looking forward to getting a jersey, as opposed to an octopus. [*Laughter*]

In 2002, the Red Wings were the first NHL team I hosted for a Stanley Cup ceremony. Turns out they are the last team I'll be hosting. [*Laughter*] You guys may be back next year, but not me. [*Laughter*] So I welcome you here.

The race for the Cup was thrilling. You started the season on a tear; you ended with a league-leading 115 points. In the playoffs, you beat Nashville, swept Colorado, dusted Dallas. [*Laughter*] In game five of the finals, you were just 34 seconds from raising the Cup when the Pittsburgh Penguins scored to tie the game, then scored in triple overtime to extend the series. But you did not get discouraged. You

were determined, and you won. And we congratulate you for winning a very, very hard cup to win, the Stanley Cup.

I want to thank the Ilitch family for joining us. Give Mom and Dad my very best. I want to welcome and congratulate Ken Holland, general manager, the Detroit club; Mike Babcock, the head coach; the commissioner—Mr. Commissioner, welcome. I'm proud you're here.

Carl Levin, Senator from the great State of Michigan, representing all the Red Wing fans who have joined us today. Senator, I'm glad you're here. Members of my administration, who should be working but instead are—[*laughter*]. Of course, we welcome the players, the coaches, the personnel, and all the fans.

I want to thank the members of the Armed Forces for joining us. We are proud of your service to the United States of America.

And finally, it is a pleasure to welcome future Stanley Cuppers, the Auburn [Ashburn] * Xtreme Hockey Club. I guess "extreme" means extremely good. [*Laughter*] Anyway, we're glad you're here. Thanks for coming. I know the players are thrilled that you've come as well.

The Stanley Cup is the oldest trophy in professional sports. It's also very difficult to win. It takes 4 rounds in the playoffs—16 wins in as many as 28 games—before an NHL player can skate and hold the Cup. That's a lot of work after a regular season.

The players here met the grueling test, and they set some impressive records along the way. Johan Franzen, affectionately known as the Mule—[*laughter*]. Where's Johan? Yes. [*Laughter*] I call Johan "Sir." [*Laughter*] He broke Gordie Howe's franchise record for the most game-winning goals in a single month, the team record for the most goals in a single playoff series, and he set the league record for most goals in a four-game sweep.

Kris Draper set an unofficial record of sorts. He is the first player to score a playoff with his teeth. [*Laughter*] Where is he? [*Laughter*] Those are beauties. [*Laughter*] But somebody said they wished he'd have kept his Chuck Norris beard. [*Laughter*]

Chris Chelios set a record when he played his 248th career playoff game. At 46 years old—or 46 years young—Chris is the oldest player to win the Stanley Cup and the second oldest player to play in the NHL. That guy is going to play a lot more. I mean, if he can do it age 46, why not 52, like Gordie Howe? [*Laughter*]

Put that in perspective, Chris's defensive partner, Brett Lebda, is 26 years old. As a kid, he rooted for Chris when he played for the Chicago Blackhawks. Hey, guys, imagine how cool this is? You grew up with a player as your idol, and then you got to play with him to win the Stanley Cup.

Particularly inspired by the story of Darren McCarty. Darren played 11 season with the Red Wings between 1993 and 2004, but he had a problem. He drank too much, and it brought his career to an early end. But Darren McCarty did not give up. Darren McCarty decided to do something about it. Last fall, he approached his friend, Kris Draper, told him he'd cleaned up his life, and he thought he had a little hockey left in him. So he plays for the Flint Generals in the IHL, works his way up to the Red Wings AHL affiliate, the Grand Rapids Griffins. And then in March, as the playoffs approached, Darren got a call from the Red Wings offering him a shot with the team.

This guy got his life back together, seized the moment, and scored the opening goal in game two of the series against Nashville. That is a stout story. And where are you, Darren? Yes, congratulations to you.

One of the things that is really interesting about the Stanley Cup is that every player on the championship team gets to take the trophy home for a day. Red Wings players took the Cup on adventures across the world, to Sweden, Finland, the Czech

* White House correction.

Republic, Slovakia, and Russia. Coach Babcock took the Cup water skiing. Slalom or two skis? [*Laughter*]

Anyway, several players had young relatives baptized with the Cup. Others let their children use it as a bowl for cereal, for ice cream, and donuts. Tomas Kopecky took it home to Slovakia and used it as a bowl for a special Slovakian broth. No telling what was in that special Slovakian broth. [*Laughter*]

Many Red Wings used their time with the Cup to lift the lives of others. Kris Draper took the Cup to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. That must have been a joyous moment for them to see the Cup. Coach Babcock took it to visit the disabled residents of a Sherbrooke Community Centre. Brian Rafalski took it to a Wisconsin veterans home.

Chris Osgood, Dan Cleary, Kris Draper, and Brett Lebda took the Cup to visit the troops at Michigan's Selfridge Air National Guard Base. And today Red Wings players took the Cup to visit wounded warriors at Walter Reed. As the Commander in Chief of a fabulous military, I thank you for honoring our troops.

There is a sign over the door of the Red Wings locker at Joe Louis Arena that reads this: "To whom much is given, much is expected." The Red Wings live up to those words on the ice and off the ice. And so I congratulate the players, their wives/girlfriends, the coaches, all those who support the team; the unheralded heroes in the locker room that make sure the lives of these players is as comfortable as possible—the trainers, the laundry handlers, the equipment handlers. I congratulate you for achieving a dream that millions of kids dream about, including those in the room.

Thanks for bringing the Cup to the White House. Good luck for the rest of the season. May God bless you.

And now it is my honor to bring Captain Nick Lidstrom to the podium.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher Ilitch, vice president, Michael and Marian Ilitch, owners, Johan Franzen, Darren McCarty, Tomas Kopecky, and Daniel Cleary, right wings, Gordie Howe, former right wing, Kris Draper, center, Chris Chelios, Brett Lebda, and Brian Rafalski, defensemen, and Chris Osgood, goal tender, Detroit Red Wings; Gary B. Bettman, commissioner, National Hockey League; and actor Chuck Norris. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Nicklas Lidstrom, defenseman and team captain, Detroit Red Wings.

Statement on Signing the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008
October 14, 2008

Today I have signed into law H.R. 928, the "Inspector General Reform Act of 2008." The Act amends various authorities related to Federal Inspectors General.

Section 6 of the bill gives Inspectors General the right to obtain legal advice from lawyers working for an Inspector General. It is important that Inspectors General have timely and accurate legal advice. It is also important that agencies have structures through which to reach a single, final authoritative determination for the agency of what the law is. This determination is subject to the authority of the Attorney General with respect to legal questions within, and the President's authority to supervise, the executive branch and, of course, the courts in specific cases or controversies. To this end, the "rule of construction" in section 6 ensures that, within

each agency, the determinations of the law remain ultimately the responsibility of the chief legal officer and the head of the agency.

Section 8 of the bill includes provisions that purport to direct or regulate the content of the President's budget submissions, including provisions that purport to direct the President to include the comments of Inspectors General with respect to those submissions. The President's budget submissions are recommendations for enactment of legislation appropriating funds. The executive branch shall construe section 8 of the bill in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 14, 2008.

NOTE: H.R. 928, signed October 14, was assigned Public Law No. 110–409.

Statement on Signing the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009
October 14, 2008

Today I have signed into law S. 3001, the "Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009." The Act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, and for national security-related energy programs.

Provisions of the Act, including sections 851, 902, 1211(2), and 1508(b), purport to impose requirements that could inhibit the President's ability to carry out his constitutional obligations to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, to protect national security, to conduct diplomatic negotiations, to supervise the executive branch, to appoint officers of the United States, and to execute his authority as Commander in Chief. The executive branch shall continue to construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority and obligations of the President.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 14, 2008.

NOTE: S. 3001, signed October 14, was assigned Public Law No. 110–417.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying the Secretary of the Treasury To Purchase Troubled Assets
October 14, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 115(a)(2) of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–343) (the "Act"), I hereby certify that it is necessary for the Secretary of the Treasury to exercise the authority granted under the Act to purchase, or commit to purchase, troubled assets up to the limit of $350 billion outstanding at any one time.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting
October 15, 2008

I called my Cabinet together for them to get a full understanding of the extraordinary actions we've taken. Many of the Cabinet members are involved with helping make sure this economy is strong in the future, no Cabinet member more involved than Secretary Paulson. And we have taken extraordinary measures because these are extraordinary circumstances.

As I said yesterday, it's very important for the American people to know that the program is designed to preserve free enterprise, not replace free enterprise. Decisions we took to enhance liquidity and make sure our financial instruments are strong is a temporary decision. For example, the equity purchases in the banks is designed so that these shares will eventually be sold back to the Government [banks].*

Secondly, the program is limited. In other words, the Government will buy only a certain number of shares in individual banks. These banks will be privately controlled. In other words, the liquidity measures being taken are structured such that the Government will be a passive investor. In other words, there won't be Government officials sitting on the boards of private companies.

These are extraordinary measures, no question about it. But they're well thought out, they are necessary, and I'm confident in the long run, this economy will come back.

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you and your team for working hard during these extraordinary times.

We analyzed the situation very carefully. And the American people must understand that this carefully structured plan is aimed at helping you. If I'd have thought this situation would have been contained only to Wall Street, we'd have had a different response. But in our judgment, had we not acted decisively at the time we did, the credit crunch, the inability for banks in your communities to loan to your businesses, would have affected the working people and the small businesses of America. And that's unacceptable to me, and that's unacceptable to this Cabinet.

And so I'm looking forward to going to Michigan today to talk to small-business owners and community bankers and workers that have been affected by the economy. I'm looking forward to hearing what they have to say. And I'm looking forward to sharing my thoughts about why the Government has taken these temporary measures designed to make sure that their lives are, you know, have the best shot at dealing with this financial crisis.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

* White House correction.

Remarks Following a Video Teleconference With Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Team Leaders and Brigade Combat Commanders
October 15, 2008

I've just finished a meeting with our Ambassador and General Odierno, members of our—some of the PRTs, Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq, four folks who have been spending time in Iraq. We are having success in Iraq. And one of the main reasons why is we're implementing an innovative strategy that combines our military with civilian expertise to help people at the grassroots level build a society that will lay the foundations for peace.

And so it's been a fascinating discussion, and I come away with a couple of thoughts. One, America is fortunate to have courageous souls volunteer to help develop an ally in the war against extremists, to develop a democracy in a part of the world where a lot of people said a democracy could never flourish; and secondly, that we are implementing a strategy in the Provinces which is effective.

The good thing about our military and our civilians in the PRTs, they're constantly looking at ways to make sure that we remain effective. And I have asked the press corps to come in here so I could, on TV, thank you all for what you're doing and thank you for your service. We are fortunate to have citizens such as yourself.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; and Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters in Ada, Michigan
October 15, 2008

The President. First of all, I want to thank leaders and small businesses and workers here in Grand Rapids for joining me. I explained to them why I felt the rescue plan was necessary. I explained to them that I was worried that if we did not do something about the financial situation, the economics would affect a lot of hard-working people all throughout our country, including right here in western Michigan.

So we moved with a plan big enough to make a difference, a plan with features in it that will cause investments to be temporary, because I frankly don't want the Government being involved with businesses, owning businesses. It's not—I don't think it's good for the country. It was necessary that the stock be purchased to help us through this financial crisis, but in the long run, it's not good for the country. And so the plan is structured to get Government in a position where these investments will be returned to the taxpayers. And it's likely, not only—by the way, that we'll not only get most of the money back, but in some cases, actually make a little money.

I made it a plan that is effective so it helps small-business owners. The man who owns the bike shop here, he's got to pay for his inventory. And yet because of the crisis, people are worried about whether

the money in their banks, their noninterest-bearing transactional accounts, would be safe. And so we said, they are safe, all aiming to restore confidence in our financial systems, all aiming to make sure that the folks out there that are watching their 401(k)s decline know that the Government is taking strong action to bring—to get this crisis over with, so we can get back to the business of getting this economy back on its feet again.

So I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to hear from you. We've got some community bankers here that have been affected by the plan we put in place, and their bank lending is now secured by the FDIC. And I bring a sense of optimism and realism. I'm realistic about how tough the situation is. I'm optimistic that we're going to come through it. And I believe when we come through it, we're going to be better than ever.

And finally, I want to assure the folks out here that we're not going to be using your taxpayers' money to, you know, enrich financiers, that we're going to protect your money, we're going to help you get it back. But people aren't going to be able to have a golden parachute as a result of your hard work and money going to help provide stability in our financial system.

So I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come. This is—it's good to be out of Washington—[*laughter*]—out here with people who are taking risk and working hard and where values are strong. And I thank you all for giving me a chance to come and see you. Congressman, thank you.

Representative Vernon J. Ehlers. Thank you very much. Thank you for being here.

Vice President's Health

Q. How's the Vice President? How's his health?

The President. The Vice President is going to be fine. I talked to him this morning. Thank you for asking. He was at our briefings this morning. He came in and told me he was going to head back into the hospital to have his, you know, his heart checked and worked on. And he said this is the exact same procedure he had a while ago. And he was confident, the doctors are confident, and therefore, I'm confident.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. at the Schnitz Ada Grill. Participating in the meeting were Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers; Nancy Ayers, general manager, Flexco—Grand Rapids; Jeanne Englehart, president and chief executive officer, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce; James Dunlap, regional vice president, Huntington National Bank; Bing Goei, owner, Eastern Floral and Gifts, Inc.; James Hackett, president and chief executive officer, Steelcase, Inc.; James Ippel, owner, Ada Bike Shop; Peter Perez, president, and Jerri Symmes, employee, Carter Products Company, Inc.; Michelle Van Dyke, president and chief executive officer, Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan); and James Zawacki, president and chief executive officer, GR Spring & Stamping, Inc. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Joint Statement by G–8 Leaders on the Global Economy
October 15, 2008

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the President of the European Commission, are united in our commitment to fulfill our shared responsibility to resolve

the current crisis, strengthen our financial institutions, restore confidence in the financial system, and provide a sound economic footing for our citizens and businesses.

We welcome and commend the recent decisions and actions taken in support of implementation of the G–7 Plan of Action, adopted by finance ministers and central bank governors and endorsed by the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund, which set forth a concerted framework for individual and collective action. These measures will help financial institutions gain access to needed capital, support systemically important financial institutions and prevent their failure, unfreeze credit markets, restart secondary markets for mortgages, and protect savers and depositors. We will implement these measures on an urgent, transparent, and non-discriminatory basis. We pledge continued close cooperation and coordination.

As we address the current crisis, we will work to mitigate its adverse impacts on emerging economies and developing nations, and we strongly support the IMF's critical role in assisting affected countries. We reaffirm that open economies and well-regulated markets are essential to economic growth, employment, and prosperity. We, therefore, underscore the importance of not turning inward and of continuing efforts to promote trade and investment liberalization, which over the past several decades has significantly raised the global standard of living and lifted millions out of poverty. In this regard, we are determined to intensify efforts to bring about a successful conclusion of the WTO negotiations with an ambitious and balanced outcome.

While our focus now is on the immediate task of stabilizing markets and restoring confidence, changes to the regulatory and institutional regimes for the world's financial sectors are needed to remedy deficiencies exposed by the current crisis. The discussions elaborating such changes, building on the efforts of the Financial Stability Forum and the IMF, must involve both developed and developing countries. We look forward to a leaders' meeting with key countries at an appropriate time in the near future to adopt an agenda for reforms to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We are confident that, working together, we will meet the present challenges and return our economies to stability and prosperity.

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

Remarks on Signing the Andean Trade Preference Act Extension
October 16, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you all for coming. I am pleased that legislation extending the Andean Trade Preference Act has made it to my desk, and I'm looking forward to signing this piece of legislation.

With this bill, our Nation is showing our commitment to economic growth in our hemisphere and to a global system based upon free and open trade. And I want to thank the United States Congress for passing this bill with strong bipartisan support.

Appreciate members of my administration who worked hard on the bill: Condi Rice, Carlos Gutierrez, and Sue Schwab. I want to thank members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. I welcome Luis Moreno, the President of the Inter-American Development Bank. I want to thank

the members of the congressional staff who are here.

Across the world, citizens are concerned about the financial crisis, and they should be. And our Governments are working together to address it. This past weekend, I met with the finance ministers from the G–7 and G–20, organizations representing some of the fastest and largest growing economies in the world. Yesterday I joined other G–8 leaders in a statement that reaffirms our commitment to resolve the crisis. In other words, we're working together. We want to make sure we're coordinated in our response. All our nations are carrying out a comprehensive plan of action to help unfreeze credit markets and restore confidence in our financial systems.

These are urgent short-term steps. In the long run, one of the best ways to restore confidence in the global economy is by keeping markets open to trade and investment. Last year, America set a record by exporting more than $1.6 trillion of goods and services. Exports now make up a greater share of our gross domestic product than at any time in our history. People are finding good-paying jobs when they work for businesses that export.

Opening markets benefits our trading partners. For example, this deal, this law I'm signing, will help hard-working people in countries affected. It will help people have a better way of life. We want there to be a prosperous neighborhood. It's in the interest of the United States that prosperity spreads throughout our neighborhood.

So Congress was right to pass this bill, ensuring duty-free access to the U.S. market for trading partners in South America, including our friends Colombia and Peru. The Andea [Andean]* Trade Preference Act allows us to suspend trade preferences with countries that do not live up to their promises. And unfortunately, Bolivia has failed to cooperate with the United States on important efforts to fight drug trafficking. So, sadly, I have proposed to suspend Bolivia's trade preferences until it fulfills its obligations.

Now that Members of Congress have ensured duty-free access for American—South American products entering our markets, they also need to ensure duty-free access for U.S. products entering South American markets. Congress has a good opportunity to take a step in that direction by approving our free trade agreement with Colombia. More than 90 percent of Colombia's exports currently enter the U.S. duty free. Yet American's goods sold in Colombia continue to face high tariffs. The Colombia free trade agreement would eliminate these trade barriers. It will level the playing field for America's businesses and farmers and ranchers and workers.

Seems to me, it'd make a lot of sense to simply—asking the Congress to sign a trade deal that allows us to be treated just like we've treated other people. Unfortunately, nearly 2 years have passed since the United States and Colombia signed our free trade agreement. During that time, an estimated $1.3 billion of tariffs have been levied on American products exported to Colombia. These tariffs reduce the competitiveness of thousands of American companies that do business in that nation. By approving our free trade agreement, Colombia—Congress can directly benefit American workers and ranchers and farmers and give them greater confidence about our economic future.

Congress is coming back to Washington next month. One of their top priorities should be to approve this vital agreement with Colombia, as well as with Panama and South Korea. These free trade agreements will strengthen our relationships with key allies. They will create new opportunities for our consumers and businesses. They will reassure our trading partners that America will not give in to pessimism or protectionism. They will show that we honor our commitments.

* White House correction.

And now it's my honor to sign the Andean Trade Preference Act.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. H.R. 7222, approved October 16, was assigned Public Law No. 110-436.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia
October 16, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect beyond October 21, 2008.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property and interests in property that are in the United States or within the possession or control of United States persons and by depriving them of access to the U.S. market and financial system.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 17. The notice of October 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks to the United States Chamber of Commerce
October 17, 2008

Good morning. I am pleased to be back to the U.S. Chamber. I want to thank the members of this fine organization for your efforts to support the spirit of free enterprise and to advance the interests of businesses, large and small, across our great country. I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk to you about a subject that's on all our minds, and that's the economy.

Bruce, I want to thank you for your leadership and your friendship. I want to appreciate the other members of the U.S. Chamber leadership group that is with us. I welcome the entrepreneurs that are with us; fellow citizens.

Our Nation is dealing with a serious financial crisis. Over the past month, Americans have witnessed fast-moving events involving complicated financial issues. I know many of our citizens are concerned about their finances. They're worried about the extent of Government intervention into the marketplace. In my conversations with business owners and workers and families across our country, I've heard the same message. The American people want a clear explanation of what this crisis means for them, what the Government is doing to fix it, and how this will affect the future of the free market that makes our economy so dynamic and prosperous. And that's what I've come to talk about.

To understand how this crisis unfolded, you have to look back more than a decade. For many years, the combination of low interest rates and the inflow of capital from around the world produced a period of easy credit here in the United States. This trend was especially apparent in the booming housing market, where many lenders issued mortgages to borrowers who could not otherwise afford homes. Many of those loans were then packaged into complex financial assets, which were sold to banks and investors all across the world.

These developments came together to set off a chain reaction when the housing market began to decline. With the supply of homes exceeding the demand from potential buyers, home values dropped. In addition, many homeowners with adjustable rate mortgages saw their interest rates suddenly reset to higher levels. Both these factors caused a number of borrowers to default on their mortgages. In turn, many institutions holding assets related to those mortgages suffered serious losses, which caused some of them to run short of capital. This led to high-profile bank failures, restrictions in lending, and widespread anxiety, all of which contributed to sharp swings in the stock market.

These developments were most visible on Wall Street, but their impact has reached far beyond. The drops in the stock market have eroded the value of Americans' retirement accounts and 401(k)s. The tightening of credit has made it more expensive for many families to borrow money for cars and homes and college tuition. Many healthy businesses have found it harder to get loans to expand their operations and to create jobs for our workers.

The Federal Government has responded to this crisis with systematic and aggressive measures to protect the financial security of the American people. People look at this crisis and say, "Oh, it's only Wall Street." I don't think so. As a matter of fact, I know that if we had not acted, it could affect the American people directly. The actions will take more time to have their full impact. It took a while for the credit system to freeze up; it's going to take a while for the credit system to thaw. These are decisive measures aimed at the heart of our financial challenges. And they're big enough and bold enough to work. And the American people can be confident that they will.

Let me explain this approach piece by piece.

First, the Government has focused on preserving the stability of the overall financial system. For example, out of concern that the failure of Bear Stearns, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and AIG could collapse our financial system, the Government moved to protect the American people. We prevented a disorderly failure of these large, interconnected firms, and we did so in a way that protects taxpayers and does not shield executives from the consequences of their irresponsible decisions.

Second, the Government has taken unprecedented action to boost liquidity, the grease that keeps the gears of our financial

system turning. The Federal Reserve has used a variety of tools to inject hundreds of billions of dollars in new liquidity into the financial system. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has temporarily guaranteed most new debt issued by insured banks, which will make it easier for banks to borrow needed money from each other. The Federal Reserve has announced a new program to provide support for commercial paper, which is a key source of short-term financing for American businesses and financial institutions.

Third, the Government has provided substantial new protections for responsible consumers, businesses, and investors. The Federal Government has temporarily expanded the amount of money insured in bank and credit union savings accounts, checking accounts, and certificates of deposit from $100,000 to $250,000. The FDIC has created a new short-term program to grant unlimited insurance for non-interest-bearing transaction accounts used by many small businesses. The Treasury has offered temporary Government insurance for money market mutual funds. The Securities and Exchange Commission is vigorously investigating fraud, manipulation, and abuse in the markets. These steps being taken by all these Federal agencies: providing greater peace of mind for the American people and greater stability for our financial system.

Fourth, the United States is cooperating closely with our partners overseas, who are also feeling the effects of this global crisis. Last week, the Federal Reserve and other central banks around the world enacted a joint cut in interest rates, which will help ease the pressure on credit markets around the world.

Last weekend, I met with finance ministers from the G–7 and G–20, groups representing some of the world's largest and fastest growing economies. On Wednesday, leaders of the G–8 issued a statement underscoring our commitment to work together to resolve the crisis. The statement calls for a leaders meeting with a broader group of countries, developed and developing, to work together to improve the regulatory and institutional structures of our nations' financial systems.

Earlier this week, leaders in Europe announced steps to purchase equity in major banks and provide temporary Government guarantees for bank loans. Tomorrow at Camp David, I'll continue our close consultations by meeting with President Sarkozy of France and President Barroso of the European Commission.

Our European partners are taking bold steps. They show the world that we're determined to overcome this challenge together, and they have the full support of the United States.

Finally, the Government has undertaken an historic effort to address the underlying problem behind the freeze in the credit markets. Earlier this month, Congress passed bipartisan legislation authorizing the Treasury Department to use up to $700 billion to help banks rebuild capital. This week, I announced that the Treasury will use a portion of that money to inject capital directly into banks by purchasing equity shares. Large banks, as well as smaller banks, community banks, and regional banks, will all be able to participate, at their choice. The new capital will help banks fill the gaps created by losses during the financial crisis, so they can make loans to businesses and consumers.

In addition, the Treasury will use part of the $700 billion to purchase some of the troubled assets that are weighing down banks' balance sheets and clogging the financial system. This extraordinary effort is consistent with the G–7 action plan. It is designed with one overriding purpose: to help banks get money flowing, so small businesses can thrive and hire, so big businesses won't shut down operations. To help the American people is the goal of this plan.

The actions I just outlined represent an extraordinary response to an extraordinary

crisis. Some of the steps may sound like technical matters, but they will contribute real benefits to the American people. As they take effect, they'll help restore stability and confidence in the financial markets. They'll make it easier for Americans to borrow money for their cars and for colleges and basic necessities. They will speed the day when communities across our Nation return to the path of prosperity, job creation, and long-term economic growth.

I know many Americans have reservations about the Government's approach, especially about allowing the Government to hold shares in private banks. As a strong believer in free markets, I would oppose such measures under ordinary circumstances. But these are not ordinary circumstances. We took this measure as a last resort. Had the Government not acted, the hole in our financial system would have grown larger. Families and firms would have had an even tougher time getting loans, and ultimately, the Government would have been forced to respond with even more drastic and costly measures later on.

Some have viewed this temporary measure as a step toward nationalizing banks. This is simply not the case. This program is designed with strong protections to ensure the Government's involvement in individual banks is limited in size, limited in scope, and limited in duration.

The Government's involvement is limited in size. The Government will only buy a small percentage of shares in banks that choose to participate so that private investors retain majority ownership.

The Government's involvement is limited in scope. The Government will not exercise control over any private firm. Federal officers will not have a seat around your local bank's boardroom table. The shares owned by the Government will have voting rights that can be used only to protect the taxpayers' investment, not to direct the firm's operations.

The Government's involvement is limited in duration. It includes provisions to encourage banks to buy their shares back from the Government when markets stabilize and they can raise money from private investors. This will ensure that banks have an incentive to find private capital to replace the taxpayers' investment and to do so quickly.

For those worried about the long-term consequences of the actions, our history offers some comfort. On several occasions over the past century, the Government has taken partial ownership of private companies in the banking industry during times of great financial challenge, most recently during the savings and loans failures of the 1980s and 1990s. In every case, the Government relinquished its ownership stakes after the crisis ended, and we will do so again. The Government intervention is not a Government takeover. Its purpose is not to weaken the free market, it is to preserve the free market.

I know many are worried about the price tag of this rescue package. Every dollar spent will be subject to strong oversight by a bipartisan board. We will ensure that failed executives do not receive a windfall from hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

Ultimately, we believe the final cost will be significantly less than the initial investment. This is true for two reasons. First, many of the troubled assets that the Government buys will increase in value as the market recovers. That means that the Government eventually will be able to resell them for a higher price. Second, the Government will receive quarterly dividends from the equity shares it purchases in financial institutions. If banks do not repurchase these shares within 5 years, the dividends they owe the Government will increase substantially. This provides a clear incentive for banks to buy back their shares, thus returning the money to the taxpayers as soon as possible.

As we work to resolve the current crisis, we must also work to ensure that this situation never happens again. Above all, this requires updating the way we regulate America's financial system. Our 21st-century global economy continues to be regulated by laws written in the 20th century. Secretary Paulson has proposed a detailed blueprint for modernizing these regulations; others have put forward good suggestions. Enacting these ideas into law must be a top priority for the next President and the next Congress.

Just as importantly, we must guard against unintended consequences. We must ensure that new regulations aimed at Wall Street do not end up hurting responsible business owners, limiting the ability of American firms to raise capital, or putting American workers at a competitive disadvantage. We must ensure that this crisis does not become an excuse to raise taxes on hard-working Americans, which would only make the problem worse. We must ensure that our efforts to prevent a recurrence of this global crisis do not lead us to give in to false temptations of economic isolationism. The best way to demonstrate America's commitment to open markets is for Congress to approve the Colombia, Panama, and South Korea free trade agreements this year.

We must also ensure that Government officials do not abuse our temporary position as shareholders in banks. We must not blur the line between the Government and the private sector. We must not supplant the profit motive with political motives.

We must also never lose sight of the enormous benefits delivered by the free enterprise system. Despite corrections in the marketplace and instances of abuse, democratic capitalism remains the greatest system ever devised. It allows individuals to rise as high in their societies as their talents and ambition will take them. It rewards hard work, intelligent risk-taking, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Around the world, free market policies have lifted millions of people out of poverty and given them the opportunity to build a more hopeful life. And here at home, it has given our large and dynamic economy the flexibility and resilience to absorb shocks, adjust, and bounce back stronger.

In the long run, the American people have—can have confidence that this economy will recover. America is the best place in the world to start and run a business. America is the most attractive destination for investors around the globe. America is the home of the most talented and enterprising and creative workers in the world. We're a country where all people have the freedom to realize their potential and chase their dreams. This promise has defined our Nation since its founding, this promise will guide us through the challenges we face today, and this promise will continue to define our Nation for generations to come.

Thank you for listening. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Bruce R. Josten, executive vice president of government affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Visa Waiver Program
October 17, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome to the White House. I'm pleased to stand with the representatives of seven countries—the Czech Republic,

Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and South Korea—that have met the requirements to be admitted to the United States Visa Waiver Program. Soon the citizens of these nations will be able to travel to the United States for business or tourism without a visa. I congratulate these close friends and allies on this achievement, and I thank you for joining us here.

I also thank Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of the Homeland—Department of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff for working hard to make sure this day has finally arrived. Appreciate other members of the administration here and members of the diplomatic corps.

All of the nations represented here today allow American citizens to travel to their countries visa free. The United States has not accorded their citizens the same privilege. For years, the leaders of these nations have explained to me how frustrating it is for their citizens to wait in lines, pay visa fees to take a vacation or make a business trip or visit their families here in the United States. These close friends of America told me that it was unfair that their people had to jump through bureaucratic hoops that other allies can walk around. I told them I agree with them. I also told them that in the world after September the 11th, we could only expand travel opportunities if we increased security measures at the same time.

So nearly 2 years ago, my administration asked Congress to modernize our Visa Waiver Program in a way that accomplished both of these goals. I appreciate the bipartisan support this initiative has received on Capitol Hill. My administration worked with Congress to pass a law allowing us to admit new countries to the Visa Waiver Program. These countries agree to share information about threats to our people. They also agree that their citizens use a new system that requires travelers to register online ahead of their visits to the United States. These citizens will travel to the United States only if they have tamper-proof biometric passports. I'm grateful to the dedicated officers from the United States and our allies who worked hard to complete the agreements to meet these new requirements.

Because of this good work, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff has notified our Congress the administration intends to use its new authority to admit seven countries into the Visa Waiver Program. In about a month, we will be proud to extend to citizens of these seven countries the privilege of visa-free travel.

Today's announcement signifies a new chapter in the relationship between the United States and your nations. It is a testament to the strong bonds of friendship that unite our people.

This is a significant achievement, but it is only the start. A number of America's other close friends are participating in a process called the Visa Waiver Roadmap that is helping them qualify for the Visa Waiver Program. I welcome the Ambassadors from these roadmap countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Poland, and Romania. We thank you for coming today, we thank you for your friendship, and we look forward to the day when your countries join the Visa Waiver Program.

I believe the best foreign policy for America is one that lets people from other countries get to know this country firsthand. Throughout our history, some of the strongest advocates of freedom have been those who came to America and saw the blessings of liberty with their own eyes. Extending this opportunity to some of our closest allies deepens our friendship and makes all our countries safer. I'm grateful to all the countries here for seeking to strengthen the ties between our citizens. I look forward to even stronger partnerships in the years ahead.

Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Bulgaria's Ambassador to the U.S. Elena B. Poptodorova; Cyprus's Ambassador to the U.S. Andreas S. Kakouris; Greece's Ambassador to the U.S. Alexandros P. Mallias; Malta's Ambassador-designate to the U.S. Mark Miceli-Farrugia; Poland's Ambassador to the U.S. Robert Kupiecki; and Romania's Ambassador to the U.S. Adrian Cosmin Vierita.

The President's Radio Address
October 18, 2008

Good morning. Our Nation is dealing with a serious financial crisis. Over the past month, Americans have witnessed fast-moving events involving complicated financial issues. I know many of you are concerned about your finances. So this morning, I want to tell you how we're addressing the uncertainty in our economy.

The Federal Government has responded to this crisis with systematic and aggressive measures to protect the financial security of the American people. These actions will take more time to have their full impact, but they are big enough and bold enough to work.

The primary focus of our efforts is addressing the underlying problem behind the freeze in our credit markets. Earlier this month, Congress passed bipartisan legislation authorizing the Treasury Department to use up to $700 billion to help banks rebuild capital. This week, I announced that the Treasury will use a portion of that money to inject capital directly into banks by purchasing equity shares. This new capital will help banks continue making loans to businesses and consumers. In addition, the Treasury will use part of the $700 billion to purchase some of the troubled assets that are weighing down banks' balance sheets and clogging the financial system. This extraordinary effort is designed with one overriding purpose: to help banks get loans flowing to American consumers and businesses, so they can create jobs and grow our economy.

I know many Americans have reservations about the Government's approach, especially about allowing the Government to hold shares in private banks. As a strong believer in free markets, I would oppose such measures under ordinary circumstances. But these are no ordinary circumstances. Had the Government not acted, the hole in our financial system would have grown larger, families and businesses would have had an even tougher time getting loans, and ultimately, the Government would have been forced to respond with even more drastic and costly measures later on. So I decided that Government had to move, but that Government's involvement in individual banks had to have prudent limits.

The Government's involvement is limited in size. The Government will only buy a small percentage of shares in banks that choose to participate so that private investors retain majority ownership.

The Government's involvement is limited in scope. The Government will not exercise control over any private firm, and Federal officials will not have a seat around your local bank's boardroom table. The shares owned by the Government will have voting rights that can be used only to protect the taxpayers' investment, not to direct the firm's operations.

The Government's involvement is limited in duration. It includes provisions to encourage banks to buy their shares back from the Government when the markets stabilize and they can raise money from

private investors. This will ensure that banks have an incentive to find private capital to replace the taxpayers' investment and to do so quickly.

I know many of you are also concerned about the price tag of this rescue package. Ultimately, we believe the final cost will be significantly less than the initial investment. Many of the troubled assets that the Government buys will increase in value as the market recovers. That means the Government eventually will be able to resell them for a higher price. In addition, the Government will receive quarterly dividends from the equity shares it purchases in financial institutions. If banks do not repurchase these shares within 5 years, the dividends they owe the Government will increase substantially. This provides a clear incentive for banks to buy back their shares, thus returning the money to taxpayers as soon as possible.

In the long run, the American people can have confidence that our economy will bounce back. America is the best place in the world to start and run a business, the most attractive destination for investors around the globe, and home to the most talented, enterprising, and creative workers in the world. We're a country where all people have the freedom to realize their potential and chase their dreams. This promise has defined our Nation since its founding, this promise will guide us through the challenges we face today, and this promise will continue to define our Nation for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:45 a.m. on October 17 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 17, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With European Union Leaders at Camp David, Maryland
October 18, 2008

President Bush. I want to welcome two friends to Camp David: President Sarkozy of France, who is representing the European Union, and President Barroso of the European Commission. We're really glad you're here.

I'm looking forward to an important discussion of the global financial crisis, which is having an impact on hard-working people all across the world. The first task is to stabilize the financial markets in our own countries. Given that the world has never been more interconnected, it is essential that we work together, because we're in this crisis together.

That's why over the past few weeks, the United States and our partners in Europe have cooperated closely to address this challenge. Earlier this month, the Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, and four other central banks carried out a coordinated interest rate cut. Last weekend, G–7 finance ministers and central bank governors approved a plan of action to stabilize our markets, rebuild confidence in our financial systems, and restore the flow of credit to our businesses and our consumers.

As part of this action plan, leaders in Europe have taken measures to provide financial institutions with additional capital, provide credit guarantees, and increase deposit insurance.

In the United States, we're taking systematic and aggressive steps to help banks rebuild capital and resume lending. For example, the Treasury Department will directly inject capital into banks by purchasing equity shares. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has temporarily guaranteed most new debt issued by insured banks, which will make it easier for these banks to borrow needed money from each other. The Federal Reserve is launching a new program to provide support for commercial paper, a key source of short-term financing for America's businesses and financial institutions.

These are historic measures, suited to our system, which I believe will work. These measures will take time. We're dealing with a significant problem. But the American people and our friends around the world can know that we have confidence that the measures will work.

In addition, G–8 leaders issued a statement this week expressing support for an international meeting on the financial crisis. I've been in touch with Prime Minister Aso of Japan, who happens to be the President of the G–8, and we've been consulting with the Japanese. I look forward to hosting this meeting in the near future. Both developed and developing nations will be represented. And together we will work to strengthen and modernize our nations' financial systems, so we can help ensure that this crisis doesn't happen again.

For this meeting to be a success, we must welcome good ideas from around the world. So I'm looking forward to hearing from President Sarkozy and President Barroso this afternoon and from other leaders in the days ahead. And of course, I'll share my ideas as well.

As we make the regulatory and institutional changes necessary to avoid a repeat of this crisis, it is essential that we preserve the foundations of democratic capitalism, a commitment to free markets, free enterprise, and free trade. We must resist the dangerous temptation of economic isolationism and continue the policies of open markets that have lifted standards of living and helped millions of people escape poverty around the world.

This is a trying time for all our nations. I am confident that we will overcome the challenges we face. With determination and focused action, we will weather this crisis, return our economies to the path of prosperity and long-term growth.

Mr. President.

President Nicolas Sarkozy. President, my dear George, thank you for having invited us. We—and by that I mean, I, myself, and President Barroso—have a mandate from the 27 members of the European Union to come here and say first and foremost that this is a worldwide crisis, and therefore, we must find a worldwide solution.

Each region of the world, each part of the world—to begin with, the United States and then the European countries and now Asia—are trying to find an answer to the crisis. But this answer will be all the more effective insofar as we find it together, we speak with one and the same voice, and we build together the capitalism of the future.

I say things that I deeply believe here. This may be a great opportunity if we do not fall back into the hateful practices of the past, practices that have led us exactly where we are right now. Now, the President of the United States is right in saying that protectionism and closing one's borders is a catastrophe. He is right to say that it would be wrong, catastrophic, to challenge the foundations of market economics. But we cannot continue along the same lines, because the same problems will trigger the same disasters. We can only go forward with a sense of responsibility, and that those who have made the mistakes bear the brunt of their errors and shoulder that burden of responsibility.

And we have come here on behalf of Europe to say to this great American nation that we wish to build a better world, the

world of the 21st century, that we wish to work hand in glove in building this world with you. But we must not waste any time. We want a summit—the nations of the G–8—as has been stated—and no doubt the G–5 countries—so that together with Asian states and others, we find a worldwide solution. This must be done forthwith, as President Bush has said, possibly even before the end of the month of November.

And we believe that insofar as the crisis began in New York, then the global solution must be found to this crisis in New York. All of us putting our heads together, we must look on the fundamental rules that will apply to this 21st century of ours. We live in the 21st century, but we continue to apply 20th-century rules. Hedge funds cannot continue operating as they have in the past; tax havens, neither. Financial institutions that are under no supervisory control, this is no longer acceptable; this is no longer possible. Together among friends, among allies, we must be able to say to the world that we are determined to find a solution together, to find answers together.

George, my friend, together with Jose Manuel, myself, we speak with one and the same voice. We have brought European nations together. That was no easy task. There were British traditions, French traditions, German traditions, Latin traditions, but we found a solution. And why were we able to do so? Quite simply because this is such a serious crisis, it is such a systemic crisis.

And it is on that note that I wish to end. Why must we make haste? We must make haste because we must stabilize the marketplace as swiftly as possible by coming up with answers. Once calm has been restored, we must avoid at all costs that those who have led us to where we are today should be allowed to do so once again. We believe in the capacity and the ability of the American people to come up with the answers the world is waiting for, is expecting, because this sort of capitalism is a betrayal of the sort of capitalism we believe in.

And that is the reason why, with President Barroso, we have come to make Europe's voice heard. And next week, we will be chairing the Europe-Asia summit and get across the same message.

In today's world, this world of ours, we cannot leave anyone out—anyone out of the global worldwide solution that we need to this crisis. Thank you, Mr. President, for having invited us. Thank you for using your term of office right up until the very end to help the world find the answers to a crisis that we must contain. We must not give way to fatalism.

President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso. Mr. President, George, thank you for receiving us here at Camp David. This is a global financial crisis that requires global solutions. Europe is taking decisive action. Our 27 member states and European Union institutions have worked and have agreed this week on a common framework for directions to deal with the financial crisis. This includes measures to address liquidity in interbank markets, recapitalization of banks, and guaranteeing households' deposits. Coordination and consistency of countries' decisions is the way to secure an efficient response to these unprecedented challenges. For these unprecedented challenges, we need an unprecedented level of global coordination.

European Union and United States account for a very significant share of world finance. Around 77 percent of world wholesale finance is from the United States and from Europe. We Europeans and Americans must now join efforts and extend our cooperation to major developed and emerging countries. We must act swiftly to respond to the urgency, but we must also look forward at the medium and long term.

The international financial system, its basic principles and regulations and its institutions need reform. We need a new global financial order. Together, the European Union and the U.S., we can make

a difference. Together, we should show the way towards an international response to the financial crisis and contribute to global growth.

This is why Europe wants the calling of an international summit as soon as possible to launch an effective world response to world crisis. It's precisely because if you live in open societies and open economies—open societies need rules, the rule of law, the rule of democracy. Markets also need rules; if possibly, commonly agreed rules. And as President Sarkozy just said, we'll be this week also in Beijing for the ASEM summit, where we hope to engage also with our partners around this very line.

Addressing the financial crisis must go hand in hand with providing our enterprises and citizens the conditions for creating wealth and jobs. I really believe we have a very strong responsibility. Thank you very much for receiving us.

President Bush. Thank you, Jose.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:27 p.m. Participating in the meeting were President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. President Sarkozy spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by the United States and the European Union on the Global Economy
October 18, 2008

The three leaders had a very positive discussion about the continued coordination of steps needed to solve the crisis in today's global economy. They agreed they would reach out to other world leaders next week with the idea of beginning a series of summits on addressing the challenges facing the global economy.

World leaders will be consulted about the idea of a first summit of heads of government to be held in the U.S. soon after the U.S. elections, in order to review progress being made to address the current crisis and to seek agreement on principles of reform needed to avoid a repetition and assure global prosperity in the future. Later summits would be designed to implement agreement on specific steps to be taken to meet those principles.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Business Leaders in Alexandria, Louisiana
October 20, 2008

I am honored to be with you all. Thank you very much for hosting this meeting here—and the good folks from Alexandria and Pineville, Louisiana.

I have come to talk about the economic situation in the country. A lot of the people down here and other parts of the country are wondering why a free market-oriented President made the decisions to—necessary, well, to get the Government buying stocks in banks, for example. Why would you do that?

The answer is, because I was deeply concerned about a financial crisis becoming so profound and so acute that it hurt the people and small-business owners here in Alexandria and Pineville—that's why. If I felt that the crisis could be contained in Wall Street, then I'd have taken a different course of action. But the crisis that was gripping this country, and still has a grip on this country, affects the people around this table. And that's why I made the decision I made.

Part of that decision is to make sure that the people who end up with hard-working taxpayers' money don't enrich themselves as a result of that kind of money. As I was talking to Rodney Alexander—he's a fine Congressman from this part of the world—he said, "One thing people want to make sure of, Mr. President, is that when you invest that they're not able to take that Government investment and use it to their own advantage, personally." In other words, golden parachutes or something like that.

Secondly, I believe—and I can say this with confidence to the people out here—that I think we're going to get—be able to get most of your money back. And the reason I say that is because the Government is really making investments and obviously making investments in a difficult period for our economy. And we're big enough and patient enough to be able to hold these investments. Plus, the investments are structured to encourage, for example, big banks, when they get back on their feet and get doing better to be—to buy back the shares or get somebody else to buy back the shares.

One of the things that I have heard around the table—and I'm not surprised—is that the regional banks and the community banks, which provide such an important part of many communities—or are such an important part of many communities and provide such stability for the country's financial system, they're worried about being labeled with the same brush as some of the big banks that have had economic difficulties. And I think the people in Alexandria need to know that community banks are strong, and they got good capital ratios, and they're healthy. And that's good. It's going to be very important for the small-business sector.

I am deeply concerned about the small-business sector. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. And we've got small-business owners with us today, and one of the problems facing small-business owners is that they were very worried that their non-interest-bearing accounts in banks were not insured. And so the FDIC took action to insure those accounts so that small-business owners can be comfortable that their money they got in place for inventories are in good shape.

And then the question I've asked here is, what are the attitudes like? And I have heard that people's attitudes are beginning to change from a period of intense concerns—and I would call it near panic—to being more relaxed and beginning to see the effects of changes in the liquidity that is being pumped in the system. Now, we got a long way to go. As I said Friday, this thaw—took a while to thaw; it's going to take a while to unthaw. But it's—but the attitude here is a little different than it might have been a week ago.

And so I want to thank you all very much for giving me a chance to come visit with you. I'm very fond of this part of the country. It's not that far away from my home State. And so appreciate your time. Appreciate the good folks in this part of the world. I do want to thank all those who

have said prayers for me and Laura during our Presidency. It's meant an awful lot. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:32 p.m. at the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Certifications Pursuant to the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act
October 20, 2008

Dear _____ :

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress the certifications required under section 102(c) and section 204(a) of the "United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act," (Public Law 110–369), and a Memorandum of Justification regarding those certifications.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 21. The memorandum of October 21 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the White House Summit on International Development
October 21, 2008

Thank you all. Madam President, I could not think of anybody better to give me dancing lessons than you. [*Laughter*] We love you. I love your spirit; I love your leadership; I love the example you set for leaders all across the globe. And it's an honor to be here with you.

And it's an honor to be here with you all. I welcome you to the White House Summit on International Development. It's a summit to herald the outstanding work being done to lift up souls in need. I appreciate the fact that folks in this room represent thousands that are replacing disease with health, dependency with self-reliance, and despair with hope.

The people gathered here come from different countries—I see we represent different professions—but we're united by our commitment to charting a new era in development. Today I'm going to talk with you about this new philosophy, about the way it's transforming countries and saving lives, and about why it's essential to continue in the years ahead.

Before I do so, I want to recognize not only the President, but her son Robert. I suspect your mother tells you what to do like my mother tells me what to do. [*Laughter*] As a matter of fact, your mother tells me what to do. [*Laughter*] Welcome.

Congressman Donald Payne, we're sure proud you're here; thank you, Mr. Chairman, for coming. Much of the success of the programs we've implemented are due to, one, the generosity of the American people, but also the fine group of people that are implementers: Henrietta Fore, the Administrator of USAID; Rob Mosbacher, president and CEO of OPIC; Ambassador John Danilovich, Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO; Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator; and Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer, U.S. Malaria Coordinator. Thank you all for being leaders.

The second choice to introduce me was Bob Geldof, musician. Of course, he'd have got up and said, "I saw him try to sing while in Africa." [*Laughter*] I've come to really appreciate Bob Geldof. He is a genuine person who has used his fame to help others in need, and it is a—it's been a joy to work with you. And you know, you and I might look differently, but I think we share the same compassion and the same hopes. And thank you for joining us today.

I want to thank the panelists who have participated in this conference. I do want to welcome members of the diplomatic corps; thank you all for coming by today.

You know, we meet today in the middle of a serious global financial crisis. Over the past few weeks, we have seen how the world's economies are more interconnected than ever before. The crisis is having a major impact on working people all over the world, including many in developing nations.

During times of economic crisis, some may be tempted to turn inward, focusing on our problems here at home, while ignoring our interests around the world. This would be a serious mistake. America is committed, and America must stay committed, to international development for reasons that remain true regardless of the ebb and flow of the markets.

We believe that development is in America's security interests. We face an enemy that can't stand freedom. And the only way they can recruit to their hateful ideology is by exploiting despair, and the best way to respond is to spread hope.

We believe that we ought to remain committed to development because it's in our long-term economic interests. When America helps developing nations rise out of poverty, we create new markets for our goods and services and better jobs for American workers.

And we're committed to development because it's in our moral interests. I strongly believe in the timeless truth, to whom much is given, much is required. We are a blessed nation, and I believe we have a duty to help those less fortunate around the world. We believe that power to save lives comes with the obligation to use it. And I believe our Nation is better when we help people fight hunger and disease and illiteracy.

For all of these reasons, this administration has made international development one of our biggest priorities. As the President mentioned, we've worked with partner nations—as well as the World Bank and the IMF and the African Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank—to relieve tens of billions of dollars in debt from some of the world's poorest nations. By relieving crushing debt burdens, it gives people hope. We've also worked with wealthier nations to provide aid in the form of grants instead of loans. For the past 8 years, the United States has provided more foreign assistance than at any time in the past half century.

We're using this aid to foster sustainable economic growth and promote good governance and advance a model of true partnership that gives poor nations a real stake in their own development. We're encouraging volunteer organizations, local charities, and the faith community to take on an even greater role, because we strongly believe that they offer compassion that no

government can offer. Most of all, we're insisting on accountability in return for our assistance, so we can ensure that our generosity leads to measurable results. You know, for too long, foreign aid was designed to make us feel good. Now we're ensuring that our resources do good.

This new approach to development is embodied by a revolutionary initiative called the Millennium Challenge Account. See, this program says that the United States will help, but we expect countries that we help to fight corruption and to govern justly. There's nothing more pitiful than to have people's hopes robbed by corrupt government officials. We say to those we want to help, support open markets to trade and investment, and above all, invest in your people's health and education. You see, by tying our aid to these policies, we are encouraging developing nations to make tough economic and political and social reforms. We encourage leaders to respect their citizens, uphold human dignity, and work to earn the trust of their people. This approach is based on a clear conviction: People in the developing world have the capacity to improve their own lives, and they will rise to meet high standards.

I refuse to accept the development model that says, oh, these people are doomed forever, let's just throw money at the problem. We believe that if you set high standards, good people will rise to meet those standards, regardless of where they live in the world. So the Millennium Challenge Account is a robust program that has invested $6.7 billion in 35 countries around the world. From Albania to Moldova to Indonesia to Mongolia to Paraguay to Peru, these partnerships are helping developing nations take charge of their future and, more importantly, unleash the talents of their people.

For example, this February, President Kikwete of Tanzania and I signed a 5-year, nearly $700 million compact to improve the country's transportation, energy, and water supply. It's pretty basic needs, isn't it: transportation, energy, and water supply? The partnership will build roads that connect rural Tanzanians to markets and schools and health clinics. It's hard to have a modern society if you can't get your product from rural to urban centers in your country. It's hard to get doctors to help people in the rural part of the country if you don't have roads to connect health care clinics to those in need. It's going to extend electricity to homes and businesses in some of the most remote areas of the country. It will increase access to clean drinking water, which will help reduce preventable diseases, especially in young children. Through these projects, the Millennium Challenge compact is helping Tanzania build a foundation for success in the 21st century, showing the promise of a new era in development.

In the new era of development, America and our partners are helping to meet basic human needs like food and clean water. There's nothing more basic than food and clean water. Since 2002, the United States has provided more than $16 billion in food assistance, helping to ensure that tens of millions of people around the world do not go hungry. In response to the current global food crisis, we've committed $5.5 billion to address global hunger over the next 2 years. And that's important. These are stopgap measures. The American people care when they hear people are going hungry around the world. And I want to thank the American people for their generosity.

But as we work to resolve the crisis in the long run, we have got to find better solutions for global hunger in the long term. In the short run, we're helping; in the long term, we're developing a strategy and working with partners to help them grow their own food. There's no other way to put it. The best long-term policy for the United States is to help nations develop their own agricultural industry, so we don't have to deal with global food crisis year in and year out.

And so we supply poor and rural farmers with fertilizer and water management systems. We distribute better seeds that will boost yields and invest in research that will make crops like rice and wheat more resistant to drought and pests. You know, one of the really important challenges that this administration has taken on, and future administrations must take on, is to say to other markets around the world, it is okay to import markets to—crops grown with biotechnology. A lot of countries are resistant upon introducing these new technologically advanced crops, because they fear they're not going to be able to sell their crops elsewhere. And yet these crops will help people realize a vibrant agricultural industry.

I believe that as the United States moves forward, we ought to purchase up to a quarter of our food from local farmers. In other words, of all the food aid we get we ought to take a quarter of that, Donald, and purchase the food directly from local farmers. If it's in our interest to help build a local agricultural industry, then instead of just giving food, we ought to purchase food from the farmers themselves, to help build a vibrant agricultural sector in parts of the world where food is desperately needed. I support the World Bank's strategy to increase investment in agriculture.

What I'm telling you is there's a better way than just a kind of patchwork approach. It's an approach that basically says we can use our technological advancement and our expertise to help build vibrant agricultural industries in nations where there ought to be crops today.

The United States works with partner nations to deal with the lack of clean water. Last year, we dedicated nearly a billion dollars to improve sanitation and water supplies in developing nations. We're also wise enough to enlist the private sector to help as well.

I want to share with you an interesting program—for two reasons, one, it's interesting, and two, my wife thought of it—[*laughter*]—or has actually been involved with it. She didn't think of it, but she thought of it for this speech. She has been involved with a public-private partnership called the PlayPumps Alliance. It brings together international foundations and corporations and the U.S. Government. Now, catch this: PlayPumps are children's merry-go-rounds attached to a water pump and a storage tank. When the wheel turns, clean drinking water is produced. And as my good wife says, "PlayPumps are fueled by a limitless energy source—[*laughter*]—children at play."

The United States is working with our partners to install 4,000 pumps in schools and communities across sub-Sahara Africa, which will provide clean drinking water to as many as 10 million people. It's not that hard to help people get clean drinking water. It takes focus, imagination, and effort. And I call upon all nations around the world to join us.

In the new era of development, America and our partners recognize that education is the gateway to prosperity and essential to any society's long-term success. It's pretty obvious, isn't it? If people are educated, they can read the instructions on a medicine bottle. They can keep receipts for a small business. They can learn about the rights and privileges they have under their country's constitutions. Yet too many people can't read. America and our partners are determined to extend the promise of good education to more people in the developing world.

In the Middle East, USAID has partnered with local officials to start kindergartens in Jordan, taught hundreds of thousands of children about information technology in Morocco, built 70 schools for girls in Egypt.

Through our Africa Education Initiative, as the President mentioned, the United States has trained more than 700,000 teachers. I think you said a million teachers? Yes, I'll go for a million then. [*Laughter*] Somewhere between 700 and a million.

[*Laughter*] Distributed more than 10 million textbooks—somewhere between 10 million and 15 million—and provided hundreds of thousands of scholarships to help girls go to school.

Last year, I announced a new initiative that will devote $425 million to improve education in Ethiopia and Ghana and Honduras and Liberia and Mali and Yemen. Why? Why do we do that? Because the truth of the matter is, we want children to fulfill their God-given potential; that's why we do that. And so we're helping to train the doctors and the lawyers and the engineers and entrepreneurs and the women presidents who will be vital to the future of the developing world.

In the new era of development, America and our partners are helping to lift the burden of deadly disease. In Africa, the treatable and preventable disease of malaria kills one child every 30 seconds. So in 2005, I launched a 5-year, $1.2 billion initiative that cut the number of malaria-related deaths in 15 African nations by half.

Through the initiative, we joined with African governments—notice, "we joined with African governments"—to design malaria control strategies that will work with their nations. We expect results for the money we spend. And yet we're confident when we work with governments that they can develop the strategy necessary to achieve the objectives. And so we supply the money, and our partner nations work to distribute insecticide-treated bed nets, conduct indoor spraying campaigns, and provide cutting-edge drugs.

The interesting thing about this initiative is, it's easy to measure whether or not we're being successful. In the new development agenda, results matter a lot. And therefore, when the United States works with countries, we expect there to be a well-defined strategy and the ability to measure whether or not our money is working. I don't think that's too much to ask, nor do the people who are trying to help think that's too much to ask.

So far, our efforts have reached 25 million people. In places like Zambia and Ethiopia and Rwanda and Zanzibar, the numbers of people sick or dying from malaria have dropped dramatically. We have not only made progress around the edges, we've made dramatic progress in saving lives. I find that the work to defeat malaria is exciting work and it is inspiring work. And frankly, it's not all that hard to design a strategy to get bed nets to people. And I want to thank my fellow citizens for caring deeply about this initiative. And I want to thank our partners for working hard to make sure that a mom won't have to worry about her child dying because of a mosquito bite.

The President talked about our fight against HIV/AIDS. And it's a noble battle, and it's a necessary battle. In 2003, as she had mentioned, we launched PEPFAR. The program is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history. Ambassador Dybul and I believe that the program is effective because it is defined by a few key principles. You know, if you're going to have a new era of development, it's important to have clear definitions. It's one thing just to throw money at the problem, it's another thing to insist upon strategies that actually work. So the emergency plan demands specific measurable targets for progress. His job is to not only put the implementers in place and to find those souls who are on the frontlines of saving lives and empower them, his job is to report back to the President and say, "Here is the progress we're making, Mr. President." That way it gives me a chance to say, "Well, if you're not making enough progress, Mark, do something differently, please."

It employs a prevention strategy that works: ABC, which means abstinence, be faithful, and use condoms. This isn't guesswork; this is a program that is working. It puts local partners in the lead, because they know the needs of their people best.

It enlists new partners from the international community, the private sector, and the faith community.

I can't tell you how many people that I've met in the United States who say, "I'm part of PEPFAR because my church has adopted the program." You know, there's nothing better than having people who hear the universal call to love a brother like you'd like to be loved yourselves on the frontline of helping to save lives.

And the United States Government is smart enough to enlist the compassion and love and hard work of people in the faith community in the United States to help our brothers and sisters in need. So far, the results are striking. When we launched the initiative in 2003, only 50,000 people in sub-Sahara Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

Today, we support treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region and tens of thousands of more around the world, from Asia to the Caribbean to Eastern Europe. PEPFAR has supported care for nearly 7 million people, including millions of orphans and vulnerable children. PEPFAR has allowed nearly 200,000 children in Africa to be born HIV-free. PEPFAR is working. And I want to thank the United States Congress for coming together to reauthorize and dramatically expand this program.

I'm sure that many of you had the same experiences that Laura and I have had in meeting people whose lives have been touched by the initiatives we're talking about today. I'll never forget meeting Harriet Namutebi. She is—we met her in Africa on our trip 5 years ago. She lost her brother, her husband, and one of her children to AIDS. She was diagnosed, she locked herself in her room, she refused to eat, and she wanted to die.

But at a clinic supported by PEPFAR, Harriet was given a new lease on life. Counselors at the clinic showed Harriet how to live positively with HIV. A loving soul took this person who was in despair and said, "Here's a chance for you."

Thanks to the antiretroviral treatments Harriet received, she is now in good health. She cares for four children. She is an enthusiastic member of the clinic's drama group, which educates others about HIV. She is living proof of what people in Africa call the Lazarus effect: Communities once given up for dead are now being brought back to life. And it is a joy to be a part of PEPFAR.

In the new era of development, we are working with partners to unleash the greatest engine of prosperity the world has ever known, and that is free trade. For developing nations, the value of trade is nearly 40 times the value of foreign aid. Let me repeat that: For developing nations, the value of trade is 40 times the value of foreign aid. Isn't that an interesting statistic? What should that tell you? It says, if you're interested in helping the developing world, promote trade. That's what it ought to tell you.

According to the World Bank, the complete elimination of barriers to trading goods would boost annual income in developing countries by more than $140 billion. I think that would go a long way, don't you, Madam President?

You know, trade opens growth, ignites growth, but it also produces other benefits. It helps increase transparency; it helps increase the rule of law. During my administration, we have worked hard to reduce barriers to trade and investment. When I took office, we had free trade agreements in effect with three nations. Today, we have them with 14 nations; most of them are developing countries. We've also—[*applause*].

My predecessor, President Clinton, did a smart thing with the African Growth and Opportunity Act. My administration had the honor of extending that act. In 2005, I worked with Congress to pass a free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic and nations in Central America; it's called

CAFTA. And although it's still in its early stages, trade between participating countries with the U.S. is up 30 percent since its enactment. Do you know what that means? That means more jobs for workers in those countries. It means more food for families. It means more investment that developing countries need to grow and prosper. That's what that means.

Trade is essential to prosperity in both good economic times and bad. During periods of crisis, like the one we're in now, protectionism may seem like the best way to safeguard wealth. But when major economies try to wall themselves off, they deny themselves the growth that comes from exports and deepen poverty by depriving poor nations of vital markets for their goods. You see, in the midst of this crisis, I believe the world ought to send a clear signal that we remain committed to open markets by reducing barriers to trade across the globe. The recent impasse in the Doha round of trade talks is disappointing, but that doesn't have to be the final world—word. And so before I leave office, I'm going to press hard to make sure we have a successful Doha round.

In this new era of development, countries that make the courageous choice to embrace democracy must realize the economic benefits that go with it. When young democracies do not deliver improvements in their peoples' daily lives, the people start to lose faith in free societies. That's a fact.

For example, let's talk about our own neighborhood. I believe it's in our interest that we have a good, sound neighborhood. It's in our interest our neighborhood prosper and get along. And we've seen hopeful advances for democracy and free enterprise in North and South America. There's no doubt about it: There's been some amazing advances. Yet there's also voices that challenge free markets and democratic values—quite loud voices. Some of them have gained a following, because amid the progress in our hemisphere, we also see terrible want. What the *campesinos* and *trabajadores* want is—what they don't need is false populism; what they do need is social justice. And the development aid of the United States has been focused on providing social justice in our neighborhood.

True social justice requires creating new opportunities for prosperity and upward mobility. So working in partnership with Latin American nations, we've helped more than 400,000 poor and disadvantaged children learn to read. We've increased economic opportunity by relieving debt and opening trade, as I mentioned. We've delivered aid that empowers the poor and the marginalized. Since I took office, with support from the Congress, the United States has provided nearly $15 billion to the region with a special focus on helping the poor.

True social justice requires government institutions that are fair and effective and free from corruption. You can't have social justice if your government is stealing from you. Since 2001, the United States has doubled our worldwide commitment to programs that foster democracy and good government, including programs in Latin America. We've entered into the Millennium Challenge Account agreements with six nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a number of other countries are pursuing compacts.

We've worked with countries like El Salvador to train law enforcement officers who can combat criminal gangs. Mexico, we're partnering with the Government to stop smugglers who traffic in everything from guns to human beings. Colombia, we've worked closely with President Uribe to defeat the cocaine cartels and narcoterrorists. By the way, it is no coincidence last year that Colombia's economy saw its largest growth in nearly three decades, because that country has got a strong leader willing to take on the FARC.

True social justice requires compassion. And some of the greatest work of compassion in Latin America is being done by the United States military. I don't know

if you ever heard of the Navy hospital ship called the *Comfort*, but it sailed to 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean last year. Doctors treated tens of thousands of poor patients and conducted more than 26,000 surgeries. Dentists and hygienists filled cavities and cared for infections and treated young children. These men and women are showing that the nations of Latin America have a strong partner in the United States of America. They're a part of our efforts to show that the institutions of freedom and capitalism and democracy are not threats to be feared, but the surest path to social justice there is.

From fostering good governance and reform to alleviating hunger and disease to advancing education, prosperity, and justice, our new approach to development has shown inspiring signs of success. Yet this success can be reversed, and the cost of abandoning our commitments would be far higher than the cost of fulfilling them. So I urge both parties in Congress to ensure that our development efforts remain an enduring priority of the United States.

I call on other members of the G–8 and the United Nations, as well as our fellow contributors to the Global Fund, to follow through on their pledges. Corporations and foundations have shared their resources and expertise with the developing world, and I urge them to continue their generosity. Faith-based groups have done amazing work to heal the sick and lift up the suffering, and I urge them to carry on their missions of mercy.

It's amazing what individual Americans have done to help with our—the new era of development. I got a Christmas gift from one of my little nephews, which was mosquito nets. Thousands of individuals and schoolchildren in—all across the country are donating $10 to buy a mosquito net to help save a life. There are people who are raising money for HIV/AIDS initiative. There are people who are going on a service mission with their house of worship. These folks are making a huge contribution, and I urge them to continue their good work.

History shows what happens when America combines our great compassion with our steadfast determination. We are a compassionate people, and we are a determined people. During a recent visit, a good friend of mine shared his vivid childhood memories of the Marshall plan. We were sitting—standing on the South Lawn. He said he'll never forget the kindness America showed his nation in a time of need, and now that man is the Prime Minister of Italy. And last week, Silvio Berlusconi expressed his enduring loyalty and gratitude to the people of the United States.

It's not hard to imagine what fruits our compassion will yield 60 years from today. We can see it in the faces of Afghan girls going to school for the first time. We can see them in the proud eyes of Latin American workers providing for themselves and for their families. We see them in the joy of new African mothers whose babies are protected from malaria and HIV. We see them in the outpouring of thanks throughout the developing world. I'm just so sorry that not every American could have been with Laura and me and see what we saw in our trip to Africa last year. Schoolchildren sang songs about America's generosity. One shop-owner, I think who was in Liberia, Madam President, painted his stall in our Nation's colors. Tens of thousands of people lined the roadsides during our visit, cheering and waving American flags in gratitude to the American people.

I'm honored to be the President of such a nation filled with people of such generosity and goodness. I'm proud to join with all of you in ushering in a new era of development. This is an historic commitment that we all can be proud of, one that will secure a bright future for our partners in the developing world, one that will make America a better place. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, who introduced the President. He also referred to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia

October 22, 2008

President Bush. Madam President, I have come to respect you and admire you because of your courage, your vision, your commitment to universal values and principles. Laura and I had a fantastic experience traveling to Liberia, and we want to thank you for your warm hospitality. Yesterday you made note of my—of the lack of my talent when it came to dancing. But nevertheless, I want you to know I danced with joy.

And no question, Liberia has gone through very difficult times; but no question, there's a bright future for Liberia. Liberia's needs the help of the United States and other nations to help make sure children are educated, to make sure babies are not dying because of malaria, to make sure there's an infrastructure so that small businesses can flourish, to make sure the port is open for business. We have been helpful, and we want to be helpful in the future. And I'm confident in saying to the American people that by helping this President and Liberia, we really help ourselves in many ways.

And so I—it's been a joy to know you. It's been a great experience working with you, and I congratulate you on your strong leadership. Welcome.

President Johnson Sirleaf. Thank you, Mr. President. I come on behalf of the Liberian people to thank you for the support we've received from you, the administration, from Congress, from the American people. It has enabled us to turn the corner from being what was called a failed state several years ago to today what we hope will becoming to be one of the emerging democracies.

We've been able to put our economic and financial house in order, tackle our debt, begin to rebuild our infrastructure, put our children back into school——

President Bush. That's right.

President Johnson Sirleaf. ——bring some water and electricity to a country that hasn't had it for over two decades. And so we're just so thankful for the encouragement, the support that we've received from you.

I want you to know that the challenges are many, but with the continued support of the American people and continued support of the American administration and Congress, that we feel that Liberia can become a postconflict success story.

We want to say to you that your visit to our country is one that goes down in the record books—[*laughter*]—as being one of the most enjoyable, not only for the dancing—[*laughter*]—but for all that you did to train our new soldiers——

President Bush. Well, thank you.

President Johnson Sirleaf. ——to put our infrastructure in order and the hope that you helped to give to Liberian people that, indeed, the nightmare is over, and they can have a future that's full of promise.

So we're here to say to you we're very grateful.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Johnson Sirleaf. Liberian people just want to thank you.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Johnson Sirleaf. And thank her—and thank Laura, especially, who was there with you. And we're just so pleased—just tell her.

President Bush. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

October 22, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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 with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in that country, are to continue in effect beyond October 27, 2008.

The situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability and that has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in numerous resolutions, including Resolution 1596 of April 18, 2005, Resolution 1649 of December 21, 2005, Resolution 1698 of July 31, 2006, and Resolution 1807 of March 31, 2008, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency to deal with that threat and the related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in that country.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China
October 22, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of two jet mills for fine grinding of friable or crystalline materials to be used in the manufacture of spandex fiber and semiconductor compounds and one spare beam centerline that will be exported for repair/replacement for the continuous operation of a cargo inspection system is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Terrorist Attack on the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon
October 23, 2008

Twenty-five years ago, a suicide bomb destroyed the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. We remember the 241 American marines, soldiers, and sailors who lost their lives in that attack, and we pay tribute to their families and loved ones. The U.S. forces in Lebanon were serving as part of the multinational force working to bring peace and security to that country, torn by years of civil war.

On the anniversary of this unconscionable attack, we honor the memory of those brave service men and women through our commitment to succeeding in the war on terror. We express our gratitude to those serving abroad to protect America and promote peace and freedom around the world. And we reiterate our strong support for the voices of moderation and justice in Lebanon.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying the Establishment of a Registration and Monitoring System for Defense Articles Provided to Iraq
October 23, 2008

Dear _____ :

Pursuant to section 1228(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Public Law 110–181 (NDAA), I hereby certify that a registration and monitoring system for defense articles provided to the Government of Iraq or any

other group, organization, citizen, or resident of Iraq, meeting the requirements set forth in subsection 1228(c) of the NDAA, has been established.

Specifically, I certify that the registration and monitoring system herein referenced includes:

1. the registration of the serial numbers of all small arms to be provided to the Government of Iraq or to other groups, organizations, citizens, or residents of Iraq;

2. a program of end-use monitoring of all lethal defense articles provided to such entities or individuals; and

3. the maintenance of a detailed record of the origin, shipping, and distribution of all defense articles transferred under the Iraq Security Forces Fund or any other security assistance program to such entities or individuals.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Carl Levin, chairman, and John McCain, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Christopher J. Dodd, chairman, and Richard C. Shelby, ranking member, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Ike Skelton, chairman, and Duncan Hunter, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland
October 24, 2008

I want to thank General Alexander for his hospitality to me and the Vice President and Director McConnell. We have been here at NSA, which is on the frontline of protecting the American people. Every time I come out here, I'm impressed by the caliber of people who work here, the amount of energy that goes into their jobs, and their deep desire to find an enemy and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

Ever since 9/11, the people in this building have done what the country expects them to do, and that is to work as hard as necessary to help protect the United States of America. The work here at the NSA is absolutely vital, and I wish all our citizens could meet the folks that work here and realize how smart they are, how capable they are, and how enthusiastic they are in doing their duty.

So, General, thank you for your hospitality. We've enjoyed coming out here, and appreciate the efforts you're putting into protecting the homeland.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. in the Operations Building. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Keith B. Alexander, USA, Director, National Security Agency.

Remarks at a Signing Ceremony for North Atlantic Treaty Organization Accession Protocols for Albania and Croatia

October 24, 2008

President Bush. Welcome. Please be seated. Mr. Secretary General, it's good to have you here in the White House.

Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you for your steadfast leadership and your courage. Ambassadors, thank you for joining us. The Ambassador of Croatia and Albania are here for a special reason. Congressman Engel, I think he's here—[*laughter*]—right in front of us. Congressman, we are so honored you have taken time to be here. Deputy Secretary England; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, thank you for coming. Ambassadors, members of the administration, members of the diplomatic corps, friends of freedom: Welcome, we are glad you're here. This is a special moment in the hopeful story of human liberty, as America formally declares its support for Albania and Croatia's entry into NATO.

With today's ceremony, we celebrate two young and vigorous democracies seeking to assume new responsibilities in a time of terrorism and a time of war. We strengthen America's partnership with nations that once found themselves in the shackles of communism. We rejoice in taking a major step toward welcoming the people of Albania and Croatia into the greatest alliance for freedom the world has ever known.

The United States is proud to have supported the NATO aspirations of these nations from the beginning. Laura and I fondly remember our visits to Tirana and Zagreb, where we met people who are showing the world the potential and the promise of human freedom. The citizens of Albania and Croatia have overcome war and hardship, built peaceful relations with their neighbors, and helped other young democracies build and strengthen free societies. And the people of Albania and Croatia are helping move the world closer to a great triumph of history: a Europe that is whole, a Europe that is free, and a Europe that is at peace.

The invitation to join NATO is recognition of the difficult reforms these countries have undertaken on the path to prosperity and peace. In return, NATO membership offers the promise of security and stability. The United States and our NATO allies will stand united in defense of our fellow members. Once Albania and Croatia formally join NATO, their people can know: If any nation threatens their security, every member of our alliance will be at their side.

The road of reform does not end with acceptance into NATO. Every member of the alliance has a responsibility to enhance, promote, and defend the cause of democracy. I'm confident that Albania and Croatia will deliver on their commitments to strengthen their democratic institutions and free market systems.

Albania and Croatia's entry into NATO is an historic step for the Balkans. In the space of a single decade, this region has transformed itself from a land consumed by war to a contributor to international peace and stability. America looks forward to the day when the ranks of NATO include all the nations in the Balkans, including Macedonia. I thank Macedonia's Ambassador for joining us today. We're proud of the steps you're taking to strengthen your democracy. The great NATO alliance is holding a place for you at our table. And we look forward to your admission as a full NATO member as soon as possible.

Our nations seek a path to NATO—other nations seek a path to NATO membership, and they have the full support of the United States Government. Today I reiterate America's commitment to the NATO aspirations of Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The door to NATO membership also remains open to the people of Serbia, should they choose that path. All these nations treasure the blessings of liberty because they remember the pain of tyranny. They share NATO's solemn commitment to defend the free against the unfree and the weak against the strong.

The lasting strength of the NATO alliance is a testament to the enduring power of freedom. And the expansion of this alliance will lead the way to a safer and more hopeful world. On behalf of my fellow citizens, I offer congratulations to the people of Albania and Croatia on this historic achievement. May your children always honor the struggles you endured. May the stories of Albania and Croatia be a light to those who remain in the darkness of tyranny. And may your example help guide them to a brighter day.

It's now my honor to welcome the Secretary General to the podium. Mr. Secretary General.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Croatia's Ambassador to the U.S. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic; Albania's Ambassador to the U.S. Aleksander Sallabanda; and Macedonia's Ambassador to the U.S. Zoran Jolevski. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.

The President's Radio Address
October 25, 2008

Good morning. Americans from all walks of life are continuing to feel the effects of the financial crisis. In recent weeks, concerns about the availability of credit, the safety of financial assets, and the volatility of the stock market have made many families understandably anxious about their economic future.

The Federal Government has taken bold action to stabilize our economy. Earlier this month, my administration worked with Congress to pass bipartisan legislation that is providing funds to help banks rebuild capital and resume lending. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has temporarily guaranteed most new debt issued by insured banks, which will make it easier for these banks to borrow needed money. And the Federal Reserve is launching a new program to provide support for commercial paper, a key source of short-term financing for America's businesses and financial institutions. These steps are beginning to show results, but it will take time for their full impact to be felt.

In coordination with the United States, many other nations have taken similar steps to address turbulence in their domestic markets. This crisis is global in reach and addressing it will require further international cooperation. So this week, I consulted with leaders from throughout the world and announced that I would convene an international summit in Washington on November the 15th.

This summit will be the first in a series of meetings aimed at addressing this crisis. The summit will bring together leaders of the G–20 nations, countries that represent both the developed and the developing world. And the summit will also include the heads of the International Monetary

Fund, the World Bank, and the Financial Stability Forum, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

During this summit, we will discuss the causes of the problems in our financial systems, review the progress being made to address the current crisis, and begin developing principles of reform for regulatory bodies and institutions related to our financial sectors. While the specific solutions pursued by every country may not be the same, agreeing on a common set of principles will be an essential step towards preventing similar crises in the future.

As we focus on responses to our short-term challenges, our nations must also recommit to the fundamentals of long-term economic growth: free markets, free enterprise, and free trade. Open market policies have lifted standards of living and helped millions of people around the world escape the grip of poverty. These policies have shown themselves time and time again to be the surest path to creating jobs, increasing commerce, and fostering progress. And this moment of global economic uncertainty would be precisely the wrong time to reject such proven methods for creating prosperity and hope.

Despite the ups and downs that our markets have experienced in recent months, the American people have reason for optimism in our Nation's economic future. Throughout our history, we have seen that when Americans are given the freedom to apply their talents and imagination, prosperity and success follow closely behind. For over two centuries, that principle has allowed our economy to overcome every obstacle it has faced. And we can all be confident that it will do so again.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Governor of the Bank of Italy Mario Draghi, in his capacity as Chairman of the Financial Stability Forum; and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Fernando Armindo Lugo Mendez of Paraguay
October 27, 2008

President Bush. Bienvenidos, Senor Presidente, a la Casa Blanca. I am honored you are here to visit me in the White House. We have had a meaningful conversation, a conversation that you would expect among people who have a deep desire to serve their respective people.

Mr. President, I've been impressed by *un corazon grande*. You care deeply about the people of your country, and I have felt that compassion.

I told the President that the United States wants to help. We want to help with education and health care. We care deeply about people being able to work. Our—we believe in the social justice agenda. I believe that it's important that the United States be in a position to help influence the lives of citizens that simply want a more hopeful day. And, Mr. President, it gives me great comfort to know that you're the person with whom we can work.

I'm impressed by the fact that you want to take a strong stand against corruption. There's nothing more discouraging than to have the government of a people steal their money.

And so we stand with you. It's—you got a hard job. I understand that. But you bring the right spirit to the job. And so I want to welcome you to the White House and thank you for your conversation.

President Lugo. First of all, thank you very much for the invitation. It is a commitment and a joy to be able to reinforce our historic relationship with the United States.

Many people have asked, "Why now?" And I think that it's particularly important to visit President Bush in his last days in the White House because we think it's very important to impress upon the world the importance of democratic institutions.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Lugo. And also because we believe that we, as individual people, pass. We have written that our personal history is not as important as the history of our respective peoples.

In Paraguay, I have entered politics in order to change the history of our country. We have not come into politics in order to get into the smokeless industry that is to steal from the people of the country. We came in as Christians, because our Christian duty is to serve the poorest and the neediest of our people. And today, as President of Paraguay, we're taking on all of the challenges with the greatest serenity possible so that we can help our people.

We are profoundly hurt in our souls by poverty, by the exodus of our young people, by the lack of education, by people who don't have roofs over their heads. We are profoundly moved by those people. But that pain is also impregnated with courage and decisiveness. And we have said since the very beginning that if there was anything that was to distinguish our Government, it would be international solidarity.

I'll never forget that when I talked to one of our agricultural people, one of the people out in the country, a farmer who said: "What we need is bread. We don't care if it comes from the left hand or from the right hand. We just need somebody to give us food." And that's why we're here, because the Paraguayans have asked us to be here as President to try to recover Paraguay's dignity as a nation.

And I told President Bush that we have a lot of dreams, collective dreams, but also my personal dream. And our dream is that Paraguay be known not for its corruption, but for its transparency and for its dignity as a people and as a country. And we believe, we're convinced, that we will be able to achieve that.

Thank you.

President Bush. Si. Gracias, senor. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Lugo spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring President Theodore Roosevelt's 150th Birthday
October 27, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Okay, don't be seated. Thank you all very much. Job, thank you for the fantastic performance. John Milton Cooper, we appreciate you reading. I had an interesting piece of history dropped on me tonight by Mrs. Cooper. They met on Capitol Hill when she was an intern for Senator Prescott S.

Bush, father of President 41, grandfather of President 43. And we welcome you both here. Thank you for coming.

And of course, it's good to see President Roosevelt. [*Laughter*] Oftentimes people ask me, "Do you ever see any of the ghosts of your predecessors here in the White House?" I said, "No, I quit drinking." [*Laughter*] But we just saw one.

Members of the Cabinet, thank you for coming. Former Governor of North Dakota, now the Secretary of Agriculture, is with us. That last song must have made you feel pretty good, Governor.

I'm proud to be here with Congressman Pete King. Thanks for coming, Congressman. I appreciate you and your wife coming. The Roosevelt family—members of the Roosevelt family are here tonight. We welcome you back to the White House. Distinguished guests, Laura and I are thrilled that you came to celebrate the 150th birthday of one of the greatest statesmen in our Nation's history, Theodore Roosevelt. I call him Theodore. [*Laughter*] Occasionally, call him T.R. [*Laughter*]

We remember many of our Presidents as leaders made for a unique moment in our history. President Roosevelt, as John said, was a man for all seasons. He was a soldier who won the Medal of Honor, a peacemaker who won the Nobel Prize. He was one of the world's most daring big game hunters and a leading advocate for conservation of our country's natural resources. He was an intellectual who sometimes read several books a day, as John mentioned. And he wrestled here at the White House.

He was a man who felt at home on a sprawling ranch in the West. He believed in the importance of a strenuous life of exercise. I can relate to that. President Roosevelt also was an advocate for simplifying spelling in America. During his Presidency, one Member of Congress said that President Roosevelt's efforts would create confusion and discord in the English language. I can relate to that. [*Laughter*]

Nearly 100 years after his Presidency, Theodore Roosevelt's legacy still endures here at the White House. Laura gave you an account of the legacy that still endures. He endures in the West Wing as well. Right across the door of the Oval Office is what was his former office, known as the Roosevelt Room. Above the fireplace hangs a portrait of the 26th President on horseback during the Spanish-American War. That portrait is a reminder. When I look at it I think about the character and courage that is necessary for any President. For the past 8 years, his legacy has been an inspiration to me. It will be an inspiration to the person who replaces me, and it will be an inspiration for all Presidents to come.

We thank you for joining us. And please now join us for a reception in the State Dining Room. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Job Christenson; John Milton Cooper, Jr., professor of history, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his wife Judith; Rosemary King, wife of Rep. Peter King; and Theodore Roosevelt impersonator Joseph Wiegand. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Masoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq
October 29, 2008

President Bush. President Barzani, welcome back to the Oval Office. It's been a while since we have seen each other, but we have talked on the phone quite frequently, and the reason why is because you've played a very instrumental part in the development of a free Iraq. And I thank you for your leadership, and I thank you for your personal friendship.

We had a discussion today on several major topics. We talked about the progress on the election law and on the hydrocarbon law, but we also talked about the status of forces agreement, called the SOFA. President Barzani has been a very strong advocate of the Iraqi Government passing the SOFA, and I appreciate that.

I informed the President we received amendments today from the Government. We're analyzing those amendments. We obviously want to be helpful and constructive without undermining basic principles. And I remain very hopeful and confident that the SOFA will get passed. And, Mr. President, you get a lot of credit for your leadership on that issue.

So I'm proud to welcome you back here. Again, I thank you very much for your courage and your leadership.

President Barzani. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's good that there has been another opportunity for us to visit with you again. I am here to convey the gratitude of the Iraqi people in general and the people of Kurdistan in particular, for the brave decision that you've made to rid us of this dictatorship.

We are very grateful for all the brave souls, women and men in uniform, who paid their dear lives in the process. And we are very grateful to the American people and to you, Mr. President, for this sacrifice.

And despite the fact that there remain some major problems, we have also to look at all the big achievements that have been made thus far. Let's look at the elections and the Constitution that has been ratified. So these are major achievements that we are proud of. And we are determined to solve all the problems that still exist, according to the Constitution.

And in terms of SOFA, we do believe that it is in the interest of the Iraqi Government, it's in the interest of this country, and we have been and we will continue to support it and support its ratification.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Barzani spoke in Kurdish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Graduation Ceremony at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy in Quantico, Virginia
October 30, 2008

Thank you. Mr. Director, thank you for your kind introduction, and thank you for your leadership. Proud that you invited your wife Ann here to be with us. I thank the Attorney General for joining us today.

Members of the FBI Academy staff, distinguished guests, family and friends, and most importantly, members of the graduating class: Thanks for having me.

I am so pleased to be back to the FBI Academy and to share with you this special day. When you walk across the stage, you will receive your badge and your credentials. You'll become special agents of the FBI. You will take your place on the frontlines on the war on terror. I thank you for stepping forward to serve your country during this important time. And on behalf of all Americans, I congratulate the class of '08–'14.

This academy has prepared you for the privileges and responsibilities of carrying the badge. Over the past 20 weeks, you have passed rigorous academic and physical requirements. You have spent hours practicing your aim on the firing range, combing the streets of Hogan's Alley, and navigating the Academy's "gerbil tubes." [*Laughter*] As part of your training, you were all forced to endure the sting of pepper spray, which you learned wasn't half as bad as the cafeteria food. [*Laughter*]

To reach this day of accomplishment, you have all depended on the wisdom and advice of your instructors. They took a diverse group that includes combat veterans, police officers, firefighters, lawyers, language experts, and computer specialists. And they turned you into an impressive class of FBI special agents. Your instructors are proud of your accomplishments, and I know you are grateful for their leadership.

To reach this day of accomplishment, you depended on the support of your loved ones. While you were away training for this academy, some of them were really sweating out the training for you. [*Laughter*] And Rick mentioned a lot of you were packing bags. I'm thankful you didn't mention Crawford, Texas. [*Laughter*] And so are you. [*Laughter*]

But the point is, America owes your families a great debt. And we thank you for standing by your side—thank them for standing by your side during this moment of training and the service you'll be rendering to our country. We welcome the families here today.

Members of this class join the FBI during a momentous time in our Nation's history. Earlier this summer, the FBI celebrated its 100th anniversary. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend the official ceremony. So I asked the Attorney General to speak in my place. To be honest, I was somewhat concerned that he might not live up to my high standards of oratory. [*Laughter*] He told me I had nothing to worry about. [*Laughter*]

The Bureau has come a long way since its founding. Over the past century, the FBI has grown from a small team of 34 investigators to a powerful force of more than 30,000 agents and analysts and support professionals serving around the world. The FBI has pushed the boundaries of forensic science, from mastering the art of fingerprints to pioneering the use of DNA evidence. The FBI has inspired generations of children to dream of joining the force. [*Laughter*] Sounds like I inspired one or two myself. [*Laughter*]

In every era, the FBI has risen to meet new challenges. When mobsters brought crime and chaos to America's cities during the 1920s and '30s, the G-Men of the FBI brought them to justice. When America entered the Second World War, the FBI stopped Axis agents from carrying out attacks on our homeland. During the cold war, the FBI worked long hours to protect America from Soviet spies. In all this work, the FBI has gained an incredible record of achievement and has earned the admiration of the entire world. America honors all the fine men and women who have served in the ranks before you.

As you go forth from this Academy, you're going to write a new chapter in the FBI's storied history. In the years ahead, your assignments will be as diverse as the FBI's mission: from dismantling organized criminal networks, to pulling the plug on

online predators, to making white-collar criminals pay for defrauding hard-working Americans. And just as your predecessors adapted to meet the challenges of the past century, there's no doubt in my mind, you'll respond with courage to confront the emerging dangers of this new century.

Those dangers became clear on September the 11th, 2001. On that day, 19 terrorists brought death and destruction to our shores. We became a nation at war against violent extremists. And we must not rest until that war is won.

More than 7 years have passed without another attack on our soil. And this is not an accident. Since 9/11, we have gone on the offense against the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We stand with young democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq and beyond as they seek to replace the hateful ideology of the extremists with a hopeful alternative of liberty.

Here at home, we've transformed our national security institutions and have given our intelligence and law enforcement professionals the tools and the resources they need to do their job, and that is to protect the American people. We formed a new Department of Homeland Security. We created a new Director for National Intelligence. We established a program at the Central Intelligence Agency to interrogate key terrorist leaders captured in the war on terror. We worked with Congress to pass legislation that allows our intelligence professionals to quickly and effectively monitor terrorist communications while protecting the civil liberties of our citizens. If Al Qaida is making a phone call into the United States, we need to know why and to whom they're calling in order to protect the American citizens.

The FBI has played a vital role in doing the most important job that Government has, and that is to secure the American people from harm. Since 9/11, the Bureau has worked with our partners around the world to disrupt planned terrorist attacks. Most Americans will never know the full stories of how these attacks were stopped and how many lives were saved. But we know this: The men and women of the FBI are working tirelessly to keep our Nation safe, and they have the thanks of the American people.

The FBI's leadership in the war on terror has required a dramatic change of mission. Before 9/11, terrorism was viewed primarily as a criminal matter. The FBI focused more on indicting terrorists after an attack than on stopping the attack in the first place. For example, after the terrorists targeted the World Trade Center in 1993, FBI agents succeeded in tracking down several of the killers. They obtained indictments against them, and they put them behind bars. And that was good work. But 8 years later, Al Qaida returned to finish the job.

Immediately after 9/11, the FBI made preventing terrorism its top priority. The FBI you join today is focused on collecting and analyzing intelligence, so we can figure out what the terrorists are planning before it is too late. Over the past 7 years, we have more than doubled the number of intelligence analysts and translators on the force. We've enacted the PATRIOT Act to ensure FBI analysts and investigators have the information they need to protect our Nation. We created the FBI's new National Security Branch, bringing together divisions responsible for counterterrorism and intelligence and counterespionage.

The FBI you join today is working more closely with partners at all levels of government. At the local level, we've increased the number of FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces from 35 to more than 100. These task forces bring together Federal and local law enforcement agents. They have helped break up terror cells in places like Portland, Oregon; Buffalo, New York; and northern Virginia.

At the national level, we created the National Counterterrorism Center, where the FBI is working side by side with the CIA,

the Homeland Security Department, and other Federal agencies to track terrorist threats and prevent new attacks. We created the Terrorism Screening Center to consolidate watch lists from different agencies into one master list.

At the international level, we've deployed the FBI to foreign countries to help track down the terrorists. Since September the 11th, the FBI has opened 16 new offices overseas. Two of them are in Kabul and Baghdad, where hundreds of FBI agents are serving alongside our brave men and women in uniform.

The FBI can be proud of all these accomplishments. These changes were difficult, and they were necessary. We've transformed an agency founded a century ago to meet the challenges of the 21st century. And thanks to the vision and determination of the FBI, America is safer today than we were on September the 11th, 2001.

In the midst of this rapid change, we can be confident that one thing will never change, and that is the character and courage of those who carry the badge. We see this character and courage in the story of an agent named Leonard Hatton. A bomb specialist for the FBI, Lenny had investigated terrorist attacks around the world. So when he saw smoke rising from the World Trade Center on September the 11th, 2001, he immediately understood the danger. With complete disregard for his own life, he ran to the scene to help others escape. And when the towers came crashing down, Lenny died beneath them. Earlier that same morning, Lenny had told his wife, "Just another regular day at work." Well, for a man like Lenny Hatton, who always put others before himself, it was another day at work. We must always honor the memory of this good and faithful servant, and we vow that those who have given their lives in the war on terror shall never have died in vain.

As new special agents, your charge to keep is to carry out this mission. I ask you to defend the values of fidelity, bravery, and integrity that you have learned here at this Academy. I ask you to carry out your duty to protect the lives and liberties of the American people. If you follow these principles, your careers will take you far, this agency will uphold its solemn responsibility, and America's security will be in good hands.

I want to thank you for sharing your graduation with me. I'm inspired by your examples of service. I wish you all the best in the future. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Robert S. Mueller III, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation; FBI special agent graduate Richard Brooks, recipient of the Director's Leadership Award; and JoAnne Hatton, wife of FBI Special Agent Leonard W. Hatton, Jr., who was killed in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan
October 30, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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 Sudan emergency is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2008.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Sudan and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions against Sudan to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address
November 1, 2008

Good morning. This Tuesday is election day. After months of spirited debate and vigorous campaigning, the time has come for Americans to make important decisions about our Nation's future. I encourage all Americans to go to the polls and vote.

Election season brings out the spirit of competition between our political parties, and that competition is an essential part of a healthy democracy. But as the campaigns come to a close, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents can find common ground on at least one point: Our system of representative democracy is one of America's greatest strengths.

The United States was founded on the belief that all men are created equal. Every election day, millions of Americans of all races, religions, and backgrounds step into voting booths throughout the Nation. Whether they are rich or poor, old or young, each of them has an equal share in choosing the path that our country will take. And every ballot they cast is a reminder that our founding principles are alive and well.

Voting is one of the great privileges of American citizenship, and it has always required brave defenders. As you head to the polls next week, remember the sacrifices that have been made by generations of Americans in uniform to preserve our way of life. From Bunker Hill to Baghdad, the men and women of American Armed Forces have been devoted guardians of our democracy. All of us owe them and their families a special debt of gratitude on election day.

Americans should also remember the important example that our elections set throughout the world. Young democracies from Georgia and Ukraine to Afghanistan and Iraq can look to the United States for proof that self-government can endure. And nations that still live under tyranny and oppression can find hope and inspiration in our commitment to liberty.

For more than two centuries, Americans have demonstrated the ability of free people to choose their own leaders. Our Nation has flourished because of its commitment to trusting the wisdom of our citizenry. In this year's election, we will see this tradition continue, and we will be reminded once again that we are blessed to live in a free nation guided by the will of the people.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 31 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31, 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 the 2008 Presidential Election
November 5, 2008

Good morning. Last night I had a warm conversation with President-elect Barack Obama. I congratulated him and Senator Biden on their impressive victory. I told the President-elect he can count on complete cooperation from my administration as he makes the transition to the White House.

I also spoke to Senator John McCain. I congratulated him on a determined campaign that he and Governor Palin ran. The American people will always be grateful for the lifetime of service John McCain has devoted to this Nation, and I know he'll continue to make tremendous contributions to our country.

No matter how they cast their ballots, all Americans can be proud of the history that was made yesterday. Across the country, citizens voted in large numbers. They showed a watching world the vitality of America's democracy and the strides we have made toward a more perfect union. They chose a President whose journey represents a triumph of the American story, a testament to hard work, optimism, and faith in the enduring promise of our Nation.

Many of our citizens thought they would never live to see that day. This moment is especially uplifting for a generation of Americans who witnessed the struggle for civil rights with their own eyes and, four decades later, see a dream fulfilled.

A long campaign has now ended, and we move forward as one nation. We're embarking on a period of change in Washington, yet there are some things that will not change. The United States Government will stay vigilant in meeting its most important responsibility: protecting the American people. And the world can be certain this commitment will remain steadfast under our next Commander in Chief.

There's important work to do in the months ahead, and I will continue to conduct the people's business as long as this office remains in my trust. During this time of transition, I will keep the President-elect fully informed on important decisions. And when the time comes on January the 20th, Laura and I will return home to Texas with treasured memories of our time here and with profound gratitude for the honor of serving this amazing country.

It will be a stirring sight to watch President Obama, his wife Michelle, and their beautiful girls step through the doors of the White House. I know millions of Americans will be overcome with pride at this inspiring moment that so many have waited so long. I know Senator Obama's beloved

mother and grandparents would have been thrilled to watch the child they raised ascend the steps of the Capitol and take his oath to uphold the Constitution of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Last night I extended an invitation to the President-elect and Mrs. Obama to come to the White House, and Laura and I are looking forward to welcoming them as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska; and Natasha "Sasha" and Malia Obama, daughters of President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to White House Staff
November 6, 2008

Thank you all for coming. Mr. Vice President and Lynne, thank you for being here with us. Laura and I welcome you to the South Lawn, better known as Barney's playground. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who've joined us. We've just finished a Cabinet meeting, and I gave them—it gave me a chance to tell them how much I appreciate the good work they're doing during this critical time for our Nation.

I also appreciate the men and women who make up the Executive Office of the President for joining us today. Some of you have been at the White House for just a few months, others arrived the same day that we did nearly 8 years ago. You're the ones who can tell that my hair has gotten a little grayer. [*Laughter*] Others here are career employees who have been here for 30 or 40 or sometimes 50 years. I can tell that your hair has gotten grayer. [*Laughter*]

People on this lawn represent diverse backgrounds, talents, and experiences. Yet we all share a steadfast devotion to the United States. We believe that service to our fellow citizens is a noble calling and the privilege of a lifetime.

This is an exciting time for our country. Earlier this week, more than 120 million people voted for a new President and Congress, one of the largest turnouts in the history of the country. No matter how we cast our ballots, this election gives us all reason to be proud of our democracy and our country. And I hope you will join Laura and me in congratulating President-elect Obama and wishing him the very best for his family and our country.

Just before our Inauguration in 2001, Laura and I went back to Midland, Texas. She was born there, and I was raised there. I said that Laura and I would never quite settle in Washington. I told them, "While the honor is great, the work is temporary." This is true for many of us here today. This peaceful transfer of power is one of the hallmarks of a true democracy, and ensuring that this transition is as smooth as possible is a priority for the rest of my Presidency. We face economic challenges that will not pause to let a new President settle in. This will also be America's first wartime Presidential transition in four decades. We're in a struggle against violent extremists determined to attack us, and they would like nothing more than to exploit this period of change to harm the American people.

So over the next 75 days, all of us must ensure that the next President and his team can hit the ground running. For more than a year now, departments and agencies throughout the Federal Government have

been preparing for a smooth transition. We've provided intelligence briefings to the President-elect, and the Department of Justice has approved security clearances for members of his transition team. In the coming weeks, we will ask administration officials to brief the Obama team on ongoing policy issues, ranging from the financial markets to the war in Iraq. I look forward to discussing those issues with the President-elect early next week.

Offices within the White House are at work preparing extensive transition materials. We're preparing career employees throughout the administration to take on added responsibilities to help prevent any disruption to the essential functions of the Federal Government.

Taken together, these measures represent an unprecedented effort to ensure that the executive branch is prepared to fulfill its responsibilities at all times. As we carry out this transition, I know that you will continue to conduct yourselves with the decency and professionalism you have shown throughout my time in office.

Successful transition is just one of the many important tasks remaining in our last 75 days. To help address the global financial crisis, the Secretary of Treasury is working endless hours, and I will host an international summit here in Washington on November the 15th. This will be an historic meeting, and I'm confident that you will work hard to help make it a success.

We'll also keep urging Congress to approve America's free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. And we will continue to protect this homeland by defeating the terrorists and extremists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home.

As January 20th draws near, some of you may be anxious about finding a new job or a new place to live. I know how you feel. [*Laughter*] But between now and then, we must keep our attention on the task at hand, because the American people expect no less. Earlier this year, I promised that I would sprint to the finish. I am keeping that promise, and I know I have given some of you a good workout along the way. As we head into the final stretch, I ask you to remain focused on the goals ahead. I will be honored to stand with you at the finish line. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lynne V. Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the National Economy
November 7, 2008

Today we received monthly job report numbers that reflect the difficult challenges confronting our economy. We are in the midst of a global financial crisis, and tight credit markets have made it harder for businesses to borrow the money they need to meet their payrolls, grow, and create new jobs.

The Federal Government has taken aggressive and decisive measures to address this situation. It will take time for these measures to have their full impact on an economy in which many Americans are struggling. But in recent days, we have seen some encouraging signs. The market for lending between banks has loosened considerably, and the Federal Reserve's efforts to stabilize the commercial paper market have provided businesses with an urgently

needed source of financing for day-to-day operations.

In the weeks ahead, my administration will continue working to return our economy to the path of prosperity and growth. I will continue urging Members of Congress to approve free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, and I look forward to hosting an international financial summit with leaders of both developed and developing nations on November 15.

I understand that Americans remain deeply concerned about the challenges facing our economy, but our economy has overcome great challenges before, and we can be confident that it will do so again.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

The President's Radio Address
November 8, 2008

Good morning. Earlier this week, more than 120 million Americans went to the polls and voted for a new President and Congress. No matter how we cast our ballots, all Americans have reason to be proud of our democracy. Our citizens have chosen a President who represents a triumph of the American story, a testament to hard work, optimism, and faith in the enduring promise of our Nation.

When I called President-elect Obama to congratulate him on his historic victory, I told him that he can count on my complete cooperation as he makes his transition to the White House. Ensuring that this transition is seamless is a top priority for the rest of my time in office. Our country faces economic challenges that will not pause to let a new President settle in. This will also be America's first wartime Presidential transition in four decades. We're in a struggle against violent extremists determined to attack us, and they would like nothing more than to exploit this period of change to harm the American people.

So my administration will work hard to ensure that the next President and his team can hit the ground running. For more than a year now, the White House and agencies throughout the Federal Government have been preparing for a smooth transition. We've provided intelligence briefings to the President-elect, and the Department of Justice has approved security clearances for members of his transition staff. In the coming weeks, we will ask administration officials to brief the Obama team on major ongoing policy issues, ranging from the financial markets to the war in Iraq. I will keep the President-elect fully informed on important decisions during this critical time for our Nation. Taken together, these measures represent an unprecedented effort to ensure continuity throughout the executive branch.

A successful transition is just one of the many important tasks remaining for my administration. Yesterday we learned that America's economy lost jobs in the month of October, and I will continue working hard to return our Nation to the path of prosperity and growth. To help address the global financial crisis, my administration will host an historic international summit in Washington on November the 15th. We will also keep urging Congress to approve America's free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea. We will continue working to defeat the terrorists and extremists abroad to keep the American people safe here at home.

Americans expect their President to conduct the people's business. I will continue to uphold this solemn obligation for as long as this office remains in my trust. In the meantime, I join the American people in wishing President-elect Obama every success. Laura and I wish the Obama family as much joy and happiness as our family has found in this wonderful house.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on November 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 7, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland
November 10, 2008

Admiral, thank you very much for leading an amazing group of men and women who provide such compassion and skill for those who have been wounded.

You know, I'm—appreciate the families who were so gracious to me here. One of the things I tell them is that their loved one is going to get fabulous medical care, and they do. It's inspiring to see the hard work. It's also inspiring to see the courage of the patients. I met some of the men that I'd seen 6 months ago; I came back, and they're totally different looking people. That's because of the good health care. It's also because of their mental framework. They've decided that nothing's going to get them down, and they battled back. And they're—a lot of them are doing really well.

So I want to thank you for your time, and it's been an honor to be the Commander in Chief of such fine men and women.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, USN, commander, National Naval Medical Center.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction
November 10, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, as amended, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2008.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of

the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Arrival in New York City
November 11, 2008

Veterans Day

As you can see, I have the honor of traveling with men and women who have volunteered to serve our Nation in a time of war. Behind me are five outstanding Americans representing each branch of the military service. I am with them today because we are celebrating Veterans Day.

Veterans have inspired troops such as these; veterans have inspired me. I was raised by a veteran. I appreciate the commitment to our country that the veterans have made. I am committed to making sure that today's veterans get all the health care and support they need from the Federal Government for agreeing to serve in a time of danger.

Our Nation is blessed because our liberties have been defended by brave men and women in the past. And we are blessed to have brave men and women defend our liberties today.

God bless our veterans. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. at John F. Kennedy International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to CPO Shenequa Cox, USN, Navy Information Operations Command Hawaii; PO1 Christopher O. Hutto, USCG, Sector Jacksonville Aids to Navigation Team; S. Sgt. Michael Noyce Merino, USA, B Company, 1–163d Cavalry Regiment, Montana National Guard; SrA. Alicia Goetschel, USAF, 100th Security Forces Squadron; and Sgt. John Badon, USMC, Basic School for Martial Arts Center of Excellence.

Remarks at a Rededication Ceremony at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City
November 11, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Be seated. Charles and Rich, thanks a lot. I gratefully accept the Freedom Award. And I'm honored to be with you today as we rededicate a great monument to freedom, the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. At this ceremony, we recognize nearly 55,000 Americans who served aboard the USS *Intrepid*, including some who are here today. And we commemorate Veterans Day by honoring all those who have worn the uniform of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. Thank you for serving our great Nation.

I am proud to be traveling with the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush, the most patient woman in America. [*Laughter*] Governor, thank you for joining us. Secretary Kempthorne, Senator Hillary Clinton, I'm proud to be with you. Thank you for being here. Congressman Pete King, Congressman Charlie Rangel, Congressman Anthony Weiner, thank you all for joining us today. Looking forward to that lame duck session, aren't we? [*Laughter*]

What an awesome guy General Jim Conway is, Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and member of the Joint Chiefs. Christine Quinn, thank you for your remarks. Bill White, the Vanna White of the *Intrepid*. He's a—[*laughter*]. Arnold Fisher and the Fisher family, what a fabulous contribution the Fishers have made to the United States of America, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

John Rich, fellow Texan; John, tell them we're coming home, and we're coming home with our heads held high.

Members of the Intrepid Museum and Foundation board of trustees; wounded warriors. You know, oftentimes they ask me, "What are you going to miss about the Presidency?" And first reaction is, I say, "No traffic jams in New York." The truth of the matter is, I will miss being the Commander in Chief of such a fabulous group of men and women, those who wear the uniform of the United States military.

Veterans Day has a long and solemn history. The event that inspired it took place 90 years ago today in a small railway car in a French forest. November the 11th, 1918, the Allied Powers and Germany signed an armistice that ended one of the bloodiest wars the world had ever witnessed. By the time that day arrived, World War I had raged for more than 4 years, and more than 8 million soldiers had given their lives. But on the 11th hour of the 11th day of that 11th month, the guns fell silent, and peace began to return to Europe.

To commemorate the war's end, President Woodrow Wilson declared that November the 11th should be remembered as Armistice Day, a holiday to honor the brave sacrifices of the American soldiers who defended democracy and freedom overseas. Today, we know it as Veterans Day, a day when we celebrate and thank and honor every man and woman who have served in our Armed Forces.

These noble Americans are our sons and daughters, they are our fathers and mothers, they are our family, and they are our friends. They leave home to do the work of patriots, and they lead lives of quiet dignity when they return. Today we send a clear message to all who have worn the uniform: Thank you for your courage, thank you for your sacrifice, and thank you for standing up when your Nation needed you most.

In the years since we began celebrating Veterans Day, America's Armed Forces have defended our freedom in many conflicts. And in those conflicts, they have often relied on the might of the USS *Intrepid*.

The great ship's keel was laid on December 1, 1941. Less than a week later, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and America entered World War II. In the years to come, as the United States Navy defended the freedom in the Pacific, the men of the "Fighting I" would be in the thick of the battle. The *Intrepid* participated in the invasion of the Marshall Islands. She played a key role in the amphibious assault on Okinawa. She was part of one of the greatest sea battles in history, the Battles of Leyte Gulf.

In that massive engagement, American forces faced some of the most formidable elements of the Japanese Navy. The Japanese fleet included the *Yamamato* [*Yamato*] * and the *Musashi*; these were the heaviest and the largest battleships ever constructed. The Imperial Navy approached the coast of the Philippines from three different directions, and it was a fearsome challenge, but the men of this ship were ready. The *Intrepid*'s air group fought courageously and without rest. By the time the battle ended 3 days later, the United States Navy had sunk the *Musashi* to the ocean floor and lifted hopes for victory in the Pacific.

The war ended the following year, but the *Intrepid*'s mission did not end. As the

* White House correction.

United States raced into the new frontier of space, the *Intrepid* stood by to retrieve astronauts returning to Earth. During the cold war, she patrolled the Mediterranean and helped force the surrender of pro-Castro terrorists who had hijacked a freighter in the Caribbean, and did three tours off the waters of Vietnam. For our Nation's bicentennial celebration, the United States Congress paid a fitting tribute to this ship's extraordinary service when they selected the *Intrepid* to represent the United States Navy in Philadelphia.

After more than 30 years at sea, the *Intrepid* was permanently decommissioned. Despite her amazing history, she was destined to be scrapped. But thanks to the work of the Intrepid Museum Foundation, she found a home in New York City. Since 1982, she has been a museum that educates new generations of Americans about the high price that those who came before them paid for their freedom.

One of the veterans who has been honored here was a Navy pilot who flew Avenger torpedo planes during World War II. When he was invited onboard the *Intrepid* for the 50th anniversary of D-day, he was moved to see that the museum had arranged for a vintage Avenger, painted in the style of his unit, to be right here on the deck. It just so happens that it was flanked by two of the men who had flown in his squadron. The man the *Intrepid* honored that day is a great American. He's a dedicated servant to this country, and I can tell you from personal experience he's a fabulous father.

Even as a museum, the *Intrepid* still answered the call to service. I'm pretty certain most Americans don't understand what I'm about to tell you, but on September the 11th, when we came attacked just a few blocks from here, the *Intrepid* was used as an emergency command center. First-responders launched helicopters from the decks. It became clear that this ship, which helped defeat the great totalitarian threats of the 20th century, was front and center in the opening moments of a new struggle against the forces of hatred and fear.

The war on terror has required courage; it has required resolve equal to what previous generations of Americans brought to the fields of Europe and the deep waters of the Pacific. And I'm proud to report to my fellow citizens, our Armed Forces, the Armed Forces of this generation, have showed up for the fight, and America is more secure for it.

This morning, Laura and I flew up here with some brave men and women who are keeping us safe. I want to introduce them to you.

Staff Sergeant Michael Noyce Merino was the first National Guardsman ever to be named the Army's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Senior Airman Alicia Goetschel was named one of the Air Force's Outstanding Airmen of the Year for her work in keeping dangerous extremists off the streets of Iraq. Chief Petty Officer Shenequa Cox won several awards recognizing her as one of the Navy's finest sailors. Petty Officer First Class Chris Hutto was honored as the Coast Guard's Enlisted Person of the Year. And United States Marine Sergeant John Badon's bravery earned him two Purple Hearts for his service in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Where are my new pals? God bless you.

They are representatives of the finest our Nation offers. And they have the support of strong and caring and loving families. And so on this Veterans Day, not only do we honor those who have worn the uniform, those who are wearing the uniform, we honor their families. And we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

We have a moral obligation to support our families, and we have a moral obligation to support our veterans. It has been my privilege to work with Members of the United States Congress to nearly double the funding for those who have worn the uniform. It has been my privilege to work to implement the recommendations from

the Dole-Shalala Commission, to make sure that we have a mental health care system and physical health care system worthy of the sacrifice of those who have worn the uniform.

It has been my privilege to work with the United States Congress to expand education benefits for both members of our military as well as our veterans. It has been my privilege to say loud and clear to our veterans: We love you, we respect you, and we thank you for serving the United States of America.

And I love what the Intrepid Relief Fund and the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund have done to support our veterans as well. They provided more than $100 million to military families in need. The Intrepid's Fisher House program has provided temporary housing for families of service men and women receiving medical treatment.

At the center for the Intrepid's physical rehabilitation facility in San Antonio, Texas, America's wounded warriors receive some incredible medical care. I have seen what happens in this place of healing and hope firsthand. The Intrepid Center brings great compassion to those who have worn and are wearing the uniform. It also shows that the American people are incredibly generous in supporting the veterans. And I want to thank the Intrepid members and those who support the Intrepid foundations for your work on behalf of our country.

Throughout the decades, our service men and women have shown a spirit of selfless courage. I was impressed by the story of Alonzo Swann, who on October 29, 1944, here on the deck of the *Intrepid*, had to help his fellow sailors deal with a kamikaze attack. He saw his best friend burning alive and caught in a gun mount. He rushed into the flames. He attempted to save his buddy, but before he could do so, an ammunition bin detonated; nine were killed, six injured, including Alonzo.

For his bravery, he was awarded the Bronze Star. It's a high honor, but a lot of folks didn't think it was a high enough honor. They felt he deserved the Navy Cross, and many believed that he had been denied the Navy Cross because of the color of his skin—he was an African American. For 50 years his advocates petitioned the Government, and for 50 years they were unsuccessful. But he kept the faith. November 3, 1993, under the Presidency of my predecessor, President Bill Clinton, right here on the deck of the *Intrepid*, Alonzo Swann finally received his Navy Cross. And I want people to listen to what he said. He said, "If you think you're right, fight your heart out." That ought to be the motto of the modern United States military. You think you're right, and you're fighting your heart out for the sake of peace and freedom, and we thank you for it.

Laura and I are honored to be here. We're honored to see this majestic place. I love the fact that parents can answer a child's question about "Why fight?" with this answer: These brave souls fought for freedom, they fought for liberty, and they fought to guarantee the rights given to us by our Creator. And that has been the history of our Armed Forces: brave folks, the mightiest defenders of those unalienable rights.

So on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank our veterans for your service, for your commitment. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Charles de Gunzburg and Richard Santulli, cochairmen, and Arnold Fisher, chairman emeritus, Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum board of trustees; Gov. David A. Paterson of New York; Christine C. Quinn, speaker, New York City Council; Bill White, president, Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum; television personality Vanna White; and entertainer John Rich.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
November 11, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran national emergency declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2008.

Our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the January 19, 1981, agreements with Iran is still underway. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared on November 14, 1979, with respect to Iran, beyond November 14, 2008.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks Honoring 2008 NCAA Championship Teams
November 12, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House, champions day here on the South Lawn. We appreciate you coming. We appreciate the fact that as champions you have set goals and you have worked hard to achieve those goals.

I appreciate very much the fact that you brought your coaches with you and people at your universities who support you. I'm proud to welcome the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, his wife Molly, and daughter Ella. He is here because he is a graduate of Northwestern University. Of course, you're probably here to cheer all the teams, right? Yes.

I want to welcome other members of the administration, school officials, families, and fans. First team I want to honor is the team for which we have called upon this weather: the University of Alaska Fairbanks rifle team. [*Laughter*] The Nanooks are with us today. You won your 10th national championship and your third in a row. I want to welcome coach Dan Jordan and the folks from Fairbanks—University of Alaska Fairbanks. I asked the captain, "Who did you beat to get here?" And he said, "Army." [*Laughter*] The folks at West Point need to practice. [*Laughter*] These guys make good competition to you. Congratulations. Welcome. And we are glad you're here.

A lot of teams from the State of Arizona have joined us. We put this weather on just for you. [*Laughter*]

The University of Arizona men's and women's swimming and diving teams are here. In March, the women defeated Auburn to win the national championship, and 1 week later, the men handily beat the

University of Texas. We welcome you here. This is the first national championship for either team. And I got the feeling, having talked to some of the athletes, this will not be the last time you'll be at the White House, even though it will be my last time here at the White House. [*Laughter*] Coach Frank Busch—no relation—and the mighty Arizona men and women's team, congratulations, and we welcome you.

The Arizona State University men's and women's indoor track and field team have joined us today. [*Applause*] There you are. The Sun Devil men and women both took home indoor track and field championships. This was the first indoor title for the men and a repeat for the women. You have a great leader and coach, Greg Kraft, and we're glad to welcome you back. Congratulations, and thanks.

Arizona State softball team are with us today. [*Applause*] Seems to be some support out there for women's softball. You're looking at a big women's softball supporter. You went 66–5, and 10–0 during the postseason to capture the Sun Devils' first NCAA softball national title. When Coach Clint Myers arrived 3 years ago, he promised that you would win a national title. That's a pretty bold promise, Coach Myers, and you've delivered. And you thanked him by dumping Gatorade all over him. [*Laughter*] I hope you sent them the cleaning bill.

The Florida State men's outdoor track and field team have joined us today, the mighty Seminoles. This is your third-straight title. Coach Bob Braman told me that he—last year, he said, "We'll be back, Mr. President." I said, "I'll be here too." You're in the process of winning; you produced nine All-Americans. Congratulations on another great championship.

The Northwestern University women's lacrosse team; they finished 21–1. I must tell you, I was slightly disappointed when I came in the White House room there and looked at the feet of those women. I was looking for flip-flops. [*Laughter*] Coach Kathy—Kelly Hiller led you to the fourth straight national title over Penn, and here is what she said: "I'm not going to call ourselves a dynasty, but if you want to, I'm okay with it." [*Laughter*] Welcome back, a dynasty. Congratulations, ladies.

LSU women's outdoor track and field team, straight out of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. [*Laughter*] It came down to the wire, the very last event of the very last day was the 4x400, and you won. And now you are the national champs. We welcome Coach Dennis Shaver and the women from Louisiana State University.

I'm proud to welcome back Coach John Murphy's Brown University women's rowing team. This is the second-straight year that the women have been back; this is your sixth national championship in less than a decade. You are the most successful crew in NCAA women's rowing history. Congratulations, and welcome back to the White House.

And finally, Fresno State men's baseball. So you talk about a team that refused to quit. This team lost 12 of the first 20 games of the season. I suspect some of you wrote you off, you know, like—[*laughter*]—8 and 12? These guys call themselves champs? You needed to win your conference tournament just to make the NCAA field of 64 teams. Six times in postseason you were only one game away from elimination. Every time you held on, and you became national champs. No wonder the ESPYs nominated you for the best upset of the year.

I thank you for your willingness to never say die, your willingness to keep fighting. Steve Detwiler said this—he played with an injury by the way—he said: "It's mind over matter. The pain is temporary, the pride is forever." And I suspect, Steve, a lot of athletes, whether they were on your team or on the teams represented here, can testify that pride is forever. This is a prideful moment for you.

We are glad you're here at the White House. I thank you for being good champions on the field. I thank you for being champs off the field. I'm proud you're here at this grand house of the people. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patrik Sartz, cocaptain, University of Alaska Fairbanks rifle team; and Steve Detwiler, outfielder, Fresno State men's baseball team.

Remarks at the 2008 Bishop John T. Walker Memorial Dinner
November 12, 2008

Thank you, Frank, and thanks for this great honor. I accept it gratefully, but it ought to be offered to the American people.

Laura and I are thrilled to be with you. I am always a better man when my wife is by my side.

I want to thank Jules Coles, the president of Africare; Maria Walker, the widow of Bishop John Walker. I was thinking coming over, "Let's see, I'm George Walker Bush"—[*laughter*]. I don't know, what do you think? [*Laughter*] Anyway, Madam—Ms. Walker, thank you very much for joining us.

I want to thank the members of the Africare board of directors for this honor, but more importantly, for the work you do in Africa.

I thank my friend, Congressman Don Payne, who's one of the leading—[*applause*]—the leading authorities in the United States Congress on African affairs. I'm pleased members of my administration have joined me and Laura here tonight.

Henrietta Fore, Administrator of USAID; the head of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Ambassador John Danilovich; the U.S. Malaria Coordinator, Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer—thank you for coming, Admiral.

I'm pleased to be here with Lloyd Pierson, President and CEO of African Development Foundation; Ron Tschetter, Director of the mighty Peace Corps.

Laura and I have the privilege of hosting Bill Frist and his wife Karyn at the White House tonight. Make sure you make your bed, Senator, but we thank you for coming.

I want to thank members of the diplomatic corps. We are proud you are here tonight.

I'm in pretty good company when it comes to this Humanitarian Service Award. Jules said, "Man, you're hanging out with some good folks." Last year's award winner went to—recipient was President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, a great woman. Last year's dinner speaker was, in fact, my wife Laura. And frankly, knowing both women, I am not sure which is a harder act to follow.

I really am glad Laura is here because our work in Africa—and I say our collective work in Africa—is a labor of love for us. Laura and I have been to Africa a lot. She has worked in an effective way to help promote education and health. Our girls Barbara and Jenna have done a lot of work to help promote dignity on the continent of Africa, particularly with those folks living with HIV/AID. I am proud of their work, and I'm proud of the work of millions of our fellow citizens. It is amazing to me that when you go to Africa, the number of Americans you meet who are living out the universal call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, who are hearing that admonition that to whom

much is given, much is required. America—[*applause*].

I appreciate those who support Africare. I thank you for your work in caring for orphans in Uganda or fighting polio in Angola or resettling refugees from Sudan. I thank you for the work you do in 20 nations on the continent of Africa. And in that work, you are carrying out the vision of the man we honor, Bishop John Walker.

When he was a young clergyman in the sixties, he traveled to Uganda. He was welcomed in the homes of people who needed his message of love. That experience convinced Bishop Walker that Africa's greatest treasure is not its spectacular scenery or natural resources, but it is the determined spirit of its people.

Bishop Walker understood that disease and poverty and injustice are great challenges. But he also knew that the people of Africa have the talent and ambition and resolve to overcome them. And frankly, that has been the heart of our policy toward Africa. We do not believe in paternalism, we believe in partnership, because we believe in the potential of the people on the continent of Africa.

I've had a lot of uplifting experiences as the President. And one of the most uplifting experiences has been to witness a new and more hopeful era dawning on the continent. Over the past 8 years, it's been moving to watch courageous Africans root out corruption and open up their economies and invest in the prosperity of their people. The United States stands with these leaders as partners and friends and allies in hope through the work of the Millennium Challenge Account.

On my trip to Africa this February, I joined President Kikwete of Tanzania to sign a 5-year, nearly $700 million Millennium Challenge compact, which will help build up Tanzania's infrastructure. And as part of this compact, Africare is helping to extend electricity to homes and businesses in some of the most remote areas of the country. My fellow citizens need to hear what President Kikwete said. He said that the Millennium Challenge program is a "source of pride, making it possible for the people of Tanzania to chart a brighter future."

Notice he didn't say, making it possible for the American people to chart a brighter future for Tanzania. He said, making it possible for the citizens of Tanzania to chart their own future.

It is uplifting to see people freed from hunger and thirst. And I'm proud of the fact that the American people have supported programs to help feed tens of millions of people on the continent. And I appreciate the work of people here in Africare for helping on that work. Your organization has partnered with our government to address the lack of clean and safe drinking water. This is one of the greatest challenges to development in African nations, and through your efforts this evening, you're helping to overcome it.

On a way—one way our country is working with African governments is to provide safe water through private-public partnerships, and one such innovative program is called the PlayPumps Alliance. Mr. Dale Jones of PlayPumps International is with us today. You probably may not have heard of PlayPumps Alliance—it's kind of hard for me to say. [*Laughter*] But here's the way it works: PlayPumps are children's merry-go-rounds attached to a water pump and a storage tank, and so when the wheel turns, clean water is produced. Laura and Jenna helped to get one of these new pumps moving during their visit to a Zambian school. As the wheel spun, children on the merry-go-round shouted and laughed with joy. At the same time, they helped to keep their friends in good health.

There are innovative ways to express the compassion of the American people on the continent of Africa. And I want to thank PlayPumps International for being one of the innovators.

On my trips to Africa, it has been uplifting to see people fulfilling their God-given

potential, thanks to a good education. The African Education Initiative was mentioned, but a part of that initiative is the fact that we've trained 700,000 teachers, distributed more than 10 million textbooks, and provided hundreds of thousands of scholarships to help girls go to school.

In Liberia, I met a woman named Deddeh Zaizay, who told me that her husband had abandoned her and her three children because she was illiterate. Deddeh is learning to read. She proudly declared in front of the President of Liberia that she plans to go to college. And she has set her sights high; she wants to be the President of Liberia one day.

I do not see how you can have a hopeful life if your mother and father is dying of HIV/AIDS or your baby is dying needlessly because of a mosquito bite. And so we have taken a strong stand against deadly disease. Through the malaria initiative, we've partnered with African nations to dramatically reduce infection rates and save lives. Laura and I saw the good work of the American people and the good work of Africare at firsthand in Tanzania's Meru District Hospital. New mothers bring their babies into the hospital; they have them tested for malaria and HIV. Nurses distribute bed net vouchers, where mothers can use to buy insecticide-treated bed nets.

Laura and I met the mothers. I cannot tell you the expression of pride they had on their face when they held their babies up and said, "My baby is healthy." Nothing more hopeful than to see the joy on a mother's face, realizing that her baby has escaped the scourge of the deadly disease of malaria. I thank all those in this audience and around our Nation who have helped this malaria initiative become robust and effective.

And then, of course, there's the extraordinary story—stories related to PEPFAR. We launched the initiative in 2003; only 50,000 people in sub-Sahara Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment. Today, as was mentioned, we support treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region. Africare is making vital contributions to this effort. And with your help, people across Africa now speak of a Lazarus effect: Communities once given up for dead are being brought back to life.

Laura and I have seen this miracle with our own eyes. I'm sure many of you have as well. She traveled to South Africa in 2005; Laura visited a PEPFAR-supported clinic for HIV-positive pregnant women. There she met Kunene Tantoh. When Kunene first arrived at the clinic, she virtually had no immune system left. But with the treatment she received, Kunene survived. Not only did she survive, 2 years later she was in the Rose Garden at the White House. She brought with him—she brought with her her son Baron. She wanted Laura and me to see an HIV-free baby. Baron is a reminder of the many lives that have been touched and saved by the compassion of the American people. And he represents the bright and promising future awaiting the folks in Africa.

In our visits to the continent, we have been overwhelmed by the affection and gratitude that the African people show to the American people. Oh, a lot of people are out there saying: "Why should I care about Africa? What good does it do me, Mr. President, for our Government to support Africa?" Well, I'll tell you what good it does. One, it is in our national security interest that we defeat hopelessness. It is in our economic interest that we help economies grow. And it is in our moral interest that when we find hunger and suffering, the United States of America responds in a robust and effective way.

I thank Africare for being on the leading edge of this transformative series of initiatives. I hope you feel as good about your contribution as I feel as good about our Government's contribution to doing what's right. I'm honored to receive this award. I am honored to be the President of the most compassion, greatest nation on the

face of the Earth. God bless you, and God bless the people of America and Africa.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:19 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to W. Frank Fountain, chairman, Africare; former Sen. William H. Frist; and Dale E. Jones, chief executive officer, PlayPumps International.

Remarks to the United Nations High-Level Debate on Interfaith Dialogue in New York City

November 13, 2008

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: Laura and I are pleased to be back here at the United Nations, and I am grateful for the opportunity to once again address the General Assembly.

I want to thank King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia for his leadership and for convincing us all to come together to speak about faith. I appreciate the participants who recognize the transformative and uplifting power of faith.

One of my core beliefs is there—that there is an Almighty God and that every man, woman, and child on the face of this Earth bears His image. Many years ago, faith changed my life. Faith has sustained me through the challenges and the joys of my Presidency, and faith will guide me for the rest of my days.

I know many of the leaders gathered in this assembly have been influenced by faith as well. We may profess different creeds and worship in different places, but our faith leads us to common values. We believe God calls us to love our neighbors and to treat one another with compassion and respect. We believe God calls us to honor the dignity of all life and to speak against cruelty and injustice. We believe God calls us to live in peace and to oppose all those who use His name to justify violence and murder.

Freedom is God's gift to every man, woman, and child. And that freedom includes the right of all people to worship as they see fit. Sixty years ago, members of the United Nations General Assembly acknowledged this truth when we adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration proclaims that everyone has the right to choose or change religions and the right to worship in private or in public.

The United States strongly supported the adoption of the Universal Declaration. In fact, the American delegation was led by a former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. When we voted for the Universal Declaration, the American people reaffirmed a conviction that dates back to our earliest days. Our Nation was founded by people seeking haven from religious persecution. The first amendment of our Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion for all. And through the generations, our Nation has helped defend the religious liberty of others, from liberating the concentration camps of Europe to protecting Muslims in places like Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Today, the United States is carrying on that noble tradition by making religious liberty a central element of our foreign policy. We've established a Commission on the International Religious Freedom to monitor the state of religious liberty worldwide. We strongly encourage nations to understand that religious freedom is the foundation of a healthy and hopeful society. We're not afraid to stand with religious dissidents and

believers who practice their faith, even where it is unwelcome.

One of the best ways to safeguard religious freedom is to aid the rise of democracy. Democratic governments don't all look alike. Each reflects the history and traditions of its own people. But one way—but one of the defining features of any democracy is that it makes room for people of all backgrounds and all faiths. Democracies allow people with diverse views to discuss their differences and live in harmony.

The expansion of democracy also represents the most promising path to peace. People who are free to express their opinions can challenge the ideologies of hate. They can defend their religious beliefs and speak out against those seeking to twist them to evil ends. They can prevent their children from falling under the sway of extremists by giving them a more hopeful alternative.

Over the past 8 years, I've been privileged to see how freedom and faith can lift up lives and lead the world toward peace. I remember clearly a congregation in the State of Kansas, in my country, whose members stayed together and prayed together, even when a tornado had torn down their church. I've seen faithful caregivers on the continent of Africa who take AIDS patients given up for dead and restore them to health. I have seen mothers across the Middle East whose faith leads them to dream of a better and more peaceful future for their children, a dream shared by mothers all around the world.

I appreciate every nation participating in today's dialogue. Through dialogue we can draw closer to the day when our prayers for freedom and peace are answered and every person on Earth enjoys the rights and dignity granted by an Almighty God.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the Manhattan Institute in New York City
November 13, 2008

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you. Larry, thank you for the introduction. Thank you for giving Laura and me a chance to come to this historic hall to talk about a big issue facing the world. And today I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and for me to outline the steps that America and our partners are taking and are going to take to overcome this financial crisis.

And I thank the Manhattan Institute for all you have done. I appreciate the fact that I am here in a fabulous city to give this speech. People say, "Are you confident about our future?" And the answer is, absolutely. And it's easy to be confident when you're in a city like New York City. After all, there is an unbelievable spirit in this city. This is the city whose skyline has offered immigrants their first glimpse of freedom. This is the city where people rallied when that freedom came under attack. This is the city whose capital markets have attracted investments from around the world and financed the dreams of entrepreneurs all across America. This is the city that has been and will always be the financial capital of the world.

And I am grateful to be in the presence of two men who served ably and nobly

New York City, Mayor Koch and Mayor Giuliani. Thank you all for coming. Glad you're here. I thank the Manhattan Institute board of trustees and its chairman Paul Singer for doing good work, being a good policy center. And before I begin, I must say, I would hope that Ray Kelly would tell New York's finest how much I appreciate the incredible hospitality that we are always shown here in New York City. You're the head of a fabulous police force, and we thank you very much, sir.

We live in a world in which our economies are interconnected. Prosperity and progress have reached farther than any time in our history. Unfortunately, as we have seen in recent months, financial turmoil anywhere in the world affects economies everywhere in the world. And so this weekend I'm going to host a summit on financial markets and the world economy with leaders from developed and developing nations that account for nearly 90 percent of the world economy. Leaders of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and the Financial Stability Forum are going to be there as well. We'll have dinner at the White House tomorrow night, and we'll meet most of the day on Saturday.

The leaders attending this weekend's meeting agree on a clear purpose: to address the current crisis and to lay the foundation for reforms that will help prevent a similar crisis in the future. We also agree that this undertaking is too large to be accomplished in a single session. The issues are too complex, the problem is too significant to try to solve or to come up with reasonable recommendations in just one meeting. So this summit will be the first of a series of meetings.

It will focus on five key objectives: understanding the causes of the global crisis, reviewing the effectiveness of our responses thus far, developing principles for reforming our financial and regulatory systems, launching a specific action plan to implement those principles, and reaffirming our conviction that free market principles offer the surest path to lasting prosperity.

First, we're working toward a common understanding of the causes behind the global crisis. Different countries will naturally bring different perspectives, but there are some points on which we can all agree.

Over the past decade, the world experienced a period of strong economic growth. Nations accumulated huge amounts of savings and looked for safe places to invest them. Because of our attractive political, legal, and entrepreneurial climates, the United States and other developed nations received a large share of that money.

The massive inflow of foreign capital, combined with low interest rates, produced a period of easy credit. And that easy credit especially affected the housing market. Flush with cash, many lenders issued mortgages, and many borrowers could not afford them. Financial institutions then purchased these loans, packaged them together, and converted them into complex securities designed to yield large returns. These securities were then purchased by investors and financial institutions in the United States and Europe and elsewhere, often with little analysis of their true underlying value.

The financial crisis was ignited when the booming housing markets began to decline. As home values dropped, many borrowers defaulted on their mortgages, and institutions holding securities backed by those mortgages suffered serious losses. Because of outdated regulatory structures and poor risk management practices, many financial institutions in America and Europe were too highly leveraged. When capital ran short, many faced severe financial jeopardy. This led to high-profile failures of financial institutions in America and Europe, led to contractions and widespread anxiety, all of which contributed to sharp declines in the equity markets.

These developments have placed a heavy burden on hard-working people around the world. Stock market drops have eroded the value of retirement accounts and pension

funds. The tightening of credit has made it harder for families to borrow money for cars or home improvements or education of the children. Businesses have found it harder to get loans to expand their operations and create jobs. Many nations have suffered job losses and have serious concerns about the worsening economy. Developing nations have been hit hard as nervous investors have withdrawn their capital.

We are faced with the prospect of a global meltdown. And so we've responded with bold measures. I'm a market-oriented guy, but not when I'm faced with the prospect of a global meltdown. And at Saturday's summit, we're going to review the effectiveness of our actions.

Here in the United States, we have taken unprecedented steps to boost liquidity, recapitalize financial institutions, guarantee most new debt issued by insured banks, and prevent the disorderly collapse of large, interconnected enterprises. These were historic actions taken necessary to make—necessary so that the economy would not melt down and affect millions of our fellow citizens.

In Europe, governments are also purchasing equity in banks and providing government guarantees for loans. In Asia, nations like China and Japan and South Korea have lowered interest rates and have launched significant economic stimulus plans. In the Middle East, nations like Kuwait and the UAE have guaranteed deposits and opened up new government lending to banks.

In addition, nations around the world have taken unprecedented joint measures. Last month, a number of central banks carried out a coordinated interest rate cut. The Federal Reserve is extending needed liquidity to central banks around the world. The IMF and World Bank are working to ensure that developing nations can weather this crisis.

This crisis did not develop overnight, and it's not going to be solved overnight. But our actions are having an impact. Credit markets are beginning to thaw. Businesses are gaining access to essential short-term financing. A measure of stability is returning to financial systems here at home and around the world. It's going to require more time for these improvements to fully take hold, and there's going to be difficult days ahead. But the United States and our partner are taking the right steps to get through this crisis.

In addition to addressing the current crisis, we will also need to make broader reforms to strengthen the global economy over the long term. This weekend, leaders will establish principles for adapting our financial systems to the realities of the 21st-century marketplace. We will discuss specific actions we can take to implement these principles. We will direct our finance ministers to work with other experts and report back to us with detailed recommendations on further reasonable actions.

One vital principle of reform is that our nations must make our financial markets more transparent. For example, we should consider improving accounting rules for securities, so that investors around the world can understand the true value of the assets they purchase.

Secondly, we must ensure that markets, firms, and financial products are properly regulated. For example, credit default swaps—financial products that insure against potential losses—should be processed through centralized clearinghouses instead of through unregulated, over-the-counter markets. By bringing greater stability to this large and important financial sector, we reduce the risk to our overall financial systems.

Third, we must enhance the integrity of our financial markets. For example, authorities in every nation should take a fresh look at the rules governing market manipulation and fraud and ensure that investors are properly protected.

Fourth, we must strengthen cooperation among the world's financial authorities. For

example, leading nations should better coordinate national laws and regulations. We should also reform international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which are based largely on the economic order of 1944. To better reflect the realities of today's global economy, both the IMF and World Bank should modernize their governance structures. They should consider extending greater voter—voting power to dynamic developing nations, especially as they increase their contributions to these institutions. They should consider ways to streamline their executive boards and make them more representative.

In addition, these important—to these management changes, we should move forward with other reforms to make the IMF and World Bank more transparent, accountable, and effective. For example, the IMF should agree to work more closely with member countries to ensure that their exchange rate policies are market oriented and fair. And the World Bank should ensure its development programs reflect the priorities of the people they are designed to serve and focus on measurable results.

All these steps require decisive actions from governments around the world. At the same time, we must recognize that government intervention is not a cure-all. For example, some blame the crisis on insufficient regulation of the American mortgage market. But many European countries had much more extensive regulations and still experienced problems almost identical to our own.

History has shown that the greater threat to economic prosperity is not too little government involvement in the market, it is too much government involvement in the market. We saw this in the case of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Because these firms were chartered by the United States Congress, many believed they were backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government. Investors put huge amounts of money into Fannie and Freddie, which they used to build up irresponsibly large portfolios of mortgage-backed securities. And when the housing market declined, these securities, of course, plummeted in value. It took a taxpayer-funded rescue to keep Fannie and Freddie from collapsing in a way that would have devastated the global financial system. And there is a clear lesson: Our aim should not be more government, it should be smarter government.

All this leads to the most important principle that should guide our work. While reforms in the financial sector are essential, the long-term solution to today's problems is sustained economic growth. And the surest path to that growth is free markets and free people.

This is a decisive moment for the global economy. In the wake of the financial crisis, voices from the left and right are equating the free enterprise system with greed and exploitation and failure. It's true this crisis includes failures by lenders and borrowers and by financial firms and by governments and independent regulators. But the crisis was not a failure of the free market system. And the answer is not to try to reinvent that system. It is to fix the problems we face, make the reforms we need, and move forward with the free market principles that have delivered prosperity and hope to people all across the globe.

Like any other system designed by men, capitalism is not perfect. It can be subject to excesses and abuse. But it is by far the most efficient and just way of structuring an economy. At its most basic level, capitalism offers people the freedom to choose where they work and what they do, the opportunity to buy or sell products they want, and the dignity that comes with profiting from their talent and hard work. The free market system provides the incentives that lead to prosperity: the incentive to work, to innovate, to save, to invest wisely, and to create jobs for others. And as millions of people pursue these incentives together, whole societies benefit.

Free market capitalism is far more than economic theory. It is the engine of social mobility, the highway to the American Dream. It's what makes it possible for a husband and wife to start their own business or a new immigrant to open a restaurant or a single mom to go back to college and to build a better career. It is what allowed entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley to change the way the world sells products and searches for information. It's what transformed America from a rugged frontier to the greatest economic power in history, a nation that gave the world the steamboat and the airplane, the computer and the CAT scan, the Internet and the iPod.

Ultimately, the best evidence for free market capitalism is its performance compared to other economic systems. Free markets allowed Japan, an island with few natural resources, to recover from war and grow into the world's second largest economy. Free markets allowed South Korea to make itself into one of the most technologically advanced societies in the world. Free markets turned small areas like Singapore and Hong Kong and Taiwan into global economic players. Today, the success of the world's largest economies comes from their embrace of free markets.

Meanwhile, nations that have pursued other models have experienced devastating results. Soviet communism starved millions, bankrupted an empire, and collapsed as decisively as the Berlin Wall. Cuba, once known for its vast fields of cane, is now forced to ration sugar. And while Iran sits atop giant oil reserves, its people cannot put enough gasoline in its—in their cars.

The record is unmistakable. If you seek economic growth, if you seek opportunity, if you seek social justice and human dignity, the free market system is the way to go. And it would be a terrible mistake to allow a few months of crisis to undermine 60 years of success.

Just as important as maintaining free markets within countries is maintaining the free movement of goods and services between countries. When nations open up their markets to trade and investment, their businesses and farmers and workers find new buyers for their products. Consumers benefit from more choices and better prices. Entrepreneurs can get their ideas off the ground with funding from anywhere in the world. Thanks in large part to open markets, the volume of global trade today is nearly 30 times greater than it was six decades ago, and some of the most dramatic gains have come in the developing world.

As President, I have seen the transformative power of trade up close. I've been to a Caterpillar factory in East Peoria, Illinois, where thousands of good-paying American jobs are supported by exports. I've walked the grounds of a trade fair in Ghana, where I met women who support their families by exporting handmade dresses and jewelry. I've spoken with a farmer in Guatemala who decided to grow high-value crops he could sell overseas and helped create more than 1,000 jobs.

Stories like these show why it is so important to keep markets open to trade and investment. This openness is especially urgent during times of economic strain. Shortly after the stock market crash in 1929, Congress passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, a protectionist measure designed to wall off America's economy from global competition. The result was not economic security, it was economic ruin. And leaders around the world must keep this example in mind and reject the temptation of protectionism.

There are clear-cut ways for nations to demonstrate the commitment to open markets. The United States Congress has an immediate opportunity by approving free trade agreements with Colombia, Peru [Panama],* and South Korea. America and other wealthy nations must also ensure this crisis does not become an excuse to reverse

* White House correction.

our engagement with the developing world. And developing nations should continue policies that foster enterprise and investment. As well, all nations should pledge to conclude a framework this year that leads to a successful Doha agreement.

We're facing this challenge together, and we're going to get through it together. The United States is determined to show the way back to economic growth and prosperity. I know some may question whether America's leadership in the global economy will continue. The world can be confident that it will, because our markets are flexible, and we can rebound from setbacks. We saw that resilience in the 1940s, when America pulled itself out of Depression, marshaled a powerful army, and helped save the world from tyranny. We saw that resilience in the 1980s, when Americans overcame gas lines, turned stagflation into strong economic growth, and won the cold war. We saw that resilience after September the 11th, 2001, when our Nation recovered from a brutal attack, revitalized our shaken economy, and rallied the forces of freedom in the great ideological struggle of the 21st century.

The world will see the resilience of America once again. We will work with our partners to correct the problems in the global financial system. We will rebuild our economic strength, and we will continue to lead the world toward prosperity and peace.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. at the Federal Hall National Memorial. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence J. Mone, president, Manhattan Institute; former Mayors Edward I. Koch and Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; and Raymond W. Kelly, commissioner, New York City Police Department. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Klamath River Basin Conservation Agreement
November 13, 2008

I congratulate the many people of the Klamath River Basin in Oregon and California who recently put forward a shared vision for conservation of the river. The agreement my administration announced today with Oregon, California, and PacifiCorp, the company that owns four hydropower dams on the Klamath River, will advance that vision. Federal, State, and private partners will now begin studying the feasibility of removing four hydropower dams on the river. This is the first phase of a long-term conservation program for upriver salmon habitats.

This agreement turns what was a conflict into a conservation success. For years, there had been disagreement among irrigators, States, tribes, conservationists, and others. Beginning with the drought of 2001, the community, working in partnership with the Federal Government, rallied together to find a long-term solution. Since 2002, my administration has requested and Congress has provided approximately $90 million annually—a total of more than $500 million—for Klamath Basin activities. Working together, the Federal Government and its partners have restored irrigation and more than 10,000 acres of fish habitat and banked for conservation more than 800,000 acre-feet of water. These actions have provided adequate water for farmers while also helping species recover.

Together, we have produced an agreement that will greatly reduce the risk of future shutdowns of the irrigation system.

I applaud this example of cooperative conservation and thank everyone who worked to bring it about.

The President's Radio Address
November 14, 2008

Good morning. This weekend, I am hosting a summit on the global financial crisis with leaders of developed and developing nations. By working together, I'm confident that with time we can overcome this crisis and return our economies to the path of growth and vitality.

I know many of you listening are worried about the challenges facing our economy. Stock market declines have eroded the value of retirement accounts and pension funds. The tightening of credit has made it harder for families to borrow money for cars, homes, and education. Businesses have found it harder to get loans to expand their operations and create jobs. Many nations have suffered job losses and have serious concerns about the worsening economy.

Nations around the world have responded to this situation with bold measures, and our actions are having an impact. Credit markets are beginning to thaw, and businesses are gaining access to essential short-term financing. It will require more time for these improvements to fully take hold, and there will be more difficult days ahead. But the United States and our partners are taking the right steps to get through the crisis.

As we address the current crisis, we also need to make broader reforms to adapt our financial systems to the 21st century. So during this summit, I will work with other leaders to establish principles for reform, such as making markets more transparent and ensuring that markets, firms, and financial products are properly regulated.

All these steps will require decisive actions from governments around the world. At the same time, we must recognize that government intervention is not a cure-all. While reforms in the financial sector are essential, the long-term solution to today's problems is sustained economic growth. And the surest path to that growth is free markets and free people.

This is a decisive moment for the global economy. In the wake of the financial crisis, voices from the left and right are equating the free enterprise system with greed, exploitation, and failure. It is true that this crisis included failures by lenders and borrowers, by financial firms, by governments, and independent regulators. But the crisis was not a failure of the free market system. And the answer is not to try to reinvent that system. It is to fix the problems we face, make the reforms we need, and move forward with the free market principles that have delivered prosperity and hope to people around the world.

The benefits of free market capitalism have been proven across time, geography, and culture. Around the world, free market capitalism has allowed once impoverished nations to develop large and prosperous economies. And here at home, free market capitalism is what transformed America from a rugged frontier to the greatest economic power in history.

Just as important as maintaining free markets within countries is maintaining the free movement of goods and services between countries. There are many ways for nations to demonstrate their commitment to open markets. The United States Congress can take the lead by approving free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama,

and South Korea before adjourning for the year.

In the long run, Americans can be confident in the future of our economy. We will work with our partners around the world to address the problems in the global financial system. We will strengthen our economy, and we will continue to lead the world toward prosperity and peace.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on November 14 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 14. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a State Dinner With Financial Markets and World Economy Summit Participants

November 14, 2008

Your Excellencies, welcome to the United States. Welcome to the White House. And welcome to the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy.

I do want to begin my remarks by extending our heartfelt sympathies and prayers to Prime Minister Balkenende. He landed today and called me on the phone to inform me that his father had passed away. He returned back to his country to be with his family, and we wish them all the very best.

In the State Dining Room tonight are representatives of major industrialized economies, some of the largest developing economies, and key international financial institutions. We are here because we share a concern about the impact of the global financial crisis on the people of our nations. We share a determination to fix the problems that led to this turmoil. We share a conviction that by working together, we can restore the global economy to the path of long-term prosperity.

When we sit down at the summit table tomorrow, we bring clear priorities. Tomorrow's discussion will be the first in a series of meetings. We will focus on key, five objectives: understanding the causes of the global crisis, reviewing the effectiveness of our responses thus far, identifying principles for reforming our financial and regulatory systems, launching a specific action plan to implement those principles, and reaffirming our conviction that free market principles offer the surest path to lasting prosperity.

As we pursue these objectives, we can build on what we have achieved together so far. Since the outbreak of the crisis, the world's leading nations have coordinated our actions more closely than ever before. Thanks in large part to these decisive measures, global credit markets are beginning to thaw. Businesses around the world are regaining access to essential short-term financing, and stability is beginning to return to the international financial system. This problem did not develop overnight, and it will not be solved overnight. But with continued cooperation and determination, it will be solved.

There is more work to do beyond the immediate crisis, and the stakes are indeed high. Billions of hard-working people are counting on us to strengthen our financial systems for the long term. Families need credit to buy homes and to fund education. Businesses need capital to expand their operations so they can hire new employees. Older workers are counting on pensions and retirement funds to support them in

their retirement years. Developing nations need the assistance they have been promised, as well as additional foreign investment, to continue their journey from poverty to promise. All over the world, people understand that their livelihoods depend upon a healthy and growing global economy.

The surest path to that growth is to continue policies of free and open markets. Free market capitalism has been an engine of prosperity, progress, and social mobility in economies all over the globe. Trade and investment have been—have linked our economies together, creating new customers for businesses and workers and greater choices and lower prices for consumers. All our nations must reject calls for protectionism, collectivism, and defeatism in the face of our current challenge.

I thank you all for coming and for your commitment to this urgent work. And with confidence in the success of our efforts, I offer a toast to all of you, to the principles we share, and to the people we serve.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands.

Remarks on Arrival at the National Building Museum
November 15, 2008

Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy

Good morning. We had a good dinner last night. I am pleased with the progress we're making on—to, one, address the current crisis. I am pleased that we're discussing a way forward to make sure that such a crisis is unlikely to occur again. And I am pleased that the leaders reaffirmed the principles behind open markets and free trade. One of the dangers during a crisis such as this is that people will start implementing protectionist policies.

Obviously, you know, this crisis has not ended. There's some progress being made, but there's still a lot of more work to be done. And so we had a good, frank discussion last night. I look forward to the discussions today. And we'll see you after the meetings have ended.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:53 a.m.

Remarks at the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy
November 15, 2008

Welcome. Good afternoon. We just had a very productive summit meeting. Thinking about 3 weeks ago, when I was talking to President Sarkozy and Barroso at Camp David—some of you were there—I don't think we could have predicted then how productive and how successful this meeting would have been.

The first decision I had to make was who was coming to the meeting. And obviously, I decided that we ought to have G–20 nations, as opposed to the G–8 or the G–13. But once you make the decision to have the G–20, then the fundamental question is, with that many nations, from six different continents, who all represent different stages of economic development,

would it be possible to reach agreements, and not only agreements, would it be possible to reach agreements that were substantive? And I'm pleased to report the answer to that question was, absolutely.

One of the things we did, we spent time talking about the actions that we have taken. The United States has taken some extraordinary measures. Those of you who have followed my career know that I'm a free market person, until you're told that if you don't take decisive measures then it's conceivable that our country could go into depression greater than the Great Depression. So my administration has taken significant measures to deal with a credit crisis. And then we worked with Congress to deal with the credit crisis as well.

And we're beginning to see some positive results. One of the things people around the table were interested in is, are you beginning to see the results of your actions? And our credit markets are beginning to thaw, having been severely frozen; businesses are beginning to get access to short-term credit. It's going to take more time for the measures we have put in place to take hold. No question about that. As a matter of fact, we just started, for example, on the $700 billion fund, to start getting money out to our banks. So it's going to take more time.

But I was pleased to tell the folks around the table that the significant actions we've taken are beginning to work. All of us committed to continue to work on progrowth economic policies. It's phrased different ways—fiscal plans—but the whole point was, was that we recognize that, on the one hand, there's been a severe credit crisis, and on the other hand, our economies are being hit very hard. And so there was a common understanding that all of us should promote progrowth economic policy.

We also talked about broader reforms. So, in other words, the discussions were focused on today and what we're doing about it, but what are we going to do to make sure it doesn't happen tomorrow.

One of the key achievements was to establish certain principles and to take certain actions for adapting our financial systems to the realities of the 21st century. A lot of the regulatory structures that are in place were 20th-century regulatory structures. And obviously, you know, the financial industry went way beyond them. And the question is, how do we establish good regulatory structure without destroying the incentive to innovate, without destroying the marketplace?

Our nations agree that we must make the markets—the financial markets more transparent and accountable. Transparency is very important so that investors and regulators are able to know the truth. Considered improving accounting rules, so that investors can understand the true value of the assets they purchase. We agree that we need to improve our regulations and to ensure that markets, firms, and financial products are subject to proper regulation and oversight.

For example, credit default swaps, financial products that ensure against potential losses, should be processed through centralized clearinghouses. That's a significant reform. Heretofore, the credit default swaps were traded in over-the-counter, unregulated markets.

Yesterday the Working Group on Financial Markets, which is obviously associated with the White House, announced an initiative to create these kinds of clearinghouses. And I know that other nations are working on them as well. This process will help expedite credit default swaps and other types of instruments not being traded in unregulated, over-the-counter markets. By bringing greater stability to this important sector, we will help with liquidity, but also mitigate risk.

Third, we agreed that we must enhance the integrity of the financial markets. For example, authorities in every nation should take a fresh look at the rules governing market manipulation and fraud to make sure that investors in all our countries are

properly protected. We agree that we must strengthen cooperation among the world's financial authorities. There was a lot of discussion about the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for example.

Leading nations should make regulations consistent. As well, we should reform the international financial institutions. Again, these institutions have been very important—the World Bank, IMF—but they were based on an economic order of 1944. And so, to better—we agreed that to better reflect the realities of today's global economy, both IMF and World Bank should modernize their governance structures. They ought to consider extending greater voter—voting power and representation to developing nations, particularly those who have increased their contributions to the institutions.

All this is an important first step. In other words, this is the beginning of a series of meetings. People say, "Well, why don't you have one meeting and, you know, call it 'Bretton Woods II'?" Well, Bretton Woods I took 2 years to prepare. I don't know what you want to call this one, but whatever name comes from this meeting, it took 3 weeks to prepare. And so it makes sense to come out of here with a firm action plan, which we have.

It also makes sense to say to people that there is more work to be done, and there will be further meetings, sending a clear signal that a meeting is not going to solve the world's problems. A meeting will help begin a process so that we can say over time that we will have a regulatory structure in place that will make this less likely to happen in the future.

And so we've directed our finance ministers to work with other experts and consult with officials in other economies and then report back to the leaders with detailed recommendations. Whatever we do, whatever reforms are recommended, we need to be guided by the—this simple fact: That the best way to solve our problems and solve the people's problems is for there to be economic growth. And the surest path to that growth is free market capitalism.

Leaders at this summit agreed on some other matters of importance. One is to reject protectionism and refrain from erecting new trade barriers. This is a very important part of this summit. The temptations in times of economic stress will be to say: "Oh, trade isn't worth it. Let's just throw up protective barriers." And yet that attitude was rejected, thankfully. And matter of fact, not only rejected, there is a determined effort to see if we can't complete the modalities for Doha by the end of December.

One of the things I stressed as well is that the United States, in the midst of this financial crisis, will not abandon our commitments to people in the developing world; that the HIV/AIDS initiative known as PEPFAR will remain strong and vibrant; that our deep desire to significantly reduce malaria deaths in countries on the continent of Africa will not be diminished; that our obligation to help feed the hungry will not stop; that in the midst of all this turmoil and financial crisis, we will meet our obligations. These obligations are in our national security interests and our economic security interests, and they in—are in our moral interests.

And so I will tell you that I thought this was a very successful summit. And they're going to meet again. I keep saying "they" because some of you may not have heard yet, but I am retiring. But I told the leaders this: That President-elect Obama's transition team has been fully briefed on what we intended to do here at this meeting. I told them that we will work tirelessly to make sure the transition between my administration and his administration is seamless. And I told them that I hope he succeeds, that it's good for our country that people see a peaceful transfer of power. And I hope it was good for them to hear that even though we're from different political parties, that I believe it's in our country's interest that he succeed.

So I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come and visit with you. Thanks for covering this summit. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:11 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Citizens Medals
November 17, 2008

President Bush. Congratulations to our recipients. Welcome, the families and friends here at the White House.

The Presidential Citizens Medal was created nearly four decades ago to recognize Americans who have performed exemplary service to our Nation. It is among one of the highest honors that can be conferred on a citizen. As President, I rarely have the opportunity to surprise anybody. [*Laughter*] It is tough to be stealthy with a security detail that comprises a 20-car motorcade. [*Laughter*] That makes me especially pleased to present the President's Citizens Medal to four outstanding and unsuspecting leaders in the arts: Bruce Cole, Dana Gioia, Adair Margo, and Bob Martin. [*Applause*] No, no, not yet. Please do not rush the stage. [*Laughter*] Remember the big security detail? [*Laughter*]

As leaders of our Government's cultural institutions, each of today's recipients have made lasting contributions to American life and civic culture, and each is greatly deserving of this honor.

As Chairman of the National Endowment of Humanities, Bruce Cole has encouraged the study of American history through the "We The People" program and has helped preserve America's rich heritage for future generations.

As Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts, Dana Gioia has combined his passion as a poet and his skill as a businessman to enrich the lives of Americans, from young readers to soldiers returning from war.

As the Chairman of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities—and a fellow Texan—[*laughter*]—Adair Margo has rallied support for American cultural institutions and has used the arts to strengthen our relationships with nations from Mexico to China.

As former Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Bob Martin has helped preserve our treasured collections and bring libraries and museums into the 21st century with new technology. He's helped recruit and train a new generation of librarians to replace the many skilled library professionals who are preparing to retire. I know of such person preparing to retire. [*Laughter*]

Bob Martin's successor, Anne Radice, could not be here. This is a stealthy ceremony. [*Laughter*] She's doing something else. But nevertheless, in appreciation of her service, she will be presented the Citizens Medal as well and is probably wondering why she was not notified. [*Laughter*]

Each of today's honorees understands that encouraging individual creativity and freedom of expression through the arts and scholarship strengthens and enhances our great country. And so I want to thank them for their service. I congratulate them. And now I ask the military aide to read the medal citations.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Clay Beers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

President Bush. Once again, Laura and I thank you for coming. I hope you have found this day as joyous as we have. Congratulations. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady and the presentation ceremony of the National Medals of Arts and National Humanities Medals.

Remarks at the Department of Transportation
November 18, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. Madam Secretary, thank you for the kind introduction. Thank you for the reception. I am honored to be with the men and women who work here at the U.S. Department of Transportation. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come by and visit with you today. I want to thank you very much for the great job you are doing to make sure that across America our railroads and highways and airways are working to keep our citizens moving. You have done a terrific job, as far as I am concerned. The past 8 years I have not seen a traffic jam—[*laughter*]—waited for an airplane—[*laughter*]—or had my bags lost. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate very much the fabulous job—and I emphasize fabulous job—that the Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters, has done and is doing for our country. And I want to thank you for your service, Madam Secretary. She has been an outstanding member of the Cabinet; she is a strong leader. I saw her leadership, as did the country, firsthand when Minnesota's I–35 bridge collapsed. The Secretary coordinated a swift and an effective Federal response. Swift was important for the people in Minneapolis. Effective is always important when it comes to reminding our citizens that the Government can respond in a way that will make them proud.

I appreciate the fact that she launched a thorough review of bridge safety across our country and worked with the Congress to get the monies necessary to rebuild that bridge. The bridge reopened months ahead of schedule, thanks in large part to the organization, determination of our Secretary and the people who work for her.

Madam Secretary, you did your job. That's what I expected when I asked you to serve, and I really want to thank you for your service.

I'm proud to be here, as well, with the Deputy Secretary, Tom Barrett; thank you—as well as the former Deputy Secretary, and at one time Acting Secretary, Maria Cino.

I know that a lot of folks in our country think about transportation a lot, particularly this time of year. People are getting ready to move around for Thanksgiving and with Christmas not very far behind. And a lot of our citizens are nervous about travel. They're not nervous about their safety, but they're nervous about what the experience will be like: the long delays, lost bags, overbooking of flights. One way to look at it is they're saying, "Will traveling home for the holidays be 'It's A Wonderful Life,' or will it be 'The Nightmare Before Christmas'?" [*Laughter*]

Our job is to make sure it is as comfortable an experience as possible. Now obviously, the Federal Government can't control all aspects of how the airlines, for example, conducts their business. We're not

in the business of managing airlines. We are in the business, however, of making it easier for airlines to do the job we expect them to do.

And so to this end, you might remember, at Mary's recommendations, that we—the military opened its east coast airspace to civilian flights during the Thanksgiving holiday season. And it worked. This year, we're going to expand what we call the "Thanksgiving express lanes" to areas of the Midwest, the Southwest, and the west coast, including the skies over Phoenix and Los Angeles. In other words, we innovated last year to ease the travel, it worked, and now we're expanding that innovation this year. We're also working with the FAA, the TSA, and the airlines to make more staff available to speed check-in and boarding, and to help passengers affected by cancellations and delays.

We have just completed new regulations that provide increased protection for consumers. These include measures that will require airlines to provide greater compensation for lost bags, as well as tougher penalties when airlines fail to notify travelers of hidden fees. I think that's a responsible role for government. I think it makes sense for us to, through this Department, put regulation in place that stands side by side with consumers in a reasonable way.

We expect these rules to take effect in December, in time for Christmas and New Year's. These efforts represent our commitment to making this year's holiday travel season as smooth as possible. And frankly, they are part of this administration's strong record on improving air travel for American consumers.

During my time in office—or our time in office, we have put regulations in place to make airlines more accountable for the way they treat passengers. In other words, we have done this kind of regulatory regimes before, notably doubling the fine airlines pay for bumping travelers off of overbooked flights. Our message is: We will hold you to account. The consumers will hold you to account, but we have a responsibility in Government as well to help our air travelers.

This administration has signed agreements with the EU and India, Thailand and China to increase flights between the United States and these countries. It makes it easier for Americans to travel around the globe. We have launched an unprecedented effort to reduce air congestion by boosting flight capacity at some of the busiest airports. The Department of Transportation, over the past 7 and a little more than three-quarters years, has completed 13 major airport improvement projects, including 11 new runways. This week, 3 more runways will open at Seattle-Tacoma, Washington-Dulles, and Chicago-O'Hare, bringing the total to 14, which is going to help ease aviation congestion coast to coast. And for those of you in this audience who have worked on these projects, I thank you.

The administration has taken steps to address the source of most flight delays and cancellations across the country, and that would be the heavy air traffic around New York City. To help untangle the skies over New York, we have improved air traffic control. We added a new departure route from the metro area and capped the total number of flights, providing nearly $90 million over the next 8 years to upgrade taxiways at JFK. And in January, the FAA will start auctioning takeoff and landing slots at New York airports. This will increase competition for access to these airports, and we strongly believe increased competition will help lower fares to consumers.

I remember talking about this market-based approach, Madam Secretary, in the Roosevelt Room in the West Wing of the White House, and I thank you for implementing the vision.

Airlines need incentives. They need incentives to boost efficiency. And this incentive that we put out will encourage them to use larger planes out of the New York

area. We believe these actions will ease our traffic jams in New York, which will help reduce flight delays all across the country.

In addition to tackling air congestion, this Department has built an impressive record when it comes to travel safety. I hope you take pride in the record: Department policies that helped make the past 7 years the safest ever in commercial aviation. Last year on America's roadways, we saw the lowest highway fatality rate ever recorded.

Another important part of our transportation record is our work to safeguard the environment and promote energy security. The energy bill I signed last year will save fuel and cut greenhouse gas emissions by specifying a national fuel economy standard of 35 miles per gallon by 2020.

A lot of folks here in this Department have worked hard on this initiative, and I congratulate you for your good work. By dramatically boosting our output of clean-burning biodiesel and ethanol, providing tax credits for the purchase of low-emission hybrid vehicles, and investing in technologies like advanced batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, the Department can be proud of the ways in which we have made America's transportation system safer, cleaner, and more effective.

Yet there's a lot more work to be done. For example, in an age when teenage drivers use GPS systems in their cars, air traffic controllers still use World War II-era radar to guide modern jumbo jets. That doesn't seem to make any sense to me, and I know it doesn't make sense to the Secretary and a lot of folks in this audience. Modernizing our aviation system is an urgent challenge. So today I'm signing an Executive order that makes this task a leading priority for agencies across the Federal Government.

Members of Congress have responsibilities. As they take up the next highway and aviation bills in the coming year, they should adhere to a few key principles. They should harness the power of the free market through policies like congestion pricing, which uses the laws of supply and demand to reduce traffic on our roads and in the air. They should ensure that taxpayer funds for transportation are allocated based on the true needs of the American people, not spent on wasteful earmarks or the political demands of influential lobbies. They should provide incentives for the private sector to develop new technologies, invest in our infrastructure, and help make our transportation system worthy of the 21st century. Just a little advice.

Of course, we all wish the American citizen to have a safe and pleasant travel—travels during this holiday season. We wish them all the best. And our citizens must know there's some really fine people in this Department of Transportation working hard to see that goal comes true.

I want to thank you for what you've done. It's been an honor to serve with you. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Executive Order 13479.

Remarks on the Reopening of the National Museum of American History
November 19, 2008

Thank you. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. We are honored you would invite us to reopen one of the country's great civic institutions, the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. This building is home to many of our national treasures.

It is a reminder of our country's proud heritage. And today we're witnessing the beginning of an exciting new era in its history. And I would urge all our citizens who come to Washington, DC, come to this fantastic place of learning.

Wayne, thank you for serving; proud to be with you. Roger Sant, the Chair of the Smithsonian Institute's Board of Regents, and Vicki. I appreciate Brent Glass, the Director. I want to thank Dirk Kempthorne; Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. Jonathan Scharfen, Acting Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, as well as Congressman [Congresswoman] * Doris Matsui from California. I want to thank Governor Martin O'Malley of the great State of Maryland for coming here today. I am honored to be with Judy Woodruff, the esteemed master of ceremony—mistress of ceremony, MC. I thank David McCullough for joining us, a great historian and a fine American.

Ever since President James K. Polk laid the Smithsonian's cornerstone in 1847, it has been one of our Nation's greatest centers of knowledge. And since it opened nearly 45 years ago, the Museum of American History has been one of the Smithsonian's most popular institutions.

The items on display here are as diverse as our Nation. Visitors can see George Washington's military uniform, one of Thomas Edison's early lightbulbs, the desk on which Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, even Muhammad Ali's boxing gloves, which he modestly predicted would become the most famous thing in this building. [*Laughter*]

Another item on display here is one of our Nation's proudest symbols of patriotism. The icon's fame dates to the War of 1812. In that conflict, the British Navy bombarded Baltimore's Fort McHenry with rockets and mortar fire. And as the battle raged, a young American was detained on a ship in Baltimore Harbor, unable to join the fight. The next morning, he was anxious to see whether his country had resisted the invasion. He discovered the answer when he saw the stars and stripes of the United States waving defiantly above Fort McHenry.

That young American, of course, was Francis Scott Key. He referred to the moment he saw the flag as an "hour of deliverance and joyful triumph." He recorded those emotions in a poem called "The Star-Spangled Banner." Today, nearly two centuries after they were composed, his words are written on the heart of every American and written into our law as our country's national anthem. And the flag that inspired them is preserved here, thanks to the generosity of some fine citizens, to remind us of the sacrifices that have been made to ensure our freedom.

There have been hours in our Nation's history when that promise of freedom looked uncertain. One of them took place 145 years ago today, when President Abraham Lincoln arrived in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to dedicate a cemetery at one of the Civil War's bloodiest battlefields. By that day, the war had raged for more than 2½ years and claimed hundreds of thousands of casualties. Many were convinced that a peace that preserved slavery would be better than a war that was pitting brother against brother. President Lincoln understood that liberty is a gift given by the Almighty and that peace must not be purchased with injustice.

That day, President Lincoln called the Nation together in the pursuit of a new birth of freedom. He urged Americans to honor the dead by carrying out the cause for which they gave their lives. With only 10 sentences, he strengthened the bonds of our Union, and rededicated our Nation to the proposition that all men are created equal.

At the time, President Lincoln said that the world would "little note nor long remember" his words. The verdict of history has been quite different. Over the years,

* White House correction.

the Gettysburg Address has been memorized by generations of schoolchildren—including me and Laura—stands as the greatest Presidential speech of all time.

For nearly 50 years, one of the only handwritten copies of this speech has been kept at the White House. For the next several weeks, it will be on display here at the Museum of American History. And Laura and I are delighted that this important piece of our country's heritage will be available for all to see.

Among those inspired by the principles in the Gettysburg Address were four African American college students in Greensboro, North Carolina. In 1960, they sat at a lunch counter inside a Woolworth's department store and asked to be served. Their request was denied, because the counter was designated as "whites only." When they were asked to leave, those brave students refused to give up their seats. The single act of courage helped power a national movement that culminated with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And today, that lunch counter is preserved here at the Smithsonian, in an honored location just down the hall from the Gettysburg Address.

In the lives of Francis Scott Key, Abraham Lincoln, and those brave students in Greensboro, we see the best of America. We see men and women of character who refused to surrender to adversity. We see hope, courage, and a devotion to universal values. And we see a nation constantly moving toward greater freedom and greater opportunity.

Throughout our history, these ideals have called out to those beyond our shores. They have beckoned those who love liberty from every nation. They have made countless generations of men and women across the world long for the pride that comes with calling yourself an American citizen. Today I'm delighted to congratulate five of you who will be taking your oath of citizenship in just a few moments. Though you are originally from France, Germany, Guyana, Lebanon, and Peru, today you're becoming members of the American family. We welcome you with open arms. I will be proud to call you fellow citizen.

The Museum of American History is a wonderful place to begin your journey as an American. These halls reflect both the duties and privileges of citizenship. They remind us that America's highest ideals have always required brave defenders. They remind us that our liberty is a precious gift from God.

Thank you for having Laura and me here. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to G. Wayne Clough, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Victoria P. Sant, President, National Gallery of Art; and Judy Woodruff, senior correspondent, Public Broadcasting Service.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Rwanda-United States Treaty Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment
November 20, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, with a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, signed at Kigali on February 19, 2008. I transmit also, for the information of the

Senate, the report prepared by the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

This is the first bilateral investment treaty (BIT) concluded between the United States and a sub-Saharan African country since 1998. The Treaty will help to promote cross-border investment by providing legal protections for investors of each country for their investments in the other country. The Treaty underscores the shared commitment of both countries to open investment and trade policies.

Rwanda has opened its economy, improved its business climate, and embraced trade and investment as a means to boost economic development and help alleviate poverty. The U.S.-Rwanda BIT will reinforce these efforts.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy to secure protections for U.S. investment abroad and to welcome foreign investment in the United States. Under this Treaty, the Parties agree to accord national treatment and most-favored-nation treatment to investments. They also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation and for the minimum standard of treatment. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation in the event of expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investment; freedom of investment from specified performance requirements; prohibitions on nationality based restrictions for the hiring of senior managers; and the opportunity for investors to resolve disputes with a host government through international arbitration. The Treaty also includes extensive transparency obligations with respect to national laws and regulations and commitments to transparency in dispute settlement. The Parties also recognize that it is inappropriate to encourage investment by weakening or reducing the protections afforded in domestic environmental and labor laws.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
November 20, 2008.

Interview With Raul Tola of America TV
November 20, 2008

President's Upcoming Visit to Peru/APEC Summit

Mr. Tola. Okay. Mr. President, a pleasure to be with you.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Tola. You're about to travel to Lima, Peru, again. You're going to the APEC. And this is your last trip as President——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Tola. ——of the United States of America. How would you like to remember both trip and APEC?

The President. I will—first of all, I remember Peru fondly from my last visit in 2002, and I'm looking forward to going back. I think it will be said, when people analyze the relationship between the United States and Peru, that during my time in office and the time of President Toledo and Garcia, we worked hard to put a good relationship in place.

And so, on the one hand, I'll be able to go and confirm the importance of the bilateral relationship, and then I'll go to a very important meeting. And APEC is an important meeting this time, particularly given the financial situation in the world.

APEC comes right after the economic summit we had here in America. So it means that it has the chance to embrace the principles, but it also has a chance for countries that did not participate in the summit here in Washington to express their views.

So I'm looking forward to it. It's a very important meeting.

Peru-U.S. Relations

Mr. Tola. Mr. President, you built a relationship with Peru because you have a close friendship with President Toledo——

The President. Si.

Mr. Tola. ——with former President Toledo, which held the negotiations in favor of FTA——

The President. Si.

Mr. Tola. ——which was finally approved. Now we have President Garcia in Peru, and elected President Obama in your country. Do you think this new situation is going to change the relationships between the two countries?

The President. No, I don't think so. I really don't. First of all, President Garcia is *muy amable*. And President-elect Obama will find him to be a straightforward man.

Secondly, the foundation is very strong. And so I anticipate and believe that bilateral relations with Peru and the United States will continue to be vibrant and strong and respectful. It's important for the American President—and I know President Obama will be this way—is to respect the leaders, the culture, and the people of the different countries.

Latin America-U.S. Relations

Mr. Tola. Let's talk about Latin America, Mr. President. Sometimes it's said that at the beginning of your administration you were very interested in building up a strong relationship with Latin America, but 9/11 changed the priorities for the United States.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Tola. Is it true?

The President. No, it really isn't. I understand that. I mean, a lot of my—well, you know, when I was on TV, for example, after 9/11, I was talking about securing the United States and the war on terror. And so I'm certain a lot of people in the neighborhood, Central and South America, said, "Well, he's only focused on the Middle East; he doesn't really seem to care about us." But I've traveled. And in order to defeat that attitude, I came to Central and South America a lot as President. I've been to your country twice. And secondly, more important than trips, though, is policy. Free trade agreements with nations in the region are important for development. Social justice programs focusing on health and education for citizens in the region are—indicate our desire to help improve the human condition; the Millennium Challenge Account for countries in the region. So in other words, the record speaks about our deep desire to be good neighbors and to have friends.

U.S. Foreign Policy

Mr. Tola. But some pundits said that the lack of policies in foreign affairs gears through Latin America empowered some political tyrants, like President Chavez.

The President. Yes. No, I strongly disagree with that. I can understand pundits. There's a lot of pundits everywhere, but I believe that our policies have obviously set a different example of what's available for people. I mean, ours is a country that believes strongly in social justice. We believe good societies must have educated people. It's hard to be hopeful if there's not good health. And finally, ours is a country that promoted free and fair trade, which is the best way to help nations develop their economies. I mean, in other words, you're a Peruvian farmer, you'd like to be selling into U.S. markets, and—because it's a big market. Nothing wrong with selling in the Peruvian market or in countries bordering Peru or throughout South America. But also, it gives you an option to sell into

U.S. markets. And that's the best way to help people make a living.

And we have—obviously, there's a philosophical difference of opinion. And the only thing the United States tries to do is to show the human side of the philosophy that most leaders embrace, which is freedom, free markets, free trade, and social justice.

U.S. Influence Abroad/Next Administration

Mr. Tola. Mr. President, elected President Obama said that at the very first day of his administration, he will withdraw troops from Iraq in a period of 18 months.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Tola. It also is obvious that we are all in a middle of a huge global financial crisis. Do you think that this marks the end of an era which started with President Reagan and highlighted the United States hegemony with both military and economically?

The President. No, I don't think so. I think the United States is still going to be a leader. It's going to be important for whoever the President is, whether it be—obviously, President-elect Obama, but Presidents following—that the United States builds close alliances and friendships. That's exactly what this administration does. I mean, the classic case is with Peru. We've worked hard to have a good, strong, bilateral relations.

And the President-elect is going to be facing difficult decisions. My job, as the sitting President, is to help him as he transitions into the job. I want him to succeed. And I want him to be able to have a economic platform that is good for the country. Now, obviously, we're in difficult times economically. We've taken some very strong measures here during my Presidency. And I'm very hopeful that these measures will make it easier for President-elect Obama, not harder.

I've worked hard on a lot of fronts. I think America is more secure now than it was. Democracy is more vibrant in parts of the world that didn't see democracy. Trade is—agreements are more abundant now. I have given it my all. And now I am very hopeful that the man who succeeds me as President of the United States succeeds in his job.

Presidential Transition

Mr. Tola. One last question, President—Mr. President. Elected President Obama said in his slogan, his campaign slogan, that change is the main thing for America.

The President. El cambio.

Mr. Tola. El cambio, yes.

The President. You know, when I campaigned for office, I said I was for change. Everybody who campaigns is for change. And that's a very effective slogan, and he ran a very effective campaign. And the American people spoke loud and clear.

And now it's—it will be his turn in 2 months to assume the great honor of being President. And I want to help him and help his team transition into office. And I really do wish him all the best. It's going to be very important that he be given a good start. And that's what we're going to do.

Mr. Tola. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Si. Gracias.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:11 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. Mr. Tola referred to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this interview.

The President's Radio Address
November 21, 2008

Good morning. This weekend, I am in Lima, Peru, meeting with leaders from nations in the Asia-Pacific region at our annual summit.

This summit comes at a time of serious turmoil in the global economy. It also comes at a time of unprecedented cooperation. A week ago in Washington, I hosted the first in what will be a series of international meetings to address the financial crisis. We reviewed the actions we have taken to manage the crisis, and we agreed on principles and specific actions to modernize our financial structures for the 21st century and help prevent another crisis.

As we work to rebuild confidence in our financial systems in the short term, we must also work to promote long-term economic growth. Together, our nations must focus our efforts on three great forces that drive this growth: free markets, free trade, and free people.

No region of the world demonstrates the power of these forces more vividly than the Asia-Pacific. Free markets have helped millions lift themselves out of poverty. Free trade has helped small nations turn themselves into global economic powers. And as more people in the Asia-Pacific are free to develop their talents and pursue their ambitions, the whole region has grown in prosperity. We're facing a difficult challenge, and there will be tough days ahead. But by relying on these principles, we can be confident in the future of our Nation and the world.

Back at home, one of the most serious economic challenges we face is the situation in our auto industry. America's auto manufacturers are facing severe and urgent financial shortfalls. Earlier this fall, I signed a bill that authorized up to $25 billion in loans to help these automakers make more fuel-efficient vehicles. Under the law, this money is not available to help auto companies with their immediate funding challenges. So this past week, Senators Bond, Levin, and Voinovich came forward with a new proposal that would allow auto companies to access the loans they need, as long as they're willing to restructure to become financially viable.

This proposal earned support from both sides of the aisle on Capitol Hill. Unfortunately, the leadership in Congress adjourned without even allowing this measure to come up for a vote.

My position is clear: If the automakers are willing to make the hard decisions needed to become viable, they should be able to receive the funds Congress already allotted to them for other purposes. This is a critical issue for our economy and our country. The American people expect their elected leaders to do what it takes to solve it.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on November 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to the President of the Senate Reporting a Certification Regarding NATO Invitee Albania
November 21, 2008

Dear Mr. President:

Consistent with the condition set forth in the Senate resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of Albania of September 25, 2008, and based on the recommendation of the Department of State, I hereby certify to the Senate that:

(i) the inclusion of the Republic of Albania in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will not have the effect of increasing the overall percentage share of the United States in the common budgets of NATO; and

(ii) the inclusion of the Republic of Albania in NATO does not detract from the ability of the United States to meet or to fund its military requirements outside the North Atlantic area.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Letter to the President of the Senate Reporting a Certification Regarding NATO Invitee Croatia
November 21, 2008

Dear Mr. President:

Consistent with the condition set forth in the Senate resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of Croatia of September 25, 2008, and based on the recommendation of the Department of State, I hereby certify to the Senate that:

(i) the inclusion of the Republic of Croatia in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will not have the effect of increasing the overall percentage share of the United States in the common budgets of NATO; and

(ii) the inclusion of the Republic of Croatia in NATO does not detract from the ability of the United States to meet or to fund its military requirements outside the North Atlantic area.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Message on the Fifth Anniversary of the Rose Revolution
November 21, 2008

I send greetings to those celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Rose Revolution.

One of the most inspiring chapters in the history of freedom was written by the Georgian people during the Rose Revolution. Thirsting for liberty and armed only with roses in hand, citizens throughout Georgia peacefully staked claim to their God-given right of liberty. These demonstrations proved once again, that when given a choice, people choose to live in freedom.

On this anniversary, Americans honor the brave Georgian citizens who defended freedom, and we renew our commitment to supporting Georgia's democracy, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We also look forward to the day when the light of liberty shines on all people throughout the world.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May the God who gave us liberty bless those who are advancing freedom's cause.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 22. An original was not available for the verification of the content of this message.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada in Lima, Peru
November 22, 2008

President Bush. I'm pleased to be with a good friend and a strong leader, Prime Minister Stephen Harper. It's been a joy to work with him, and we've accomplished a lot together. Relations between the United States and Canada are strong, sometimes complicated, but nevertheless based on common values. I appreciate your candor, your strength of character, and your consistent philosophy. So I'm looking forward to good discussions. I'm looking forward to this APEC; I think it's very important for us to continue to work together during this time of economic turmoil.

I want to thank you for coming to Washington last weekend and thank you for your solid contributions—[*inaudible*].

Prime Minister Harper. Well, I appreciate that, Mr. President, and I've appreciated the candor of our relationship; I've appreciated your openness. We've had many things we've agreed on and a few we haven't, but you've always been willing to listen. And Laureen and I certainly wish Laura and you all the best if I don't see you again before the 20th of January.

President Bush. Before forced retirement. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:17 a.m. at the JW Marriott Hotel Lima. Prime Minister Harper referred to his wife Laureen.

Remarks at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Summit in Lima
November 22, 2008

Gracias, senor. [*Laughter*] What he forgot to say, Secretary Rice, is that he went to Notre Dame. She is a great supporter of Notre Dame. And thank you for having me. Laura and I are delighted to be back in your country.

This is my second trip as President. I have been looking forward to it. And I appreciate the opportunity to come and discuss the state of the financial situation with such an august group. Thank you for making the Asia-Pacific region a vibrant part of the world.

I believe it is important for the world to recognize, and for our country to recognize, that the United States is a Pacific nation. And over the past 8 years, I have made it a priority; I made APEC a priority. I've been to every single APEC summit. I want to send a clear signal that it's in our Nation's interest that we engage actively and consistently with the nations of APEC.

My first international trip after September the 11th, 2001, was to an APEC summit in Shanghai. My first trip overseas after my reelection in 2004 was to the APEC summit in Chile. And now that I'm headed to retirement—[*laughter*]—my last trip as President is to APEC here in Lima.

This summit comes at a serious time during economic turmoil. And I'm looking forward to our discussions. It is—also comes at a time of unprecedented cooperation. A week ago in Washington, you might have heard that I had the honor of hosting a summit in what will be the series of international summits to address the financial crisis. I didn't believe we could solve all problems in one meeting, but I did believe it was important for us to host the initial summit to get it started, to lay the foundation for successful—for meetings.

I also didn't believe that the meeting ought to be with kind of a handful of countries. Some suggested, keep the meeting small. I didn't agree with that. And that's why we invited 20 leaders, including 8 members of APEC, because I believe developed nations and developing nations needed to be sitting at the same table to have an honest, fruitful dialogue. After all, nations in Asia and Latin America now contribute more to the world economy than ever before. Nations are feeling the painful effects of the financial crisis; I understand that. And so all of us need to be involved in the solution. And we'll discuss this during our APEC meetings here, starting today.

At the summit, leaders from around the world sent a powerful message of unity and determination. We agreed on principles and actions to modernize the financial structures of the 21st century. There's a recognition that while our economies have changed, the financial structures that we are dealing with were primarily written in the 20th century. We believe in transparency and integrity in the markets that will make sure that firms and financial products are subject to proper regulation and oversight.

We agreed that the world's financial authorities must improve cooperation, that governments must keep their promises to the developing world. One point I'll make this morning at the APEC summit is to say that the United States is committing—committed to improving social justice, and we will not let this economic turmoil prevent us from helping nations educate their people, provide good health care, feed the hungry, and deal with diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria.

We agreed that we must reform the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to better reflect the important role of developing nations. And we agreed to keep our markets open and firmly reject protectionism. All these steps are essential to rebuilding confidence in our financial systems. Yet the only way to regain strength in the long term is sustained economic growth. And among the most powerful engines of that growth are the businesses and workers and entrepreneurs of the Asia-Pacific region.

A few decades ago, a statement like this would have seemed unimaginable. Many Asia-Pacific economies were mired in poverty; their governments pursued backward economic policies. Then leaders started to make bold decisions by opening up their markets, by welcoming investment and trade, and by tapping the potential of the private sector. The results have astonished the world.

In the midst of all this turmoil, it's important to remember what has taken place as we chart our future. The APEC region's

share of the global economy has grown nearly 55 percent. Isn't that interesting? When we meet today in Lima, Peru, about 55 percent of the total economy—world's economy will be at that table. In a single generation, the percentage of East Asians living in poverty has plummeted from nearly 80 percent to 18 percent. We're witnessing a dramatic shift of history, as the center of the world economic stage moves from west to east, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Some view the rise of Asia-Pacific with suspicion and fear; America doesn't. The United States welcomes the success of emerging economies throughout the region. We welcome the new hope that comes when people escape poverty and join a confident middle class. We welcome new buyers for our products and new investors for American enterprise. We welcome new competition that leads our own workers and businesses to be more efficient. In an interconnected global economy, the gains of any advance the interests of all. So over the past 8 years, America has engaged this vital region more closely than ever before.

Continuing that engagement is especially important during the times of economic strain. The policies of free enterprise that lifted up so many in this region can help chart a path to recovery for the whole world. That's what's important for people to know. That which enabled us to be successful in the past must be used to help us chart a more hopeful future for tomorrow. With confidence in our ideals, we can turn the challenge we face today to an opportunity and lead the way toward a new era of prosperity for the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

So I want to talk today about how to do that, and I want to focus—and I think we ought to focus our efforts on three great forces for economic growth: free markets, free trade, and free people.

First, our nations must maintain confidence in the power of free markets. Now, I know in the wake of the financial crisis, free markets have been under very harsh criticism from the left and from the right. It's true the free market system is not perfect. It can be subject to excesses and abuse. As we've seen in recent months, there are times when government intervention is essential to restart frozen markets and to protect overall economic health. Yet it is also essential that nations resist the temptation to overcorrect by imposing regulations that would stifle innovation and choke off growth. The verdict of history is unmistakable: The greater threat to prosperity is not too little government involvement in the market, it is too much.

Over the decades, the free market system has proved the most efficient way and the just way of structuring an economy. Free markets offer people the freedom to choose where they work and what they want; offers people the opportunity to buy or sell products as they see fit; gives people the dignity that comes with profiting from their talent and their hard work. Free markets provide the incentives to lead to prosperity: the incentive to work, to innovate, to save and invest wisely, and to create jobs for others. And as millions of people pursue these incentives together, whole societies benefit.

No region of the world demonstrates the power of free markets more vividly than the Asia-Pacific. Free markets helped Japan grow into the world's second largest economy. Free markets helped South Korea make itself one of the most technologically advanced nations on Earth. Free markets helped Chile triple its economy and cut its poverty rate by more than two-thirds over the past two decades. And last year, free market policies helped make Peru's economy the second fastest growing in APEC.

Secondly, our nations must keep our commitment to free trade. When nations open their markets to trade and investment, businesses and farmers and workers find new buyers for their products. Consumers benefit because they have more choices and better prices. Entrepreneurs get their ideas

off the ground with funding from anywhere in the world.

Trade is seen as controversial in some places, but here in the Asia-Pacific region its benefits are beyond doubt. Trade transformed the economies of the "Asian Tigers"—Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—into global powerhouses. Trade fueled the rise of a new generation of "Tigers," nations like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. And in the most dramatic case of all, trade helped lift China out of isolation and poverty and into three decades of rapid economic growth and closer engagement with the world.

Expanding trade and investment has been one of the highest priorities of my administration. When I took office, America had free trade agreements in force with only three nations. Today, we have agreements in force with 14, including China [Chile], * Singapore, and Australia. We have agreements that will soon take effect with three more countries, including Peru. We've concluded agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. And it is extremely disappointing that the United States Congress adjourned without passing these three agreements. And I urge all those who support free trade to continue in pressing the case for the Congress to pass free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea.

I just had a chance to have a cup of coffee with President Uribe. He is a strong leader. He's a good friend. And our Congress and our Government must never turn our back on such a friend as Uribe.

In addition to negotiating these free trade agreements, my administration supported the accession of China, Taiwan, and Vietnam into the World Trade Organization. We're negotiating bilateral investment treaties with China and Vietnam. We're discussing similar agreements with Taiwan, Indonesia, and Russia.

These steps have brought benefits to America, and they brought benefits to our trading partners. Since I took office, America's trade with the world has grown from $2.5 trillion to $4 trillion, an increase of nearly 60 percent. Trade with Chile and the United States has more than doubled. Trade between Peru and the United States has more than doubled. And trade between China and the United States has more than tripled. Overall, America's trade with APEC nations now accounts for nearly two-thirds of our trade in the world.

Greater economic integration in the Asia-Pacific advances the interests of all. So earlier this year, America began discussions on a new regional free trade agreement with Brunei and Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. This agreement has the potential to open up new opportunities across the region. And we welcome other APEC members to join, and we appreciate Australia and Peru's recent announcements that they will join. Eventually, this agreement could be the foundation of something even more promising, a free trade area of the Asia-Pacific, where goods and services and capital flow across borders without barriers.

The nations in this region must also continuing to work down—must continue to work down—continue working to break down trade barriers at the global level. We have an immediate opportunity to do so through the Doha round at the WTO. One of the enduring lessons of the Great Depression is that global protectionism is a path to global economic ruin.

At our summit in Washington last weekend, leaders from around the world expressed strong support for completing Doha. Isn't that interesting? Over 20 nations at the table, from all different kinds of backgrounds, expressed solidarity with the idea of completing Doha. And now we've got to put those words into action. I recognize I'm leaving office in 2 months, but nevertheless, this administration will push hard to put the modalities in place

* White House correction.

so that Doha can be completed, and so we can send the message: We refuse to accept protectionism in the 21st century.

The third great force for economic growth in this region is the limitless potential of free people. As the business leaders in this room understand, the greatest resource any country has is the creativity of its citizens. That's what economists call human capital. And the best way to unleash that resource is, is to build healthy, educated, and democratic societies.

One requirement of any free and prosperous society is an accountable and effective government. The United States launched the Millennium Challenge Account to invest in nations that fight corruption, pursue wise economic policies, and invest in the health and education of their citizens. Today, Millennium Challenge programs support some of the world's most promising developing nations, from Indonesia to the Philippines to Peru. This initiative demonstrates a larger truth: Whether it leans left or right, any government that is honest with its people, that exists to serve the people, that advances social justice and desires peace, will have a partner in the United States of America.

America is helping build—helping governments lift the daily burdens that hold their people back, such as hunger and ignorance and disease. We're cooperating with APEC nations to adopt better farming practices and build up local agriculture markets. We're partnering with leaders to defeat the AIDS epidemic in places like Papua New Guinea and Vietnam. We're supporting countries like Indonesia that invest in basic education. We're committed to these efforts. And as I said earlier, we'll be committed to these efforts regardless of the ebb and flow of the markets, and our partners can be confident that the compassion agenda of the United States of America will continue.

Ultimately, the only way for a nation to realize its full potential is for its people to live in freedom; it includes both economic and political freedom. When people are free to profit from their abilities, they prosper. When people prosper, they demand more liberty in other areas of their lives. And we have seen this story unfold throughout this region. To continue freedom's momentum, the United States and other free nations are taking practical steps to support young democracies through the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership. We recognize that democracies develop at their own speeds, consistent with their own cultures. But when people experience the dignity and the opportunity that freedom brings, they never turn back. I've told people a lot, since my Presidency, this truth: I believe there is an Almighty. And I believe a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom.

As we look to the future, the tasks facing our nations are no doubt demanding. Recovering from the financial crisis is going to take time. But we'll recover, and in so doing, begin a new era of prosperity.

The nations of APEC have faced tests before. We have risen to meet them together, and we will do so again. Over the past 8 years, we've taken measures to protect our people from terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We've responded to natural disasters. We've worked to prevent the spread of potential pandemic diseases like avian flu and SARS. We've worked to confront climate change and usher in a new age of clean energy. We're standing for a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons and with a Burma free of repression.

Above all, we can be confident in the future of this region because we know the spirit of its people. And I've seen it firsthand. When I attended my first APEC summit in Shanghai, just a few weeks after September the 11th, 2001, I said that America would always remember the signs of support from our friends in the region. I remember the American flag flying from

every firetruck in Montreal, Canada. I remember children kneeling in silent prayer outside our Embassy in Seoul. I remember baseball players in Japan observing moments of silence. I remember a sign handwritten in English at a candlelight vigil in Beijing that read, "Freedom and justice will not be stopped."

The bonds of unity we felt then remain today, and they will always remain. Long after this crisis has passed, the United States of America will stay engaged in this region. We will continue working with our partners to build an Asia-Pacific where people can work and worship and trade in freedom, where children grow up with hope and pursue their dreams, and where thriving, prosperous nations continue to inspire the world.

Thanks for letting me come by. *Que Dios le bendiga.* God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 a.m. at the Ministry of Defense Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ricardo Rizo Patron de la Piedra, vice president, Cementos Lima, who introduced the President; and President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Lima
November 22, 2008

President Bush. It's an interesting moment because I've had a lot of meetings with Dmitry and Vladimir Putin. This will be my last meeting as the sitting President with the leader of Russia. We've had our agreements; we've had our disagreements. I've tried to work hard to make it a cordial relationship though, so that when we need to work together we can and when we disagree we're able to do so in a way that is respectful to our two nations.

I thank you for coming by today and appreciate your time.

President Medvedev. Thank you very much, George. And in general, though we do have points of agreements and those points of real differences, positions, we are prepared for the continuous work. And I view that, in general, our work was successful.

President Bush. Thank—[*laughter*].

[*At this point, President Bush's remarks were translated by an interpreter.*]

President Bush. Thank you. *Spasibo.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:34 p.m. at the JW Marriott Hotel Lima. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe
November 22, 2008

Nearly 8 months have passed since the Zimbabwean people voted for a new President, yet they still are governed by an illegitimate regime that continues to suppress democratic voices and basic human rights.

In addition to its disastrous economic policies which have forced half the population to rely on food assistance, the Mugabe regime is now assaulting doctors and nurses, denying citizens access to basic medical services, and stealing donor funds intended for HIV/AIDS patients.

In October alone, independent organizations documented some 1,300 incidents of politically motivated violence and harassment by the regime. We call for an end to the Mugabe regime's brutal repression of basic freedoms and for the formation of a legitimate government that represents the will of the people as expressed in the March 2008 elections.

In spite of the regime's aggressive actions against its own people, the United States will continue to honor its commitment to provide emergency humanitarian assistance, already totaling $186 million in 2008, and stands ready to provide other forms of assistance pending the formation of a legitimate government that represents the will of the Zimbabwean people.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr.
November 24, 2008

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for inviting me in for a cup of coffee. The Secretary and I share the concerns of our citizens, the concerns about jobs, the concerns about their savings accounts. This is a tough situation for America, but we'll recover from it. And the first step to recovery is to safeguard our financial system.

Now, last night on Air Force One coming back from Peru, I talked at length to the Secretary about his recommendation on the decisions made to safeguard Citicorp [Citigroup].* Now, we have made these kind of decisions in the past; made one last night. And if need be, we're going to make these kind of decisions to safeguard our financial system in the future.

I talked to President-elect Obama about the decision we made. I told the American people, and I told the President-elect when I first met him, that any time we were to make a big decision during this transition, he will be informed, as will his team.

Secretary Paulson is working closely with the President-elect's transition team. It's important for the American people to know that there is close cooperation. It's important for the American people to know that we will safeguard the financial system as the first step necessary for financial—for economic recovery. And so, Mr. Secretary, thanks for your hard work. Appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Department of the Treasury.

* White House correction.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel
November 24, 2008

President Bush. I am pleased to welcome my friend Prime Minister Ehud Olmert back to the Oval Office. And I thank you for bringing your wife to have dinner tonight with Laura and me. I'm looking forward to it.

We've been through a lot together during our time in office. We strongly believe that Israel will benefit by having a Palestinian state, a democracy on her border that works for peace. And, Prime Minister, that vision is alive because of you. And I thank you for your steadfast support for peace.

And it's not easy. It's not easy to try to change the paradigm, and I understand that. But one thing is for certain: You've kept your word. And in international politics, that's important. And I want to thank you for the friendship and thank you for your vision. And I just want you to know that I believe that vision is alive and needs to be worked on.

And again, I welcome you. Appreciate you coming.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to express again the deep gratitude that we all have to you, personally, as a human being, as a friend, as a courageous leader who has helped Israel so much over the period since you were President of the United States of America.

We will never forget that you have removed one of the most threatening strategic dangers from Israel on the east side, in Iraq. And this is a great achievement that makes life much better for many people in our part of the world, particularly for us and for our neighbors as well.

You have set forth in motion the Annapolis process, which I was very proud to take part in.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Olmert. It continues with your guidance and support and inspiration. And this is very important, because as you say, a two-state solution is the only possible way to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

So, Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Israel, I want to thank you. The importance of your leadership is greatly appreciated in our country. And I'm sure that when the history books will be written, the contributions that you made to the safety and security of many people will be greatly appreciated.

Personally, I want to thank you for your friendship on behalf of my wife Aliza and myself. And I'm so happy and proud that I have an opportunity to bid farewell to you before you leave this great place and before I leave my office. And I'm sure that we will continue our friendship for many years to come.

Thank you very much.

The President. Sure. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to the Community at Fort Campbell, Kentucky
November 25, 2008

The President. Thank you. Please be seated; unless, of course, you don't have a seat. [*Laughter*] I am honored to be here at Fort Campbell. I'm honored to be with the

Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne, the Night Stalkers of the 160th, the Green Berets of the 5th Special Forces Group, all members of the Fort Campbell community. You are part of the finest military in the world. I have one word for you: Hooah!

I also bring greetings from another man named Bush, America's only skydiving President. [*Laughter*] He said, "Pass on these two words: Air assault!"

In recent weeks, this post has been the scene of heartwarming family reunions. Many of you recently finished deployments to Iraq. You performed with courage and distinction on the frontlines of the war on terror. You have returned on success. On behalf of a grateful nation, I'm proud to welcome home the Bastogne Brigade, the Strike Brigade, the Rakkasan Brigade—[*applause*]. Job well done.

I want to thank General Townsend for his service. I'm proud to be with his wife Melissa. I thank General Schloesser's wife Patty. I appreciate Maria McConville. I want to thank Theresa Vail. These women represent the military families who have sacrificed just like our military has. On behalf of an incredibly grateful nation, I extend our heartfelt thanks and our respect to the military families here on Fort Campbell.

I thank Governor Beshear, who is with us, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I want to thank the two Congress folks that represent this important base: Congressman Ed Whitfield from Kentucky, Congressman Marsha Blackburn from Tennessee. I also want to thank Congressman Zach Wamp from Tennessee, as well, for joining us.

I appreciate all the local and State officials who are here today. I particularly want to point out one person, Staff Sergeant John [Joshua]* Forbess. I had the honor of meeting John [Joshua]* at the base of Air Force One. He was severely wounded in a helicopter crash in Iraq in 2003. Yet, despite his wounds, he volunteers in the Fisher House.

I'm proud of those of you who not only serve our Nation by wearing a fabulous uniform, but serve our Nation by feeding the hungry and providing home—houses for the homeless, for loving your neighbor just like you like to be yourself, just like Sergeant Forbess has done.

I want to thank very much those who made this event work—happen. I mean, it's not easy to host the President. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming out.

You know, we're getting ready to celebrate Thanksgiving. I'm looking forward to it. The day before my first Thanksgiving as your President, guess where I was?

Audience member. Right here!

The President. Right here at Fort Campbell. For those of you who weren't here, I can only say that watching a bunch of Screaming Eagles tear into turkey is quite a sight. [*Laughter*]

That Thanksgiving came shortly after the worst terrorist attack in our Nation's history. The war in Afghanistan had just begun; the Rakkasans were the first conventional brigade to join the battle. That November day, I said, "Once again, you have a 'Rendezvous with Destiny.'" And today, there is no doubt that you have upheld this motto, you have done your duty, and you have defended the United States of America.

Over the past 7 years, folks from this base have done exactly what they were trained to do. The Screaming Eagles, the Night Stalkers, the 5th Special Forces Group have gone on the offense in the war against these killers and thugs. You have taken the battle of the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here in the United States. You have helped counter the hateful ideology of tyranny and terror with a more hopeful vision of justice and liberty. You're part of the great ideological struggle of our time. With the soldiers of Fort Campbell out front, the forces of freedom and liberty will prevail.

* White House correction.

The war on terror, the war against people who would do us harm again, is being waged on two main fronts: Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, we removed an oppressive regime that harbored the terrorists who planned the attacks that killed 3,000 folks on September the 11th, 2001. Because of our men and women in uniform, more than 25 million Afghans are free. Afghanistan is a democracy, an ally in the war on terror. And as a result of your courage, the American people are safer.

In the recent weeks, the members of the Thunder Brigade have begun deploying to Afghanistan for a new mission. You will replace the Wings of Destiny Brigade and join a powerful coalition of forces, including the Currahees, members of the LifeLiners. You'll join Major General Schloesser and his Division Headquarters. Together, you will help the people of Afghanistan defend their young democracy. Together, you will ensure that a noble goal is achieved, that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for those who want to plot and kill American citizens.

The other main front in the war on terror is Iraq. In that country, we removed a dictator who murdered his own people, paid the family of suicide bombers, who threatened America's security. As the regime crumbled, the dictator's sons tried to run and hide. They could not hide from the United States military. They met their fate in Mosul at the hands of the Screaming Eagles.

Because we acted, the dictator, his sons, and their regime are no more. More than 25 million Iraqis are free. And a young democracy has taken root where a tyrant once ruled. Removing Saddam Hussein was the right decision then, and it is the right decision today.

With Saddam gone from power, our mission turned to helping the Iraqi people defend their freedom against violent extremists, including Al Qaida. In 2006, our efforts were faltering, so I reviewed our strategy and changed course. Instead of retreating, I ordered more troops into Iraq. And to lead the surge, I chose a former commanding general of the 101st Airborne, the man formerly known as Eagle Six, General David Petraeus.

Our troops conducted this surge with resolve and with valor, and nobody knows the impact better than the Screaming Eagles. When the Bastogne Brigade deployed to Salah ad Din last year, the Province was still struggling to recover from the bombing of the famous Golden Mosque. But you partnered with the Iraqis to restore security. Schools and businesses are now open. The Golden Mosque is being rebuilt. Throughout the Province, hope is returning; the terrorists are being driven out. The Iraqi people have the Screaming Eagles to thank.

Across Iraq, the surge has produced similar results. Since the surge began, violence and sectarian killings have fallen dramatically. Iraqi security forces have taken responsibility for 13 out of Iraq's 18 Provinces. Slowly but steadily, economic and political progress is taking place. Iraqis are working together for a more hopeful future.

As conditions on the ground continue to improve, we will further reduce American combat forces in Iraq; it's a strategy I call return on success. So far, we've brought home a Marine expeditionary unit, two Marine battalions, six Army brigades without replacement, including the Rakkasans. And by the end of January, we'll have brought home more than 4,000 additional troops.

As conditions on the ground continue to improve, we're also making progress toward completing a strategic framework agreement and a security agreement with the Iraqi Government. These landmark agreements will pave the way for a future of economic and diplomatic and military cooperation between our two countries. Iraqi lawmakers in Baghdad are now debating these agreements through the democratic process. It's a good sign that Iraq has become a strong and vigorous democracy, and it's a testament to the success of our men

and women in uniform. The war in Iraq is not over, but we're drawing closer to the day when our troops can come home. And when they come home, they will come home in victory.

The work you have done and are going to do is historical work. See, the consequences of success in Iraq will resonate far beyond that country's borders and will resonate when your children and grandchildren begin to study the history of peace. Success will frustrate Iran's ambitions to dominate the region. Success will show millions across the Middle East that a future of liberty and democracy is possible. Success will deny Al Qaida a safe haven for launching new attacks. Success in Iraq will mean that the American people are more secure at home.

In Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, our men and women in uniform have done everything we have asked of them and more. You've earned the thanks of every American.

You know, this is going to be my last Thanksgiving as President. Sometimes I am asked what I will miss most about the job. Well, above all, I'm going to miss spending time with men and women who have volunteered to serve the United States of America, the fine men and women who wear the uniform. We are blessed to have defenders of such character and courage. I'm grateful to the families who serve by your side. And I will always be thankful for the honor of having served as the Commander in Chief.

So Laura and I wish you and your families a safe and happy Thanksgiving. We join you in praying for our troops spending the holiday far from home. We pray for those who've been wounded in battle and for all who love and care for them. We hold in our thoughts and prayers the brave men and women who have given their lives and the families who mourn for them. We ask the Almighty to watch over everyone who puts on the uniform and has volunteered to serve this great land.

It's an honor to be with you today. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Stephen Townsend, USA, deputy commanding general (rear), 101st Airborne Division, and his wife Melissa; Patty Schloesser, wife of Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, USA, commanding general, 101st Airborne Division; Maria McConville, wife of Brig. Gen. James C. McConville, USA, deputy commanding general (support), 101st Airborne Division; Theresa Vail, wife of Col. Thomas Vail, chief of staff, 101st Airborne Division; Gov. Steven L. Beshear of Kentucky; S. Sgt. Joshua Forbess, USA, President's Volunteer Service Award recipient on November 25; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 26, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the Rose Garden for the pardoning of the National Thanksgiving Turkey.

This is a tradition that dates back to the Presidency of Harry Truman. Just to be safe, I will be pardoning a second bird—[*laughter*]—in the unlikely event the main act chickens out. [*Laughter*] Turkeys are not only the ones on edge this morning; you see, it turns out the Rose Garden is

Barney's turf. [*Laughter*] So the press corps is a little nervous as well. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the representatives of the National Turkey Federation who have joined us: President Joel Brandenberger, Chairman Paul Hill, Paul's wife Mary June. Today's birds were hatched on the Hill family farm in Ellsworth, Iowa. Paul's son Nathan and daughter-in-law Betsy, along with grandsons Collin and Connor, did a fabulous job of raising the guests of honor.

I also welcome the children here from Cloverly Elementary School. And after I make my brief remarks, you will be welcome to come up and pet our feathered friends.

This is an election year, so it is fitting that the names of these two birds were chosen through the democratic process. After a long, drawn-out election season, when the people finally spoke, the name of the ticket sent here to the White House was Pumpkin and Pecan. [*Laughter*] Pumpkin is right there. [*Laughter*] Pecan is in an undisclosed location. [*Laughter*]

Pumpkin and Pecan have an exciting trip ahead of them. Later today they will fly to Disneyland aboard "Turkey One." [*Laughter*] Pumpkin will be the honorary grand marshal of Disneyland's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Together, these birds will gobble the rest of their days in "the happiest place on Earth." I just hope they stay humble there. [*Laughter*]

This is my final Thanksgiving as the President. Over the past 8 years, I have been given many reasons to be thankful. I'm thankful to our men and women in uniform, and I am incredibly proud to have been their Commander in Chief. I am thankful for the armies of compassion, volunteers who feed the hungry and shelter the poor. I am thankful for the teachers and nurses and pastors and police officers and firefighters, and others who serve their neighbors and better their communities.

I'm thankful for the wonderful and supporting family that I have been blessed with. I'm grateful to Laura for her love. I'm grateful for two Thanksgiving miracles who were blessed—who we were blessed with 27 years ago: Barbara and Jenna. I'm thankful for the fact that my mother is doing well. And I—[*applause*]. And this year, we're looking forward to having another place at our Thanksgiving table with a son-in-law, and I'm thankful for Henry.

Most of all, I thank the American people for the tremendous privilege of serving as the President. In recent weeks, I've talked a lot about sprinting to the finish. Yet I've assured these turkeys they will not be trotting to their finish. [*Laughter*] That's because in keeping with a longstanding tradition, Pumpkin and Pecan are hereby granted a full and unconditional Presidential pardon.

I wish all Americans a happy Thanksgiving, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Henry Hager, husband of Jenna Bush Hager. The Thanksgiving Day proclamation of November 21 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this voulme.

The President's Radio Address
November 26, 2008

Good morning. This week, Americans gather with loved ones to celebrate Thanksgiving. This holiday season is a time of fellowship and peace. And it is a time to give thanks for our many blessings.

During this holiday season, we give thanks for generations of Americans who overcame hardships to create and sustain a free nation. When the Pilgrims celebrated their first Thanksgiving nearly four centuries ago, they had already suffered through a harsh and bitter winter. But they were willing to endure that adversity to live in a land where they could worship the Almighty without persecution. When President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863, the United States was in the midst of a terrible civil war. But in that hour of trial he gave thanks, because he believed America would weather the storm and emerge into a new era of liberty.

During this holiday season, we give thanks for those who defend our freedom. America's men and women in uniform deserve our highest respect, and so do the families who love and support them. Lately, I have been asked what I will miss about the Presidency. And my answer is that I will miss being the Commander in Chief of these brave warriors. In this special time of year, when many of them are serving in distant lands, they are in the thoughts and prayers of all Americans.

During this holiday season, we give thanks for the kindness of citizens throughout our Nation. It is a testament to the goodness of our people that on Thanksgiving millions of Americans reach out to those who have little. The true spirit of the holidays can be seen in the generous volunteers who bring comfort to the poor and the sick and the elderly. These men and women are selfless members of our Nation's armies of compassion, and they make our country a better place, one heart and one soul at a time.

Finally, I have a special note of thanks to the American people. On this my last Thanksgiving as your President, I am thankful for the good will, kind words, and heartfelt prayers that so many of you have offered me during the past 8 years. I have been blessed to represent such decent, brave, and caring people. For that I will always be grateful, and I will always be honored.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on November 26 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 26. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Approval of a Strategic Framework Agreement and a Status of Forces Agreement in Iraq
November 27, 2008

Earlier today, in another sign of progress, Iraq's Council of Representatives approved two agreements with the United States, a strategic framework agreement and a security agreement, often called a status of forces agreement or SOFA. The strategic framework agreement sets the foundation for a long-term bilateral relationship between our two countries, and the security agreement addresses our presence, activities, and withdrawal from Iraq. Today's vote affirms the growth of Iraq's democracy and increasing ability to secure itself. We look forward to a swift approval by Iraq's Presidency Council.

Two years ago, this day seemed unlikely, but the success of the surge and the courage of the Iraqi people set the conditions for these two agreements to be negotiated and approved by the Iraqi Parliament. The

improved conditions on the ground and the Parliamentary approval of these two agreements serve as a testament to the Iraqi, coalition, and American men and women, both military and civilian, who paved the way for this day.

As the two agreements move to Iraq's Presidency Council for final approval, we congratulate the members of the Council of Representatives for coming together to approve these historic agreements that will serve the shared and enduring interests of both our countries and the region.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai, India
November 28, 2008

Laura and I are deeply saddened that at least two Americans were killed and others injured in Wednesday's horrific attack in Mumbai. We also mourn the great loss of life suffered by so many people from several other countries, and we have the wounded in our thoughts and prayers.

My administration has been working with the Indian Government and the international community as Indian authorities work to ensure the safety of those still under threat. We will continue to cooperate against these extremists who offer nothing but violence and hopelessness.

Remarks on the Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai, India
November 29, 2008

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I extend our condolences to those suffering from the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India. We mourn those who lost their lives, including American citizens. We pray that the injured will recover. We pledge the full support of the United States as India investigates these attacks, brings the guilty to justice, and sustained its democratic way of life.

My administration has been monitoring the situation in India closely since the attacks on Wednesday. On Thursday morning, I spoke to Prime Minister Singh from Camp David. I sent our heartfelt condolences to the Prime Minister. This morning I held a video conference with Secretary Rice, our Ambassador to India, our consul general in Mumbai, and other national security officials. We reviewed the latest developments, and we are working to ensure that American citizens in India are safe. Throughout the process, we have kept President-elect Obama informed.

The killers who struck this week are brutal and violent, but terror will not have the final word. The people of India are resilient; the people of India are strong. They have built a vibrant, multiethnic democracy that can withstand this trial. Their financial capital of Mumbai will continue to be the center of commerce and prosperity.

The leaders of India can know that nations around the world support them in the face of this assault on human dignity. And as the people of the world's largest democracy recover from these attacks, they can count on the world's oldest democracy to stand by their side.

Thank you very much. May God bless the people of India.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:51 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India; and Paul A. Folmsbee, consul general, U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai.

Message to the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, Qatar
November 26, 2008

I send greetings to those gathered for the UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, Qatar. Six years ago, I joined leaders from 50 countries at the United Nations Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey, Mexico to forge a new partnership for development. That partnership was based on a consensus among the world's nations that development is in the common interest of humankind. The most effective way to raise the living standards of the world's poorest people is to create economic growth by using all forms of development finance—including trade, investment, grants, and lending—in countries that govern justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. Today in Doha we should reaffirm our commitment to the development principles agreed upon at Monterrey.

The world's economic growth is currently threatened by a global financial crisis. The world's poor are the most vulnerable to the crisis, with low or no savings or assets to weather the turmoil. In many countries, the financial crisis is leading to rising unemployment, business failures, and economic hardship.

The United States will not abandon its commitments to people in the developing world in the midst of this financial crisis. The United States calls on other economies, both developed and emerging, to similarly reaffirm and fulfill their commitments to development and assist the world's poorest, consistent with their roles in the global economy. The United States pledges to assist developing and emerging economies in gaining access to finance and pledges to help ensure that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other multilateral development banks have the resources to assist countries in crisis.

The nations of the world are increasingly interdependent. With interdependence comes mutual responsibility and accountability. Our ties of trade, finance, and development should be strengthened, not weakened by the current market turmoil. The development principles of Monterrey provide us with a proven path to prosperity and partnership. Let us join together today in reaffirming that partnership.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for the verification of the content of this message. This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1.

Remarks on World AIDS Day
December 1, 2008

Good morning. Today is World AIDS Day, a day we reaffirm our commitment to fight HIV/AIDS at home and abroad. Thirty-three million people around the world are living with HIV, including more than 1 million Americans. Once again this year, to observe World AIDS Day, there is a red ribbon on the North Portico of the White House. The ribbon is a symbol of our resolve to confront HIV/AIDS and to affirm the matchless value of every life.

One of the most important initiatives of my administration has been the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR. It's the largest international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. When we launched PEPFAR, our goal was to support treatment for 2 million people in 5 years. Today I'm pleased to announce that we have exceeded that goal early.

American people, through PEPFAR, are supporting lifesaving treatment for more than 2 million people around the world. And when PEPFAR began, only 50,000 people living with HIV in all of sub-Sahara Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

Around the world, we've also supported care for more than 10 million people affected by HIV, including more than 4 million orphans and vulnerable children. More than 237,000 babies have been born HIV-free, thanks to the support of the American people for programs to prevent mothers from passing the virus on to their children.

PEPFAR is bringing hope and healing to people around the world. On our trips to Africa, Laura and I have witnessed firsthand the gratitude of the African people.

We look forward to discussing our efforts to combat global HIV/AIDS with Rick Warren at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health this morning. In the meantime, we thank our fellow citizens for being so compassionate and so caring and so decent.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. on the North Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard D. Warren, pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The World AIDS Day proclamation of November 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health
December 1, 2008

Richard D. Warren. Well, Mr. President, I want to start by admitting to the audience that you always call me "Ricky." [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, you always call me "Georgie." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. There are only three people in my life who call me "Ricky": my mother, my grandmother, and the President.

So now we've got three purposes here this day. First, thanks for being here on the 20th anniversary of AIDS—World AIDS Day. We want to do a little information, we want to do a little celebration, and we want to do a little explanation.

First, I want to get a progress report on PEPFAR and an update on what's actually happened. Then I want us to talk about

why you did it—why did you do it. And I want to talk about some of the stories you've heard, some of the things you've seen around the world in the last 5 years. And then we want to honor you for your efforts, because we think that this is one of the most amazing things. I mentioned earlier in our preshow that no man in history, no world leader has ever done more for global health than President George W. Bush. And I think we need to recognize that, and I thank you for that——

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Warren. ——so much. Thank you.

Now I want to talk about the results of PEPFAR in five areas: saving lives; creating new partnerships—you don't have to write them down—[*laughter*]—trust in local leadership; encouraging behavior; and reducing stigma.

Now, first, these are five things that as I watched this program develop from the ground, that are very unique, very unusual. For instance, insisting on accountability. When you established this, and you first announced it at the State of the Union 2003, you insisted on measurable goals. Most development is afraid to do that; they're scared to death to do that. But you did it.

So how are we doing? Tell me about what's happened in the last 5 years.

The President. Well, Ricky—[*laughter*]—we're doing pretty good.

I insisted upon measurable goals because I felt that lives needed to be saved. And if you don't have measurable goals, lives might not be saved. This is—we live in a process world in government. Oftentimes, people said, "Well, what are the inputs?" This is an administration that tried to get people to ask the question, "Are we actually doing something?"

And so we set a goal of saving 50,000—well, when we got started there were 50,000 people getting antiretrovirals in all sub-Sahara Africa. And we set a goal of 2 million by 5 years to get antiretrovirals.

Mr. Warren. From 50,000 to 2 million.

The President. In 5 years. And you know, thank you for setting this up, because today we're able to announce that we're over 2 million in less than 5 years, which is—[*applause*].

Mr. Warren. That's fantastic.

The President. You see, but setting goals is difficult for some. Bureaucracies tend to avoid goal-setting, in all due respect to bureaucracies. Foreign governments tended to want to avoid results. Nobody really wants to be held to account oftentimes. And so setting the goals also had to change the way we did development aid. In other words, we said to people, "We want to help you." But rather than being paternalistic about our help, which basically says, "We know better than you on how to achieve our goals." We expect you to be a partner in achieving the goals. Which was an attitudinal change, basically saying to African leaders, in this case, "We trust you; we think you've got the capacity to be a good partner." And——

Mr. Warren. Yes. Now, you mentioned two of those things, but I'm going to read you a quote. You once said this: "Africa's most valuable resource is not its oil or its diamonds, but it's the talent and the creativity of its people." Now, a lot of politicians say that, but you insisted that the people who were going to do PEPFAR, that the decisions and the strategy actually be done by the people on the ground there, instead of a bureaucracy or centralized back here.

And so this principle of trusting the local leaders is a pretty innovative thing when you think about it.

The President. Well, actually, it's a timeless management principle of aligning authority and responsibility. If you disassociate authority and responsibility, you can't have accountability. And so we aligned responsibility and authority. And——

Mr. Warren. That didn't make some people happy. I mean, what about the people who say——

The President. That's what happens sometimes in my line of work. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. Okay, now, you mention this because this is another innovation. The innovation of trusting leaders at the local level——

The President. Right.

Mr. Warren. ——instead of saying, "We over here are going to tell you what to do." You let them determine the strategy in each country. And that's how you got to 2 million.

The President. Right, well, we actually helped them develop the strategy. But when they develop the strategy, therefore it's easier to hold the strategy developer to account. And so it's not all that profound to basically say responsibility and authority go hand in hand. What was different is that the United States believes that paternalism is destructive. And we believe partnership is constructive. And that's the basis of a lot of our foreign policy.

For example, not to get off subject, but the Millennium Challenge Account basically said, we want to help you, but we expect you to do some fundamentals, such as govern justly, to end corruption, to invest in the health and education of your people, to believe in market-oriented principles for the economy.

What's earthshaking about that is it basically says, we believe you can do better. We believe in setting high standards and helping you achieve high standards. That's different from, we're just going to give you money to make ourselves feel better, and that the results don't end up accomplishing our objectives.

Mr. Warren. You know, that makes me think of the old Reagan statement, "trust but verify," because you did both. You trusted the local leaders, but you also made accountability.

Now, let's talk about this partnership for a minute, because you brought in a whole new group of partners in PEPFAR. PEPFAR was not just a model for AIDS, but it's a model for all kinds of programs, because you invited everybody to the table, including faith based.

The President. Especially faith based. I say "especially faith based," not "including faith based," because I believe that when people join organizations to love their neighbor, that is a powerful, not only recruiting tool, but it's a powerful incentive for effectiveness on the ground. And one of the great things about our experience—I say "our"—Laura is here, as you know—and we've traveled to Africa a couple of times, and we've seen people from the faith community share their—in Africa sharing their stories about what it's like to love a neighbor.

And so——

Mr. Warren. Well, I've heard you say many times, "Government can't love."

The President. That's right, government is justice and law. Love is—love comes from a higher government and—or a higher calling or from God. [*Laughter*]

And so it's—and so the whole purpose of including the faith organizations was frankly bring some order into that which was already happening. Your church, other churches, you know, synagogues, people from around America who are motivated by faith are involved in the process. So why not bring some order and focus, and that's a proper role of the government in this case.

And it's working, it's paying off, people are—the interesting thing about people who are volunteering in Africa to save lives is they're actually saving their own life in many ways. They may not be saving it, but they're certainly strengthening it.

Mr. Warren. Let me talk to you about your own personal motivation behind this. This was the largest initiative ever committed to a single disease, PEPFAR. And I mean, when people heard it, I know when I heard it in 2003, I thought, "Will that ever get voted through?" Because I—it was just such an enormous, what they call a B-HAG—a big, hairy, audacious

goal—[*laughter*]—and from a purely political viewpoint, you aren't going to get a whole lot of votes from that. So what was it that motivated you to do PEPFAR?

The President. Well, first of all, I believe in this admonition, this principle: To whom much is given, much is required. It's what I believe.

Mr. Warren. Yes. I've heard you say that many times.

The President. Secondly, I would hope that when it's all said and done, people say this is a guy who showed up to solve problems. And when you have somebody say there's a pandemic that you can help, and you do nothing about it, then you have, frankly, disgraced the office.

And finally, I was surrounded by people who were pushing hard on this initiative, people I trusted: Condi Rice, Mike Gerson. When I first got the—was talking to Condi about becoming the National Security Adviser, she said, "I want you to make this promise to me that you will focus on Africa." I said, "Okay." And then there's Gerson, who was very much involved with our policy on these issues, and he—I spent a lot of time with him; see, he was the speechwriter. And so the speechwriter got to spend a lot of time with the speechmaker. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. Plant a few seeds of thought. [*Laughter*]

The President. It's harder to take words out of a speech than put them in at times. [*Laughter*] Anyway, my only point is, I had a group of people around me, people whose—I trust, and people whose hearts I came to admire, that helped forge the policy as well.

So you know, you said you're going to give awards and all that—I don't deserve an award. The people that helped make this policy work deserve the award.

And then, once we got going, Mark Dybul, who is our ambassador on AIDS—I think you call him coordinator for AIDS, one of these titles—but anyway, I like to be able to deal with Mark, because I can say, "Mark, what are we doing? Are we making progress?" And the answer is yes. But if the answer was no, I would say, "Why not, Mark?" And my only point there is that we've got a bunch of dedicated folks, once the initiative got going, who are followthrough people. And anyway, it's been a fabulous experience working with them all.

Mr. Warren. So it's been worth the scars?

The President. Yes, look, I mean, absolutely. I don't feel like I have scars.

Mr. Warren. Tell me about some personal experience that you've seen as you've traveled around the results, because there are all these numbers, 2 million people, 2 million lives that have been saved that wouldn't be on ARVs, wouldn't be getting any help. Can you tell me about one of them?

The President. Yes. So in Uganda—we first went to Uganda—I was checking out the ABC program: abstinence, be faithful, condoms—kind of the comprehensive approach to prevention in the first place. And I met a guy named Mohamed in a clinic there, and he just looked terrible. It turns out, one of his dreams was to come to the United States. He got on antiretrovirals and was present in the East Room—where you were, by the way—when we signed the reauthorization bill of PEPFAR.

Now, it is a moving experience to see a person go from near death to realizing the dream of being in the White House. That's why they call the effect that's taking place in Africa the Lazarus effect: people given up for dead now realizing there is life.

And we, Laura and I, met a lot of people. What the American people have got to understand about this initiative is, it's in our national interest that we help save lives in Africa.

Mr. Warren. It's good foreign policy.

The President. Well, it's really good foreign policy. It's good national security policy too because the truth of the matter

is, we are involved in an ideological conflict against people that—who can only recruit when they find hopelessness. And there's nothing more hopeless than to be an orphan, for example, whose parents died of HIV/AIDS, wondering whether or not there's a future for them. And so it's in our national security interest to deal with hopelessness where we can find it. It's obviously in our economic interest to have a vibrant, growing group of consumers.

But it's in our moral interest, it's in our moral interest. We're a better nation when we save lives. And I wish the American people could see what we have seen after this PEPFAR initiative has kicked in and brought results. I mean, people literally lining the roads in Tanzania, all waving and anxious to express their love and appreciation to the American President who represents the American people. And it was good to see them all waving with all five fingers, I might add. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. Well, Kay and I have been in most of those PEPFAR countries, and it is true. You know what I've discovered, that when you help somebody get better who's been sick, they tend to like your country. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, they do, which is good. Look, I think it's important. Everybody wants to be liked. But being liked because you've actually done something constructive that's measurable is the best way to try to be liked. And it's very important for America to be humble in our aid, in this sense. In other words, we can't say, "Okay, we're spending so much money, we demand this, or, we're going to make you do this." And that will end up making us not liked. But to be partners with people and to herald good government and focus on the individual will make us liked.

Mr. Warren. I want to read you a quote. In a recent article I read, Mike Gerson wrote about you, referring to the malaria initiative. And he said: "In the crucial policy meeting about malaria, one person supported it, the President of the United States, shutting off debate with moral certitude that others have criticized. And I saw how this moral framework led him to an immediate identification with a dying African child, a Chinese dissident, the Sudanese former slave, the Burmese women's advocate. It's one reason why I'll never be cynical about government or even President Bush." Is that an accurate description?

The President. Yes. He was sitting in the meeting. [*Laughter*] Far be it from me to contradict him. [*Laughter*] After all, he now has the power to write another column. Anyway—[*laughter*].

Mr. Warren. Okay, well, let me read you another——

The President. I believe this, I believe this, and I have said this throughout my Presidency: First of all, a President must have a firm set of principles from which he will not deviate. And I believe in the universality of freedom, and I believe freedom is universal because of an Almighty God. And I believe that it's not just freedom from tyranny that the United States must become involved in, I believe it's freedom from disease, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation.

And so if you believe in the universality of freedom, then you should not—then one should not shy away from doing your duty. I want to—can I share a story with you?

Mr. Warren. Go right ahead.

The President. So I've had a lot of amazing moments as President. One such moment came in the town square—a town square in Bucharest, Romania. I was coming to be the—welcome people into NATO—"An attack on one is an attack on all," which is something the Romanians wanted to hear from the U.S. President. In other words, their security was guaranteed.

It's a rainy day, there was a lit balcony, and I asked, "Why is that balcony lit?" And it was because the tyrant Ceausescu had given his last speech in this balcony. Just as I stepped up to speak a full rainbow

appears. It was a stunning moment. Remember, it was a drizzly day, kind of dark. And I ad-libbed, "God is smiling on Bucharest," because the rainbow ended exactly behind the balcony where the tyrant had given his last speech.

And you can look at that any way you want to look at it. One way to look at it is, hey, pal, you've got a lot of influence, and you can use your influence for human liberty, for decency, and for justice, all times, all places.

And so the PEPFAR initiative, or what Mike described in that article, has been a part of the freedom initiative, the freedom agenda. And the real challenge for the world is whether or not people have a view that freedom is universal or whether it just happens to be available for certain people. And it's kind of a moral relativist debate. I believe in the universality of freedom and have not deviated from that during my Presidency.

Mr. Warren. Now I've read many, many stories where PEPFAR gave people hope. It's all about hope.

The President. Yes, it is.

Mr. Warren. Do you feel pretty hopeful that we can win this fight against AIDS?

The President. Sure. I believe we can win a fight against anything when we get our minds set to it. At home, we've spent about 99 billion since my—I've been President; 20 billion on top of that for research. You know, I've gotten to know Anthony Fauci and some of the people at the NIH, who are working day and night to try to figure out a way to, you know, provide some kind of relief from this pandemic or this terrible disease. Yes, we can; sure, absolutely. And a lot of it has to do with people's individual—you know, being responsible for their behavior. People——

Mr. Warren. All right. Let's talk about that for a minute. AIDS is primarily a behavior-based disease. I mean, you don't get it from water, you don't get it from the air——

The President. Right.

Mr. Warren. ——you can't just eat something and get it. And you supported, and PEPFAR supports, behavior-based training as part of a total package like ABC and all that. And yet there are some people who oppose—they don't think the Government should be trying to encourage healthy behavior. What do you say to those people?

The President. They must not be results-oriented people. If you want to achieve results, if you actually want to solve the problem, then put strategies in place that work. Look, I mean, abstinence is a loaded word here in Washington, DC; it's become politicized. My only—my answer to that is it's a part of a comprehensive strategy and, by the way, abstinence works every time. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. All right, let me read you this quote out of the New York Times. I read this last January; it was an article titled "In the Global Battle on AIDS Bush Creates a Legacy." And here's the quote: "Even critics concede that Mr. Bush spawned a philosophical revolution. In one striking step he put to rest the notion that because patients were poor or uneducated, they did not deserve, or could not be taught to use, medicine that could mean the difference between life and death."

The President. Well, if you believe that we're all God's children and believe there is God-given talent for every single person, then that's—one should not be surprised by a policy that elevates the individual, that focuses on the individual, that doesn't focus on bureaucracies but tries to get help into the hands of, you know, individual people.

It's really the heart of a lot of our policies in—out of the administration, whether it be PEPFAR, whether it be the faith-based initiative. For example, you know, some people need help from something other than a psychologist when it comes to drugs or drinking. And therefore, rather than force people into situations where it won't be effective, why not give them a scrip that they could redeem at a place that may be a faith-based institution where

they call upon a higher being to help them from——

Mr. Warren. For their recovery.

The President. Yes, absolutely. And my only point is, it's the empowerment of the individual that also yields the results that we initially talked about. And it's very important for America not to become, you know, have such a kind of a elitist view about himself or a snobbery where we don't trust the individual.

Mr. Warren. You know, Mr. President, my wife has had a profound effect on me, and I know that's true with you.

The President. That would be true.

Mr. Warren. And the First Lady has been involved in this battle all along. Kay and I have been with her on trips in Africa, and seen that. I want the people to see a little bit of a video of Mrs. Bush speaking in Rwanda in one of her trips, dealing with people. Let's just watch this for a second.

[*At this point, a video was shown.*]

Mr. Warren. Would you welcome the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Laura Bush, along with my wife Kay Warren?

Well, thank you for joining us, Mrs. Bush——

The First Lady. Thanks, Rick.

Mr. Warren. ——and it's been great to see you in action. And actually, Barbara is here today.

The First Lady. That's right.

Mr. Warren. Where is she? There she is. Hi, Barbara.

The President. Hi, Barbara. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. We're glad you're with us. Katie.

Kay Warren. Well, Mrs. Bush, I have to start by saying thank you. This is my first opportunity to thank you for your graciousness to me.

[*Mrs. Warren, Mr. Warren, and the First Lady had a brief exchange, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Warren. You know, that particular church that we were all in together was a small church of 300 people caring for 900 people with AIDS. That's how many they were caring for in the community, that one church.

The First Lady. And we did meet one 12-year-old who was raising her little brothers. You know, it's just something that we don't think about here in the U.S., but that is these very young children themselves who are raising little children——

The President. Yes, one of the—excuse me, baby.

The First Lady. Go ahead.

The President. I call her "baby." Anyway—[*laughter*].

The First Lady. At least it's not "Ricky." [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Warren. That's okay. I'm "Katie." So everybody's "Katie," "Ricky," "Georgie," "Laurie." So—[*laughter*].

The President. One of the results that I did not talk about was the 10 million people who have been affected—10 million people with HIV have been affected by the program. So over 2 for antiretrovirals, but 10 million have been affected; 4 million of those are orphans.

Mr. Warren. Wow.

The President. And so my only point is, is that there's a lot of people——

Mrs. Warren. There are.

The President. ——whose lives are being touched by the program.

Mrs. Warren. I remember that particular church, and just—I remember glancing up at just one point and seeing you and Jenna at that exact moment when some girls in little torn dresses climbed up in your laps.

[*Mrs. Warren, Mr. Warren, and the First Lady continued their exchange, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Warren. It's all tied in together. I want to go back, Mr. President, to one of the things that Mrs. Bush said about there is a whole group of people who say, "Well, should we be spending this money on developments?" Particularly, say, the economy is bad right now, should we be

spending on—how does that—how do you justify spending that with the principle of to whom much is given, much is required, as you—as a foundation of your——

The President. Because we're a rich nation, and we can do both. And the worst thing would be for our Government to make promises to people on the continent of Africa that we're here to help you and to be partners with you, and then all of a sudden turn our back on them. I couldn't think of anything——

Mr. Warren. And let them die.

The President. Well, that too. Yes, I mean, that would be terrible.

You know, it's interesting that you were asking about stories. Remember we went to the school in Rwanda? So these were children whose parents had died because of AIDS. And I just happened to walk by and said, "God is good." And without hesitation, they said, "All the time." [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. And that was so sweet.

The President. And it was a very powerful, very sweet message.

Mrs. Warren. President and Mrs. Bush, caring for the least of these is obviously something that's very important in your family. I mean, not only are the two of you very involved, but your daughters have been involved, and both have spent extended time volunteering, caring for people with HIV. So obviously, you did something right with them. And what—how did you teach your daughters to this life of self-sacrifice?

The First Lady. Well, I think we both were very fortunate to have parents who modeled that behavior for us through our whole childhood, and I think we've done that with Barbara and Jenna as well. But one of the really, really interesting things and sweet parts of the work the President has done with PEPFAR and PMI is that our girls have been so engaged in it. Barbara worked for 9 months in a hospital in South Africa, a children's hospital in South Africa. Jenna worked with UNICEF in Central America and South America, and then came home and wrote a book about a girl that she met there who is an AIDS orphan who had a baby, became pregnant as a single young girl, a 17-year old, and was able to deliver an HIV-free baby.

And one of the sweet things that happened when Jenna and I were together—I think we were in Zambia, but I may be wrong—and two young women were telling us their stories, and everyone around was really surprised that they told us this story in front of other people, because it was really a secret. But both of them had contracted AIDS because of sexual abuse. And so Jenna went over after—they wept while they told the stories, and so of course, we did too—but after it was finished, Jenna went over just to speak to them by herself. And she said, "You know, this happens to girls all over the world; it's not just you." And she said, "I wrote a book about a girl I met in Central America that has your same story." And they said, "Oh, would you write a book about us?"

The President. I think, first of all, there's nothing that makes a parent more proud when their child becomes a contributor. I suspect that if people got to see what our girls got to see, they would want to help save lives too. And so one of the real challenges is to make sure that America's conscience is raised, that people understand the plight of their fellow citizen.

And your church has done a great job of this. Others need to be involved as well. And there's a lot of groups that are looking for a way to fulfill, you know, the calling. And it's helpful to challenge their compassion.

Mr. Warren. When you become private citizens again in January, how are you going to continue this work? What—how will that change?

The President. Well, we're going to build a policy center/freedom institute at Southern Methodist University, where Laura went to college. And the whole purpose of this institute is to promote freedom at

home and freedom abroad, based upon universal principles.

And so I—even though I haven't had much time to think about it, since I've been interested in the free market system—[*laughter*]—by taking non-free market action to save the free market system—[*laughter*]—but when we get out of here, it will be to—this whole discussion we've had here is—will be a part of the institute. And I just can envision programs coming out of this place that will encourage young people to go to—to volunteer their time or to encourage—one interesting initiative that you ought to think about and I ought to think about is to say to baby boomers, retirement isn't a golf course; retirement, fulfilling retirement is to use your time and talent——

Mrs. Warren. To me, that's hell. That's not retirement, that's hell. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right, yes.

The First Lady. The golf course?

Mrs. Warren. Playing golf every day? Oh, sorry.

The President. Exactly. Particularly if you're a lousy golfer. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Warren. Which we are.

The President. You must be. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Warren. We are. Do you see any intersection—you also have a passion for literacy—do you see an intersection between your passion for literacy and for HIV/AIDS and this institute that you're——

The First Lady. Sure, and one of the other great initiatives that the President has started is the Africa Education Initiative. And in—we've supported countries to design their own textbooks, and they worked with mainly minority-serving universities in the U.S. to write and—textbooks for K through 8. But a lot of those, and especially for adult literacy—illiteracy programs, where people—adults are learning to read, a lot of those early primers, those reading primers, are based on health education.

And so were a lot of these textbooks that the AEI program helped each country develop, because if children know that you get malaria from a mosquito, they can go home and tell their parents. And if they know—they just learned in their little reader how to use a mosquito net or whatever, they can also educate their parents.

And so there's a real combination between health and literacy: health education.

The President. And there's a real combination between freedom and literacy.

The First Lady. That's right.

The President. Literacy is freedom. If you're a literate person, you become a better citizen, and you ask tough questions for governments, for instance, that may not listen to the needs of the citizens. Illiteracy locks people into, you know, a status quo that is unacceptable.

And so absolutely, there's a big connection between literacy and what Laura described, and literacy and just the whole notion of freeing people to be able to realize their dreams.

Mrs. Warren. I have one last question, and then you probably had one as well.

Mr. Warren. Go ahead.

Mrs. Warren. And it's, what—I mean, we've been talking a lot about PEPFAR and that's all—that's people in other parts of our world, but we're here in the United States today on World AIDS Day, and there are people in this audience who are HIV-positive.

The President. Yes.

Mrs. Warren. And you know, what message do you, you know, the two of you or as individuals, what do you want to say to people in this audience who are positive?

The President. That PEPFAR is a part of a comprehensive strategy to deal both with AIDS both at home and abroad, and that the intention of PEPFAR was never to pirate money away from a domestic program. The intention for PEPFAR is to build on what we've learned here at home.

And so the first question that people ought to ask is, "What's the funding been like?" In other words, funding equals commitment; sometimes it equals, you know,

effective programming, but it—at least the funding levels will give you a sense of how committed the country is. And as I mentioned, we're spending—we spent about 99 billion at home, which was a 40 percent increase from 2001 to today, which is positive.

You know, it's—it turns out that—and in my State of the Union, by the way, I talked, you know, I think a couple of times about, you know, HIV in neighborhoods that weren't used to HIV, inner-city America, for example. And this is a issue that's going to require constant vigilance here at home, and that people that may think that they're safe, you know, have got to be reminded that, you know, care and—you know, and education is important.

So yes, but people in America should not think that PEPFAR is——

Mr. Warren. Over there.

The President. ——means that we don't care about them, because we do. This Nation has—is dedicated to, you know, helping people whose lives have been severely affected by HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Warren. I tried to introduce Dr. Mark Dybul, our Global AIDS Coordinator earlier, but he was with you coming in. But I see you sitting here next to Barbara. So, Mark, would you stand up and let us recognize the guy who's done all the work? Thank you so much. Thank you.

The President. So, like, Mark doesn't like you to do that to him. [*Laughter*] He would rather be anonymous, wouldn't you, Mark? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warren. Well, and I know you don't like us to do this to you, but in the preshow before we went on the air with a number of the networks, we—I had written to—or called up eight different world leaders and I asked them what they'd like to say about PEPFAR, and every one of them wanted to give a video tribute, and we showed those in the presession.

And I wanted to read you the list of—former President Clinton; President-elect Obama; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Prime Minister Tony Blair; President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, representing all of the African Presidents saying thank you to you; all of the PEPFAR countries wanted to say thanks; Bill and Melinda Gates; Director Michael Kazatchkine; and a friend I met out on the street named Bono. [*Laughter*]

We've played seven of these video tributes to you in our preliminary program, but I wanted you to hear just a short—kind of a—about a minute synopsis of some of these. And so let's watch this for just a second.

[*A video was shown.*]

Mr. Warren. Mr. President, we talked earlier about how all of these problems are connected: literacy, poverty, disease, education. And that's what the PEACE plan is all about. PEACE stands for "promote reconciliation, equip leaders, assist the poor, care for the sick, and educate the next generation."

And this year, the PEACE coalition of churches—over 400,000 churches in 162 countries—and businesses and individuals, part of the PEACE coalition decided that we wanted to begin a tradition of presenting an award called the International Medal of PEACE for the most outstanding contribution in attacking what we call the five global goliaths: spiritual emptiness, corruption, extreme poverty, pandemic diseases, and illiteracy.

And the consensus was unanimous that the first International Medal of PEACE would be presented to President George Bush on the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day. And it is with great honor and great humility and respect that we give you this award on the behalf of all of those in the PEACE coalition, representing 162 countries. And we thank you, sir, for your commitment.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Warren. Thank you so much.

[*Mr. Warren then presented the medal and made concluding remarks, after which a video was shown.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. at the Newseum. Participating in the forum were Richard D. Warren, pastor, and Kay Warren, executive director of the HIV/AIDS initiative, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA. In his remarks, the President referred to Michael Gerson, columnist and former speechwriter for the President; Mohamed Kalyesubula, HIV/AIDS activist, Uganda; and Anthony S. Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH. Mr. Warren referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; William H. Gates III and Melinda French Gates, cochairs, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Michael Kazatchkine, executive director of the secretariat, The Global Fund; and musician and activist Paul D. "Bono" Hewson. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Initiative in Greensboro, North Carolina

December 2, 2008

I am thankful that you all have come to talk to me about a very important initiative, and it's a mentoring program aimed at helping children of people who are incarcerated.

I set a goal for the country that from 2003 until 2008 that we'd have 100,000 such matches with adults combined with a child who could use some love. And I'm pleased that as of September we've exceeded that goal. And I want to thank you all for being a part of a program that, hopefully, is bringing hope to people's lives. I think it is.

First of all, I want to thank Stacey, Julia, and Destiney for sharing their stories, and I wish you all the best. I hope you—you're—I know you're appreciative that Joe, Melissa, and Emilee have taken time out of their lives to help you. I am hopeful that somebody who watches this show, watches this program, realizes that they can make a difference in a child's life. That doesn't take much. All it takes is time; it takes a little bit of extra love. But by helping a child, you can really help the country. You help yourself by loving, but you help America one heart, one soul at a time.

So, Chuck, thank you for your hospitality. The Youth Focus program here in Greensboro, North Carolina, is a part of Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Big Brothers and Big Sisters have begun to mentor towards these three youngsters. These youngsters got ambitions and goals. They want to go to college. They want to make a difference. And I suspect that the mentors will be anxiously following the career of someone who they have been able to help.

And so thank you all for coming. God bless you and good luck to you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Greensboro office. In his remarks, he referred to Stacey Harris, Jr., Julia Foster, and Destiney Carter, Big Brothers Big Sisters participants; Joseph Gladson, Melissa Larkin, and Emilee Christopher, Big Brothers Big Sisters mentors; and Charles Hodierne, executive director, Youth Focus, Inc.

Statement on Senator Mel Martinez's Decision Not to Seek Reelection
December 2, 2008

Throughout his distinguished career, Senator Mel Martinez has been a wonderful public servant. Mel's life story is a testament to the power of the American Dream. Since immigrating to the United States from Cuba at the age of 15 as a part of Operation Pedro Pan, he has taken on big challenges and built a record of achievement.

By becoming our country's first Cuban American Cabinet member as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the first Cuban American United States Senator, he has been a source of inspiration to people all across our country. As general chairman of the Republican National Committee, he worked to strengthen our party and expand outreach to new audiences. In addition, he has been a passionate voice for freedom in his native country.

Laura and I thank Mel for his leadership and friendship over the past 8 years, and we wish him and Kitty the best as he finishes his career in the Senate and afterward.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree
December 4, 2008

Thank you. Mr. Secretary, thank you for the introduction, and thank you for the warm welcome. Laura and I are pleased to welcome all of you here for one of Washington's great traditions, the lighting of the National Christmas Tree.

Santa, thank you for finally showing up. [*Laughter*] I know you've come a long way. After all, you do live in the North Pole. You may have heard that Laura and I are going to have plenty of time next year. [*Laughter*] So we look forward to returning the favor. The problem is we're going to be short on an airplane. [*Laughter*] Have you got an extra sleigh? [*Laughter*]

I welcome the members of my Cabinet, the administration, and their families; Members of Congress and their families; Vin Cipolla; Mary Bomar, the Director of the National Park Service; Peggy O'Dell, Regional Director, National Capital Region of the National Park Service. All the National Park Service employees, we thank you for your dedication and work.

Laura and I are thrilled to be here with our dear friend, Reverend Luis Leon. All the entertainers, thank you for being here. You were fabulous tonight. We appreciate your performance. We especially welcome the folks from Enterprise, Alabama. And we thank the school choir for showing the determination and grit of some really fine people.

We want to thank all the volunteers who designed and created the ornaments for our State trees.

Today we celebrate the 85th anniversary of the National Christmas Tree lighting. In times of calm and in times of challenge, Americans have gathered for this ceremony. The simple story we remember during the season speaks to every generation. It is the story of a humble birth in a quiet town, and the story of one life that changed millions more. For two millennia, the story of Christmas has brought joy to families, comfort to communities, and hope to hearts around the world.

During Christmas we celebrate the blessings of the season and the blessings that surround us every day. And the greatest of these blessings is freedom, the Almighty's gift to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth.

And today we give thanks to the brave men and women who protect the American people by defending freedom around the world. Over the past 8 years, my greatest honor as President has been serving as Commander in Chief of the finest military ever known.

Our men and women in uniform have stepped forward to defend our Nation during a time of war. They serve with courage and with honor, and they've made incredible sacrifices. Many of them will spend this Christmas stationed in distant lands, far from the families they love. Yet they're never far from our thoughts, and they are always in our prayers. America honors their service, and we are grateful to the sacrifice of the families who stand by their side.

Some of those families are with us tonight, and Laura and I are pleased to be joined by Kayleigh Kepler and Lindsey Van Horn. Lindsey's dad is in Baghdad. Kayleigh's dad will deploy to Iraq next year. Kayleigh and Lindsey, America is safer because of your dads, and moms and dads across America, who have stepped forward to defend our country.

And now I'm going to ask Kayleigh and Lindsey to get up here with Laura—to please come up with Laura—[*laughter*]—and help us light this beautiful tree.

Everybody join: five, four, three, two, one!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, who introduced the President; SFC Steve Cramer, USA, U.S. Army Chorus, in his role as Santa Claus; Vin Cipolla, president and chief executive officer, National Park Foundation; and Luis Leon, rector, St. John's Church.

Remarks on Signing the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Proclamation and the Proclamation To Establish the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument

December 5, 2008

The President. Thank you all for coming. I am going to sign two documents: one a Pearl Harbor Day proclamation and the other creating the World War II Valor in Pacific National Monument. The national monument will include nine sites: five in Hawaii, three in Alaska, and one in California at the Tule Lake Segregation Center, where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II.

The purpose of the monument is to remind generations of Americans of the sacrifices that Americans made to protect our country. But there's a broader purpose as well, and that is to remind generations of Americans about the transformative effect of freedom.

One of the great stories of—during World War II was that people fought bitterly to defend our country and way of life and then worked to help our enemies develop democracies according to their own cultures and their own history. And today I am so pleased to report that Japan is a strong ally of the United States of America, an ally in defending our liberties, and an ally in spreading liberty as the great ideological alternative to an enemy that still wants to do us harm.

And so this monument will help people realize the breadth and the history of World War II and its aftermath.

So I'm pleased to sign both documents, and I want to thank our distinguished visitors for joining me.

[*At this point, the President signed the proclamations.*]

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the National Economy
December 5, 2008

Today's job data reflects the fact that our economy is in a recession. This is in large part because of severe problems in our housing, credit, and financial markets, which have resulted in significant job losses. I'm concerned about our workers who've lost jobs during this downturn, and I'm—as we work to address the problems of this economy, we've extended unemployment insurance benefits to those who have lost their jobs during this downturn.

We are focusing on the root causes of the economic downturn in order to return our economy to health. The most urgent issue facing the economy is the problem in the credit markets. Businesses and consumers need access to credit at affordable rates to spend and invest. And so we're working to stabilize the markets and make credit more affordable and available. We're working with the Federal Reserve and FDIC, and credit is beginning to move. A market that was frozen is thawing. There's still more work to do, but there are some encouraging signs.

A root cause of the slowdown is housing. And so we continue to take actions that will avoid preventable foreclosures and speed a return to a healthy housing market. Interest rates help the housing market recover, and interest rates, mortgage rates are going down. And plus, there's a number of programs in place to help Americans stay in their homes, to limit the preventable foreclosures.

I am concerned about the viability of the automobile companies. I'm concerned about those who work for the automobile companies and their families. And likewise, I am concerned about taxpayer money being provided to those companies that may not survive. Put out a detailed plan recently that uses money that Congress appropriated last fall for the auto industry, money that can be used so long as the companies make hard choices on all aspects of their business to prove that they can not only survive, but thrive.

It is important that Congress act next week on this plan. And it's important to make sure that taxpayers' money be paid back if any is given to the companies.

It's going to take time for all the actions we have taken to have their full impact. But I am confident that the steps we're taking will help fix the problems in our economy and return it to strength. My administration is committed to ensuring that our economy succeeds. And I know the incoming administration shares the same commitment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:29 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released

a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at the Saban Forum
December 5, 2008

Thank you. John, thank you very much. I thought for a minute you were going to say I was your favorite rabbi, but—[*laughter*].

I appreciate you giving me a chance to come. I too want to thank Mr. Saban for his vision and for sponsoring this forum. I am honored to be with you. Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. Justice Breyer, I am pleased to see you yet again. I thank Ambassador Indyk. Minister Mofaz, it's good to see you, sir, and I appreciate you being here for this forum.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us, members of the diplomatic corps, and of course, the distinguished guests.

The Saban Forum is one of the world's premier venues for discussion on the Middle East. I thank you for the debates you provoke and the differences you have made. And I'm honored to be with you.

Over the past 8 years, I have had the privilege to see the Middle East up close. I have stood on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and I have hiked the cliffs of Masada. I have enjoyed dinner in the desert of Abu Dhabi and prayed at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. I have looked into the eyes of courageous elected leaders from Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories. I have been convinced that no region is more fundamental to the security of America or the peace in the world than the Middle East.

This evening I will share some thoughts on our policies in the region these past 8 years, and our vision for the future: a Middle East where our friends are strengthened and the extremists are discredited, where economies are open and prosperity is widespread, and where all people enjoy the life of liberty that is the universal gift of an Almighty God.

From our earliest days as a nation, the Middle East has played a central role in American foreign policy. One of America's first military engagements as an independent nation was with the Barbary pirates. One of our first consulates was in Tangiers. Some of the most fateful choices made by American Presidents have involved the Middle East, including President Truman's decision to recognize Israel 60 years ago this past May.

In the decades that followed that brave choice, American policy in the Middle East was shaped by the realities of the cold war. Together with strong allies in the Middle East, we faced down and defeated the threat of communism to the region. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the primary threat to America and the region became violent religious extremism. Through painful experience, it became clear that the old approach of promoting stability is unsuited to this new danger, and that the pursuit of security at the expense of liberty would leave us with neither one. Across the Middle East, many who sought a voice in the future of their countries found the only places open to dissent were radical mosques. Many turned to terror as a source of empowerment. And as the new century dawned, the violent currents swirling beneath the Middle East began to surface.

In the Holy Land, the dashed expectations resulting from the collapse of the Camp David peace talks had given way to the second intifada. Palestinian suicide

bombers struck with horrific frequency and lethality. They murdered innocent Israelis at a pizza parlor or aboard buses or in the middle of a Passover Seder. Israeli Defense Forces responded with large-scale operations. And in 2001, more than 500 Israelis and Palestinians were killed.

Politically, the Palestinian Authority was led by a terrorist who stole from his people and walked away from peace. In Israel, Ariel Sharon was elected to fight terror and pursue a "greater Israel" policy that allowed for no territorial concessions. Neither side could envision a return to negotiations or the realistic possibility of a two-state solution.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Saddam Hussein had begun his third decade as the dictator of Iraq, a reign that included invading two neighbors, developing and using weapons of mass destruction, attempting to exterminate Marsh Arabs and many Kurds, paying the families of suicide bombers, systematically violating U.N. resolutions, and firing routinely at British and U.S. aircraft patrolling a no-fly zone.

Syria continued its occupation of Lebanon, with some 30,000 troops on Lebanese soil. Libya sponsored terror and pursued weapons of mass destruction. And in Iran, the prospect for—of reform was fading, the regime's sponsorship of terror continued, and its pursuit of nuclear weapons was largely unchecked.

Throughout the region, suffering and stagnation were rampant. The "Arab Human Development Report" revealed a bleak picture of high unemployment, poor education, high mortality rates for mothers, and almost no investment in technology. Above all, the Middle East suffered a deep deficit in freedom. Most people had no choice and no voice in choosing their leaders. Women enjoyed few rights, and there was little conversation about democratic change.

Against this backdrop, the terrorist movement was growing in strength and in ambition. For three decades, violent radicals had landed painful blows against America: the Iranian hostage crisis, the attacks on our Embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut, the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103, the truck bombing of the World Trade Center, the attack on Khobar Towers, the bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the strike on the USS *Cole*.

And then came September the 11th, 2001, when 19 men from the Middle East carried out the worst attack on the United States since the strike on Pearl Harbor 67 years ago this weekend. In the space of a single morning, 9/11 etched a sharp dividing line in our history. We realized that we're in a struggle with fanatics pledged to our destruction. We saw that conditions of repression and despair on the other side of the world could bring suffering and death to our own streets.

With these new realities in mind, America reshaped our approach to the Middle East. We made clear that we will defend our friends, our interests, and our people against any hostile attempt to dominate the Middle East, whether by terror, blackmail, or the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. We have carried out this new strategy by following three overriding principles.

First, we took the offense against the terrorists overseas. We are waging a relentless campaign to break up extremist networks and deny them safe havens. As part of that offensive, we pledged to strengthen our partnership with every nation that joins in the fight against terror. We deepened our security cooperation with allies like Jordan and Egypt, and with our friends in the gulf. Saudi Arabia, long a breeding ground for radicalism, has become a determined partner in the fight against terror, killing or capturing hundreds of Al Qaida operatives in the Kingdom. We dramatically expanded counterterrorism ties with partners in North Africa. And we left no doubt that America would stand by our closest ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel.

Second, we made clear that hostile regimes must end their support for terror

and their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, or face the concerted opposition of the world.

This was the approach we took in Iraq. It is true, as I've said many times, that Saddam Hussein was not connected to the 9/11 attacks. But the decision to remove Saddam from power cannot be viewed in isolation from 9/11. In a world where terrorists armed with box cutters had just killed nearly 3,000 of our people, America had to decide whether we could tolerate a sworn enemy that acted belligerently, that supported terror, and that intelligence agencies around the world believed had weapons of mass destruction.

It was clear to me—it was clear to members of both political parties and to many leaders around the world—that after 9/11, that was a risk we could not afford to take. So we went back to the United Nations Security Council, which unanimously passed Resolution 1441 calling on Saddam Hussein to disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. With this resolution, we offered Saddam Hussein a final chance to comply with the demands of the world. And when he refused to resolve the issue peacefully, we acted with a coalition of nations to protect our people and liberated 25 million Iraqis.

When Saddam regimes fell—when Saddam's regime fell, we refused to take the easy option and install a friendly strongman in his place. Even though it required enormous sacrifice, we stood by the Iraqi people as they elected their own leaders and built a young democracy. When the violence reached its most dire point, pressure to withdraw reached its height. Yet failure in Iraq would have unleashed chaos, widened the violence, and allowed the terrorists to gain a new safe haven, a fundamental contradiction to our vision for the Middle East.

So we adopted a new strategy and deployed more troops to secure the Iraqi people. When the surge met its objective, we began to bring our troops home under the policy of return on success. Yesterday, building on the gains made by the surge, the democratic Government of Iraq approved two agreements with the United States that formalize our diplomatic, economic, and security ties and set a framework for the drawdown of American forces as the fight in Iraq nears its successful end.

After 9/11, we also confronted Libya over its weapons of mass destruction. The leader of Libya made a wise choice. In 2003, Colonel Qadhafi announced that he would abandon his weapons of mass destruction program. He concluded that the interests of his people would be best served by improving relations with America, and Libya turned over its nuclear centrifuges and other deadly equipment to the United States.

The defeat of Saddam also appears to have changed the calculation of Iran. According to our intelligence community, the regime in Tehran had started a nuclear weapons program in the late 1980s, and they halted a key part of that program in 2003. America recognized that the most effective way to pursue—persuade Iran to remove its nuclear weapons—renounce its nuclear weapons ambitions was to have partners at our side, so we supported an international effort led by our allies in Europe. This diplomacy yielded an encouraging result when Iran agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment.

Sadly, after the election of President Ahmadi-nejad, Iran reversed course and announced it would begin enriching again. Since then, we've imposed tough sanctions through United Nations resolutions. We and our partners have offered Iran diplomatic and economic incentives to suspend enrichment. We have promised to support a peaceful civilian nuclear program. While Iran has not accepted these offers, we have made our bottom line clear: For the safety of our people and the peace of the world, America will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.

Third, America identified the lack of freedom in the Middle East as a principal cause of the threats coming from the region. We concluded that if the region continued on the path it was headed, if another generation grew up with no hope for the future and no outlet to express its views, the Middle East would continue to simmer in resentment and export violence.

To stop this from happening, we've resolved to help the region steer itself toward a better course of freedom and dignity and hope. We're engaged in a battle with the extremists that is broader than a military conflict and broader than a law enforcement operation. We are engaged in an ideological struggle. And to advance our security interests and moral interests, America is working to advance freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to repression and terror.

As part of this effort, we're pressing nations across the region, including our friends, to trust their people with greater freedom of speech and worship and assembly. We're giving strong support to young democracies. We're standing with reformers and dissidents and human rights activists across the region. Through new efforts like the Middle East peace partnership initiative and the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, we're supporting the rise of vibrant civil societies.

We're also advancing a broader vision that includes economic prosperity, quality health care and education, and women's rights. We've negotiated new free trade agreements in the region, supported Saudi Arabia's accession to the World Trade Organization, and proposed a new Middle East free trade area. We have signed Millennium Challenge agreements with Jordan and Morocco to grant American assistance in return for anticorruption measures, free market policies, and investments in health and education. We're training Middle Eastern schoolteachers, translating children's school books into Arabic, and helping young people get visas to study here in the United States.

We're encouraging Middle Eastern women to get involved in politics and to start their own businesses and take charge of their health through wise practices like breast cancer screening. Efforts like these extend hope to the corners of despair, and in this work we have had a lot of help, but no finer ambassador of good will than my wife, Laura Bush.

Finally, to advance all the principles that I've outlined—supporting our friends and pressuring our adversaries and extending freedom—America has launched a sustained initiative to help bring peace to the Holy Land. At the heart of this effort is the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. I was the first American President to call for a Palestinian state and support—and to build support for the two-state solution has been a top priority of my administration.

To earn the trust of Israeli leaders, we made it clear that no Palestinian state would be born of terror, we backed Prime Minister Sharon's courageous withdrawal from Gaza, and we supported his decision to build a security fence, not as a political border but to protect the people from terror.

To help the Palestinian people achieve the state they deserve, we insisted on Palestinian leadership that rejects terror and recognizes Israel's right to exist. Now that this leadership has emerged, we're strongly supporting its efforts to build institutions of a vibrant democratic state.

With good advice from leaders like former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Generals Jones, Dayton, Fraser, and Selva, the Palestinians are making progress toward capable security forces, a functioning legal system, Government Ministries that deliver services without corruption, and a market economy. In all our efforts to promote a two-state solution, we have included Arab leaders from across the region, because we

fully understand that their support will be essential for the creation of a state and lasting peace.

Last fall at Annapolis, Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab leaders came together at an historic summit. President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert agreed to launch direct negotiations on a peace agreement. Nations around the globe, including many in the Arab world, pledged to support them. The negotiations since Annapolis have been determined and substantial. Secretary Rice has encouraged both sides by hosting a series of trilateral meetings. And while the Israelis and Palestinians have not yet produced an agreement, they have made important progress. As they stated to the Quartet, they have laid a new foundation of trust for the future.

On this issue, and on our overall approach to the Middle East these past 8 years, America has been ambitious in vision, we have been bold in action, and we have been firm in purpose. Not every decision I've made has been popular, but popularity was never our aim. Our aim was to help a troubled region take the difficult first steps on the long journey to freedom and prosperity and hope. Some have called this idealistic, and no doubt it is. Yet it is the only practical way to help the people of the Middle East realize the dignity and justice they deserve. And it is the only practical way to protect the United States of America in the long term.

As with any large undertaking, these efforts have not always gone according to plan, and in some areas we've fallen short of our hopes. For example, the fight in Iraq has been longer and more costly than expected. The reluctance of entrenched regimes to open their political systems has been disappointing. There have been unfortunate setbacks at key points in the peace process, including the illness suffered by Prime Minister Sharon, the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections, and the terrorist takeover of Gaza.

Despite these frustrations and disappointments, the Middle East in 2008 is a freer, more hopeful, and more promising place than it was in 2001.

For the first time in nearly three decades, the people of Lebanon are free from Syria's military occupation. Libya's nuclear weapons equipment is locked away in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Places like the UAE and Bahrain are emerging as centers of commerce. The region—the regime in Iran is facing greater pressure from the international community than ever before. Terrorist organizations like Al Qaida have failed decisively in their attempts to take over nations; they're increasingly facing ideological rejection in the Arab world.

Iraq has gone from an enemy of America to a friend of America, from sponsoring terror to fighting terror, and from a brutal dictatorship to a multireligious, multiethnic constitutional democracy. Instead of the Iraq we would see if a Saddam Hussein were in power—an aggressive regime vastly enriched by oil, defying the United Nations, bullying its Arab neighbors, threatening Israel, and pursuing a nuclear arms race with Iran—we see an Iraq emerging peacefully with its neighbors, welcoming Arab ambassadors back to Baghdad, and showing the Middle East a powerful example of a moderate, prosperous, free nation.

The most vexing problem in the region—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—there is now greater international consensus that at any point in modern memory. Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs recognize the creation of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state is in their interests. And through the Annapolis process, they started down a path that will end with two states living side by side in peace.

In fits and starts, political and economic reforms are advancing across the Middle East. Women have run for office in several nations and been named to important Government positions in Bahrain and Oman and Qatar, the UAE and Yemen. Trade

and foreign investment have expanded. Several nations have opened up private universities, and Internet use has risen sharply. Across the region, conversations about freedom and reform are growing louder. Expectations about government responsiveness are rising, and people are defying the condescending view that the culture of the Middle East is unfit for freedom.

There are still serious challenges facing the Middle East. Iran and Syria continue to sponsor terror. Iran's uranium enrichment remains a major threat to peace. Many in the region still live under oppression. Yet the changes of the past 8 years herald the beginning of something historic and new. At long last, the Middle East is closing a chapter of darkness and fear and opening a new one written in the language of possibility and hope. For the first time in generations, the region represents something more than a set of problems to be solved or the site of energy resources to be developed. A free and peaceful Middle East will represent a source of promise and home of opportunity and a vital contributor to the prosperity of the world.

Those who ask what this future will look like need only look around. We see the new story of the Middle East in Iraqis waving ink-stained fingers, with Lebanese taking to streets in the Cedar Revolution. We see it in women taking their seats in elected Parliaments and bloggers telling the world their dreams. We see it in the skyscrapers rising above Abu Dhabi and living—and thriving Middle Eastern businesses that are now connected to the global economy. We see it in a Saudi king sponsoring an interfaith dialogue, Palestinian reformers fighting corruption and terror, and Israelis who love their ancient land, but want to live in peace.

These are striking images, and they do point the way to a brighter future. I believe the day will come when the map of the Middle East shows a peaceful, secure Israel beside a peaceful and democratic Palestine. I believe the day will come when people from Cairo and Riyadh to Baghdad and Beirut to Damascus and Tehran live in free and independent societies, bound together by the ties of diplomacy and tourism and trade. The day will come when Al Qaida and Hizballah and Hamas are marginalized and then wither away, as Muslims across the region realize the emptiness of the terrorists' vision and the injustice of their cause.

Earlier this year, I laid out this vision in my address to the Israeli Knesset and then in my address to the World Economic Forum in Egypt. It was not a Jewish vision or an Arab vision or an American vision; it is a universal vision. It unites all who yearn for freedom and peace in the Middle East. And if we lead, and if we persevere, and if we keep faith in our ideals, that vision will become a reality someday.

Thanks for letting me come, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:09 p.m. in the Newseum. In his remarks, he referred to John L. Thornton, chairman of the board of trustees, Brookings Institution, who introduced the President; Haim Saban, chairman and chief executive officer, Saban Capital Group, Inc.; Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin S. Indyk, director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz, and former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, Quartet Representative in the Middle East; Gen. James L. Jones, Jr., USMC (Ret.), Special Envoy for Middle East Security; Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, USA, U.S. Security Coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority; Gen. William M. Fraser III, USAF, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; Lt. Gen. Paul J. Selva, USAF, assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; and King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

The President's Radio Address
December 6, 2008

Good morning. This weekend I'm attending the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia, and I'm looking forward to a great day of college football. But more importantly, I'm looking forward to spending time with the brave men and women of the United States military.

Throughout the past 8 years, I've seen the tremendous talent and courage of those who wear the uniform. Their efforts have overthrown tyrants, made our Nation safer, put terrorists on the run, and opened the door to liberty for more than 50 million people. And now, thanks to their work in Iraq and the courage of the Iraqi people, a hopeful new era is dawning for their democracy and ours.

Earlier this week, Iraq's Presidency Council approved two landmark agreements that will solidify Iraq's democratic gains, affirm its sovereignty, and put its relations with the United States on a strong and steady footing.

The first agreement that America and Iraq have signed is called a strategic framework agreement. This pact sets out a common vision for U.S.-Iraqi relations in the years ahead. Under this agreement, we will work together to bring greater stability to Iraq and the region. We'll promote trade and investment between our nations. And we will support Iraq's leaders and their citizens as they strengthen their democratic institutions.

Only a few years ago, such an agreement was unimaginable. Chaos and violence were consuming Iraq. Terrorists were seizing new ground and using violence to divide the Iraqi people along sectarian lines. And the nation was nearing the point of political collapse and civil war.

Today, violence is down dramatically. Our forces have struck powerful blows against Al Qaida. The Iraqi military is growing in capability, taking the lead in the fight against the extremists, and working across sectarian lines. Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish leaders are sitting together at the same table to peacefully resolve their differences and chart their country's future. And there is hope in the eyes of young Iraqis for the first time in many years.

The second agreement that America and Iraq have signed is a security agreement, known as a status of forces agreement. One of the primary purposes of this agreement is to ensure protection for our troops and Defense Department civilians as the Iraqi Government begins to exercise greater sovereignty. Our military commanders have assured me that the agreement's provisions meet this purpose. At the same time, it also respects the authority of the Iraqi Government. And it lays out a framework for the withdrawal of American forces in Iraq, a withdrawal that is possible because of the success of the surge.

This withdrawal will take place in two stages. The first stage will occur next year, when Iraqi forces assume the lead for security operations in all major population centers, while U.S. combat forces move out of Iraqi cities and move into an overwatch role. After this transition has occurred, the drawdown of American forces will continue to the second stage, with all U.S. forces returning home from Iraq by the end of 2011.

As we enter this new phase in America's relations with Iraq, we have an opportunity to adopt a new perspective here at home. There were legitimate differences of opinion about the initial decision to remove Saddam Hussein and the subsequent conduct of the war. But now the surge and the courage of brave Iraqis have turned the situation around. And Americans should be able to agree that it is in our Nation's strategic and moral interests to support the

free and democratic Iraq that is emerging in the heart of the Middle East.

The American people have sacrificed a great deal to reach this moment. The battle in Iraq has required a large amount of time and a large amount of money. Our men and women in uniform have carried out difficult and dangerous missions and endured long separations from friends and family. And thousands of our finest citizens have given their lives to make our country safer and bring us to this new day. The war in Iraq is not yet over, but thanks to these agreements and the courage of our men and women in Iraq, it is decisively on its way to being won.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:50 a.m. on December 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 5, 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 the Union League of Philadelphia's Unveiling of the President's Portrait in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
December 6, 2008

Good morning. Welcome to my hanging. [*Laughter*] Thank you for coming, and thank you for your warm welcome.

First, I'd like to compliment Mark Carder. He did a really fine job with a challenging subject. [*Laughter*] I was taken aback by how much gray paint you had to use—[*laughter*]—which speaks more about my job than yours. [*Laughter*] But thanks a lot. It's been a joy to work with you, and I'm confident this portrait will stand the test of time.

I want to thank Fred and Frank for welcoming me here. I thank you for the medal. I'm keeping pretty good company, which I will speak about in a minute.

First of all, I do want to thank the board of directors of the Union League for taking time out of your Saturday to be here. And I appreciate all the guests who have come as well.

I particularly want to say thanks to my friend Arlen Specter for joining us, and he—[*applause*]. It's been a joy working with you, most of the time. [*Laughter*] He's a pretty independent-minded fellow—[*laughter*]—who is honest and decent. And like me, he married very well. So Joan, thanks for being here, and I appreciate you supporting this good man during some very difficult times.

I thank the Hoopers for paying for this work. I thank Jim Straw and the Abraham Lincoln Foundation and the foundation members who are here today. I appreciate you preserving the legacy of a good man.

I am—it turns out, this award had been given to folks I have had the honor of serving with: Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld, Secretary Tom Ridge—three good men who are dedicated and patriot public servants.

I'm especially proud to be a co-recipient with a guy I call 41, the 1987 Gold Medal Award winner, the guy I call dad; you call him President Bush. We owe our achievements to the same savvy political counselor and firm disciplinarian, Barbara. [*Laughter*] And they're both doing well, by the way. Mother is coming out of the hospital. I hope they don't put this on TV, but she's a tough old bird—[*laughter*]—whose spirits are soaring high.

The motto of the Union League is "Love of Country Leads." You obviously love our country, because you continue to lead in ways that make Philadelphia a more compassionate place, and I want to thank you for that. I appreciate the fact that you have mentoring programs and internships and scholarships, that basically says the dream is for all who live in this country. I thank you for your efforts to preserve historical treasures. One can learn a lot from the past, and the Union League is doing its part to tell the true story of our great Nation.

In short, I thank you for your service to your community and our country.

I also thank you for preserving the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. I'm about to be a member of the ex-Presidents' club, so I'll just call him Abe. [*Laughter*] If he were around I could say, "You call me W." [*Laughter*] He—I don't know if you know this or not, but there's a place in the Oval Office where the President puts the most influential President—portrait of, I guess you'd say, influential President. I'm somewhat conflicted about the influential President, so I say, 41's portrait hangs in my heart, 16 hangs on the wall.

I found it interesting that the League was founded in 1862 to support President Lincoln in a time when his leadership was deeply controversial. [*Laughter*] Look, I know how he felt. [*Laughter*]

But the principles on which he stood have stood the test of time. "All men are created equal under God," he said unflinchingly throughout his Presidency. Liberty is given to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth. I believe, like Lincoln, there is an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man is freedom. He has taught Presidents that you must act on your principles and make tough decisions, regardless of the political consequences.

I have been a—I have drawn strength from his example. I have learned lessons by reading about Abraham Lincoln. And I want to thank you for preserving his legacy.

And most importantly, I thank you for your kind words and your heartfelt prayers during the last 8 years. It has been—somebody said, "What's it's like to be President?" I said, "Some days you're happy, some days not so happy, every day joyous to serve the United States."

God bless you, and God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in Lincoln Hall at the Union League of Philadelphia. In his remarks, he referred to painter Mark Carder; Frederick C. Haab, Jr., president, Union League of Philadelphia; Frank Giordano, member, and James B. Straw, chairman, board of trustees, Abraham Lincoln Foundation of the Union League of Philadelphia; Bruce and Eileen Hooper, commissioners of the President's portrait; former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; and former Secretary of Homeland Security Thomas J. Ridge.

Interview With Sam Ryan of CBS Sports in Philadelphia
December 6, 2008

Army-Navy Football Game

Ms. Ryan. Mr. President, we know this is one of the most storied rivalries in all of sports. What does the Army-Navy game mean to you?

The President. Well, it means to me that I have—I got a chance to come and be with people who will be joining the finest military in the history of the world.

Members of the U.S. Armed Forces

Ms. Ryan. When you look at these young players and the seniors, and you know that they enrolled in the academies after 9/11, what does that say about them?

The President. I stand in awe of somebody who would volunteer to serve America in a time of danger. It says that we are blessed to have people of such character in our country.

The Presidency

Ms. Ryan. Mr. President, I know you're probably doing a lot of reflecting here on December 6. What will you miss the most about being President?

The President. I will miss a lot of things. But one of the things I have treasured the most is to be the Commander in Chief of men and women of courage and character and decency.

Ms. Ryan. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:11 p.m. at Lincoln Financial Field. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Nadia Bilbassy Charters of MBC TV
December 5, 2008

The Oval Office

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Mr. President, nice to see you always.

The President. Welcome, welcome.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir.

The President. We are glad you're here.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you very much.

The President. Come on in to the Oval Office.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. We are grateful for this. Thank you. This is great.

The President. It's an interesting history here, and I kind of think one thing that your viewers might be interested in knowing is that the first decision I ever made as President—but I was actually President-elect—was, what color rug do you want? And one of the important things is to surround yourself with people who you can trust and delegate. In this case, I delegated the rug design to Laura, my wife.

But I told her, I said, I want the rug to have a message, and that is "optimistic guy goes to work here." And so, as you can see, the rug really lights up the room. And I am optimistic about the future of the Middle East.

Freedom Agenda/Middle East

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Well, that's a great note, sir. You've been here 8 years. A few weeks and you're going to be leaving.

The President. I'm going home.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. You sat on this desk for 8 years, and you took many decisions regarding our region. You launched the greater Middle East initiative that you want to democratize, reform the Middle East. In retrospect, do you think that vision was realized? Would you do anything differently?

The President. Well, I think it began—it's the beginning of a very difficult vision to implement. But I felt it was necessary for a couple of important reasons. One, I believe we're in an ideological struggle against people who want to achieve their ideological vision through the use of violence and murder. And I believe it is essential that you have an alternative available for people; the one I happen to believe in is based upon liberty. I don't think this

is an American vision, see. And I tell people this, that I do believe there is a universal God, and a gift of that Almighty to all of us, whether we be Methodists or Muslims or nothing, is freedom. And so freedom is a great alternative.

But I also believe there's a moral calling. If you believe there's an Almighty God, and a gift of that Almighty to everybody is freedom, then I think you have to—if you can do something about it, that you have to act on that, so that moms can grow up in a society that is hopeful for their children, you know, that their children are—can realize dreams.

And to me the best type of society to do that is freedom. But it's very hard; it's difficult. And so you have to plant a seed, and you have to cultivate the seed, and eventually the crops will bloom. And we're beginning to see the crops beginning to bloom in parts of the Middle East.

War on Terror

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Sir, some people say that the war on terror is a war on Islam.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Yet you went to the first mosque after 9/11, and you spoke there. How do you convince people in the Middle East that George Bush is not fighting a war against Islam?

The President. No, I know, and it troubles my soul, because I believe we're all God's children. And I hear people say, "George Bush doesn't like Muslims, he wants to fight Muslims." And first, I thank you for giving me the chance to, hopefully, set the record straight. But I am objecting to anybody who murders innocent people to achieve their objectives. I don't think people who murder in the name of religion are truly religious people. And secondly, I would hope that people would know that when we try to use some of our influence to help on education programs, for example, or we welcome students, Saudi students, to the United States to study here, that it's a sign of respect and a sign of my desire to reach out to all people regardless of their religion.

Reflections on the President's Time in Office

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Absolutely. I wanted also to ask you about, in the last 8 years, if you look back, would you do things differently? Would you have done things that you probably thought for a second—for the second time, I would have done them a different way?

The President. I'm sure there will be. I mean, there's been some disappointments.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Like what?

The President. Well, like, Abu Ghraib was a terrible disappointment. And admittedly, I wasn't there on the site, but I was the Commander in Chief of a military where these disgraceful acts took place that sent the absolute wrong image about America and our military.

You know, parts of Iraq, it's taken longer than I thought it would. On the other hand, I am pleased to see a multiethnic society begin to emerge. I talked to the leaders of Iraq yesterday and today and congratulated them on doing some hard work. And I love to hear their spirit in their voice.

And so I'm confident history will say, "Oh, Bush could have done it better here," or, "Bush could have done it better there." But I think from the strategic point of view, I'm confident that the idea of moving liberty in the region, a two-state solution to help the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the liberation of Iraq, and the follow-up with the—to help the Iraqis realize their sovereignty—a strong push-back against Iran—I believe when people objectively analyze this administration, they'll say, "Well, I see now what he was trying to do."

Middle East Peace Process

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. I mean, the Arab peace initiative, it was a framework. Do you think that President-elect Obama

should use it in terms of achieving peace in the Middle East?

The President. I definitely think it was a major breakthrough for then Crown Prince, now His Majesty, King Abdallah, to take the initiative and lay out the conditions for peace. And it is, I think, a useful foundation to help solve a longstanding problem. I do believe there will be a Palestinian state. I feel comfortable in saying that the decision—my decision to promote a Palestinian state, being the first President to do so, was the right thing for peace—right thing for peace for the Palestinians, right thing for peace for the Israelis. And His Majesty was very useful and very bold in laying out the Arab peace initiative.

The Rose Garden

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. We're going to talk about all this in details so——

The President. Yes, come on, I'll show you the Rose Garden.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. ——let's walk and talk as we go down to the Map Room.

The President. You've seen the Rose Garden before.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. I have, many times.

The President. Many times. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you, sir. It's beautiful.

The President. It is a beautiful day.

The Presidency

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. What are you going to miss most about this place?

The President. Well, you know, I'll miss a lot. I am—I've got such respect for our military, and I admire people in our military so very much. I'll miss being the Commander in Chief. But you know, the White House is full of incredibly gracious and kind people who work hard to make family life as normal as possible. And so I'll miss a lot of the people we work with here.

Post-Presidency Plans

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. And what's your plans?

The President. Well, I'm going to move back to Texas.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. And what are you going to do there?

The President. And I'm going to, you know, write a book, I think, about what it was like to be President and some of the hard decisions I had to make. I'm going to start a institute that will promote freedom. And this will be an interesting place, particularly in regards to the Middle East, because this will be a place where there will be a forum for people with different issues to come and discuss.

You know, I would love to have, you know, Palestinians, such as the President or the Prime Minister, to come and describe to the Americans what it was like to be in that part of the world. Or you know, there's just a lot of really interesting opportunities for people to come and lecture and think and talk.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. And in your book, obviously, we're talking about foreign policy. Most of it happened in the Middle East—okay, we're off camera now. I hope the guy is okay.

The President. A lot of—yes. He fell into the Rose Garden.

[*At this point, there was a change in location, and the interview resumed as follows.*]

Middle East Peace Process/West Bank

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Mr. President, thank you very much for this exclusive interview with us——

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. ——and thank you very much for granting us, to MEBC, and to me, personally, on behalf of Arab media. I really do appreciate it; I'm very grateful.

The President. Thank you. I've enjoyed working with you. You've been a very fair

journalist, and it's been a pleasure to have known you.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you, sir. You are the first American President to call for the establishment of a Palestinian state. You had hoped that you would have this state realized when you leave office. Do you think that you could have done more? Do you think that you have thrown all of the weight of the U.S. behind this vision?

The President. Absolutely. We threw all the muscle and all the weight of the United States behind the vision. I am—you know, I wish there would have been a clearly defined state by the time I left office. However, I do take comfort in a couple of things.

One, the attitude toward a Palestinian state has shifted. I think there's universal recognition in the region that in order for there to be peace, there must be two states living side by side in peace. Secondly, I am pleased that Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas, after Annapolis, have worked very hard to narrow the differences on a variety of issues. And they have; they've made substantial progress.

Thirdly, I am pleased that there is the Arab peace plan, which is an essential part of creating the conditions for a Palestinian state to evolve. Fourthly, I'm grateful that at the Annapolis conference all Arab nations were represented, which is an important signal, because I learned a lesson in studying previous efforts for peace that there must be regional buy-in. In other words, the nations in the region must stand with the Palestinians, in particular, and say this is—we support you.

And so—and fifthly, by the way, I am pleased with the progress being made to help the development of an infrastructure in the West Bank. Prime Minister Fayyad has asked for help. A lot of nations are helping, including the United States; we're helping with security measures. Generals Dayton and Jones have been very helpful. My friend Prime Minister Blair—former Prime Minister Blair, who was here the other night for dinner—and I talked about the economics that are beginning to take place in the region. In other words, a state can be defined on paper, but it also has to be defined in a civil society and a strong economy. And it's beginning to happen.

Middle East Peace Process/Gaza Strip

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. How do you see the Palestinian issue evolving in the next few years? I mean, Prime Minister Tony Blair said, actually, there's no peace without Gaza, and I guess that means Hamas as well. Do you share that vision?

The President. I share the vision that the only way there's going to be peace is where those who assume that violence is necessary to achieve peace cannot be a part of the process. In other words, people have to renounce violence in order to have peace. It's contradictory to say, I am going to use violence to achieve my objectives, and oh, by the way, I'm for peace.

And so ultimately, Gaza has got to be—look, Gaza has to be a part of a Palestinian state, and the Palestinian state has to be contiguous territory; it cannot look like Swiss cheese. And it's got to be a state in which the sovereignty of the Palestinian people is—reigns supreme.

Middle East Peace Process/Palestinian State

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. So you're confident it's going to emerge?

The President. I am. I really am. There will be fits and starts. I mean, if this were a straight line between vision and reality, it would have happened. But there's a lot of complicating factors. Obviously, the terrorists create complicating factors. Secondly, politics creates complicating factors, both within the Palestinians, as well as the Israelis, as we have seen.

But nevertheless, the foundation is there. People—if you give people a choice, ultimately give them a choice between two states side by side in peace or this unresolved dispute, what would they choose?

They would choose peace. And this will happen.

Middle East Peace Process

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. What will President-elect Obama pick up from where you left?

The President. Well, I think we've left it in good shape. We've left it with the vision intact. In other words, a lot of people now share the vision of two states. As I say, there's been progress between the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President toward what a state should look like. I think the Israelis are getting—be more comfortable with the notion that a state won't create less security for them, but more security for them. And the Arab world, because of the Arab initiative as well as the Annapolis conference, are showing more and more willingness to be constructive partners in getting peace.

Saudi Arabia-U.S. Relations

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. The U.S. and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have a close strategic relationship. You personally have a very good working relationship with King Abdallah. Yet you don't see eye to eye on many issues. How did you resolve that?

The President. I think we do. I think we got—I think we agree more than we disagree. First of all, I hold His Majesty in high respect. I appreciate, for example, the religious dialogue that he instigated, and I was honored to be invited to go to New York. I thought that was a very smart way to help promote understanding, and understanding eventually leads to peace.

He is a man who understands that terrorists can destroy his own society. And so I—I don't know if the world understands this or not, but Saudi Arabia has been very firm in dealing with Al Qaida. And remember, it was Al Qaida that tried to blow up their oil infrastructure; they killed their citizens. And His Majesty knows full well that that kind of terrorism cannot coexist with a peaceful society. When I have my discussions with him, I find there's a lot more common ground than not.

Saudi Arabia/Middle East Peace Process

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. So there's no disagreement with the Palestinian issue with what——

The President. I think His Majesty—look, the Arab peace initiative actually talks about, you know, Israel solving its problems with Lebanon and Syria and the Palestinians, and there will be universal recognition when that happens. And so to me that is a very positive statement. And that the idea of a Palestinian state as part—as far as being part of the solution to the overall problem is something I believe he agrees with. I don't want to put words in his mouth, because he's my dear friend.

Qatar

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. In the recent years, there was an emergence of Qatar as a regional player in many of the countries in the Middle East. Do you see that played on the—kind of at the expense of traditional allies of the U.S., like Saudi Arabia and Egypt?

The President. I think it's going to be very important for the initiatives instigated by Qatar to show results, for example, with Hamas. Now, Hamas—in my judgment, the violent wing of Hamas damages the prospects for a Palestinian state. Or with Hizballah—I believe that Hizballah is a very destabilizing influence, particularly when they resort to violence.

So what I would look for, and do look for, and would hope the next President would look for is, okay, are these initiatives bearing fruit? We, of course, appreciate, you know, our basing agreement with Qatar, and we thank them very much for that. And we would hope that they would follow through to deliver the results for peace, which is what we all want, I hope.

Iraq

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. We're going to move to Iraq. Recently, the U.S. and the Iraqi Government have signed the status of forces agreement. What do you think of it?

The President. I think that the strategic framework agreement and the status of forces agreement is a sign that the Iraqi democracy is emerging and is healthy. There was a lot of debate on the SFA and SOFA, and there were people that were—you know, a lot of people were saying, well, this will be bad for Iraq, and others say this will be good for Iraq. And after the debate was over, it was ratified by the people's assembly, and I think that's a healthy sign. I also think it's very good to have an agreement in place that recognizes the sovereignty of Iraq and recognizes that the United States will be moving its forces out of cities and then eventually out of the country based upon success.

War on Terror

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. In retrospect, would you think that this war could be averted?

The President. We tried to avert it. I know people say, "Oh, George Bush likes to use the military." That's the hardest thing for a President to do, is to put soldiers in harm's way, because I knew what would happen. And you know, that's of course manifested when I meet with mothers of fallen soldiers or wives or husbands. And it is incredibly sad, as I'm sure you can imagine, very emotional, to hug and to cry with families. And I've met with a lot of families—a lot—so I knew the consequences. I really did.

And I was hoping that through diplomatic pressure that we would be able to resolve this issue peacefully. And I remember—you can't take this Iraq out of the post-9/11 context. We'd been attacked, and here's a man who I have said repeatedly, you know, was not directly involved in 9/11, but had used weapons of mass destruction and had supported terror and had paid the families of suicide bombers and was a sworn enemy of the United States and had invaded two countries and had ignored, you know, 17 or however many resolutions in the United Nations. He was a threat.

But I did go to the United Nations, as you remember. Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences, is what 1441 said. And I firmly believe the choice was Saddam Hussein's to make, and he made a fateful choice. Then the interesting point was, after he was removed, with a broad coalition of countries, what do we do? You know, do we pick a strong man and say, here's America's guy and put him in there? Or do we work so that the Iraqi citizens would be able to pick their own form of government and their own people? And that's what we chose to do, and it's been really hard.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Was it worth it?

The President. Absolutely. I believe a Middle East with Saddam Hussein in power today would be different, much different than the one today. I think you'd see a man with a lot of oil wealth willing to use terrorist connections to try to compete, for example, with Hizballah.

There could conceivably be a nuclear arms race taking place, while even though Saddam Hussein did not have nuclear weapons, it is certain, at least to the experts, that he still had the capacity to make nuclear weapons. And there would be nothing more destabilizing for the Middle East than to see Iran trying to develop a nuclear weapon and Iraq trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

So I think the Middle East is a much better place without Saddam Hussein in power, and the sacrifices by both the Iraqi people and the coalition forces to achieve where we are today.

Iran

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. But some say, sir, that the removal of Saddam Hussein has

bolstered Iran and make emergent as a regional superpower.

The President. I disagree completely with that. I think the emergence of a democratic and stable Iraq on Iran's border is in the—will help more likely keep the peace vis-a-vis Iran in the Middle East.

Secondly, what has changed with Iran is universal recognition about the dangers of Iran having a—the capacity to make a nuclear weapon. And therefore, one of the objectives of my administration is to create an international coalition all saying the same thing, which is, you have defied the IAEA, therefore, you cannot be trusted to say that you're only enriching for civilian nuclear power; therefore, stop your process, verify they stopped their enrichment process; otherwise, there will continue to be international sanctions.

Iran-U.S. Relations

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. The Iranian—recently your administration has been involved diplomatically with the Iranians. Do you think that actually you can bring them to the international fold by engaging them diplomatically?

The President. We're trying to—we've offered them a way forward; it's verifiably suspend your enrichment. And we will be at the table with other nations.

And so, well, we discussed Iraq with Iran in a regional context. But we have said there is—if you want to have diplomatic relations and discussions with the United States, verifiably suspend your enrichment program. Our objective is to stop their gain of knowledge that would enable them to build a nuclear weapon, because having a nuclear weapon would be incredibly destabilizing to the region.

And so there is a way forward for them to have diplomacy. But it's their choice, and thus far, they have not chosen to do it. And I regret that our relations are with Iran—are this way, because I have great respect for the Iranian people and the Iranian history. And I know that they can have a better future with the rest of the world, if their leadership were to abandon its desire to learn how to build a nuclear weapon.

Syria

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. I have a few questions about just Syria and Lebanon, but my time is over.

The President. Well, thank you for your—you're a beautiful interviewer.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you, sir. So can I go ahead?

The President. Quickly. And then I really do have to go.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Sure, absolutely. I wanted to talk about Syria. Basically, the U.S. attacked Syria. But do you see——

The President. The U.S.——

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. ——attacked Syria recently. There was a target inside Syria that was attacked by——

The President. Allegedly, yes.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Allegedly. But do you see this kind of tension will succeed soon, or do you see the U.S. diplomatically engaged in Syria?

The President. First of all, we discussed no operations. Secondly, we have engaged Syria early in my administration with Secretary Colin Powell and others. And our message was, if you'd like to have better relations with us, stop housing Hamas, violent Hamas, stop destabilizing the democracy of Lebanon, stop facilitating the flow of terrorists into Iraq, be a constructive neighbor to countries, and we can have better relations. And they have, thus far, chosen to do that. Again, there is a way forward.

But my worry about just sitting down with people and hoping that they end up behaving differently is that oftentimes it reinforces behavior that is not in our interests. And so I believe in conditional diplomacy. Now, there is a lot of multilateral diplomacy going on out of this administration. But in this case, just like Iran, we will have diplomatic relations if you choose,

but there's got to be behavioral change in order to justify it.

Lebanon

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. And can you stabilize Lebanon?

The President. I've been trying to—one of the great successes has been to get 30,000 or so Syrian troops out of Lebanon. I think one of the real keys to peace in the Middle East is Lebanon. And Lebanon is a democracy. I've met their President recently here in the Oval Office, which—had a very a good discussion. I've been very impressed by Prime Minister Siniora's courage and boldness. We want to help Lebanon have an armed forces that are effective, so that they can protect their people. And we have been working very hard for 7 years to free Lebanon as much as possible from foreign interference, so that its democracy can grow and mature and be a stable contributor to the region.

President's Legacy in the Middle East

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. How would you like the people in the Middle East to remember you?

The President. I would hope they would remember me as George W. Bush, as a man who respects their religion, respects human rights and human dignity, and prays for peace.

Ms. Bilbassy Charters. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began taping at 1 p.m. in the Oval Office and continued on the Colonnade and in the Map Room at the White House, for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, USA, U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority; Gen. James L. Jones, Jr., USMC (Ret.), Special Envoy for Middle East Security; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, Quartet Representative in the Middle East; former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and President Michel Sleiman and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the Children's Holiday Reception
December 8, 2008

The President. Welcome to the White House.

Children. Thank you.

The President. Yes. We're excited you are here. And we're excited you're here for a couple of reasons. One, we love to see the wonder in people's eyes when they get to see the majesty of the White House at this time of year. And I'm looking in your eyes, and I'm seeing wonder.

Secondly, I am glad you're here because I wanted to thank your moms and dads for serving the United States of America. We love being with our military families, because it gives us a chance to express the sincere and deep appreciation of all Americans for the sacrifices that families make. So I want to thank you for standing by your moms and dads and telling them you're proud of them and telling them you love them.

Thirdly, I'm going to ask you to do us a favor, and that is, when you e-mail mom or dad, just tell them you came by the

White House—[*laughter*]—and the President and Laura, the First Lady, sent a special holiday greeting. So you'll be the messenger. So your job is to say, we respect your mom and dad, we admire your mom and dad, and we pray for your mom and dad. So would you do that for us?

Children. Yes.

The President. And fourthly, I'm glad to be here because I get to introduce my wife. [*Laughter*] It's a pretty neat thing, isn't it?

Children. Yes.

The President. Now, Laura tells me you've already seen Santa——

Children. Yes.

The President. ——had a few cookies——

Children. Yes.

The President. Yes? I'm surprised there's not more wiggling going on. [*Laughter*] At any rate, please welcome my dear wife, First Lady Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:01 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Following Briefings at the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Virginia
December 8, 2008

I have just spent a fascinating morning here at the NCTC. The NCTC is a place where our Government gathers threat assess—or threats and intelligence to better protect the American people.

I want to thank both Mikes for taking a strong lead in doing our most important job, which is to motivate people to protect this country, and that's what takes place here.

There's a lot of hard-working Americans who—this—by the way, this center is up 24/7. And any time a piece of data comes in that portends any kind of threat, it's analyzed and, if need be, acted upon.

So most Americans don't know this facility exists. It came to be after the September the 11th attacks, when we all came around and asked the question: How better can we protect the country?

And so I've come by to thank the—all the people who work here, and—because they deserve our thanks. They deserve a Government that understands that the biggest danger we face is from a terrorist attack, and that the best way to defend the country is to stay on the offense and keep the pressure on them constantly and, at the same time, spread freedom as the great alternative to the ideology of those—of the killers.

This is a challenge that's going to face this country for a while. But it's a challenge that can be better met because of facilities like the NCTC and the fact that we've given the professionals the tools, such as listening to the terrorist phone calls, to better protect America.

And so I want to thank you all for your leadership. Appreciate you having me. And again, I thank all the good folks who work here for their dedication.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. at the National Counterterrorism Center. In his remarks, he referred to Director of National Intelligence J. Michael McConnell; and Michael E. Leiter, Acting Director, National Counterterrorism Center.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Adha
December 8, 2008

I send greetings to Muslims around the world celebrating Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice.

Eid al-Adha commemorates Abraham's devotion to God, and it reminds us of God's mercy and provision for his people. Abraham's deep faith was tested when God asked him to sacrifice his son. Although Abraham was set to faithfully obey, God provided an alternate sacrifice that spared his son. During this holiday, Muslims around the world honor Abraham's trust in God and celebrate God's love through acts of charity and joyous feasts with family, friends, and others in their community.

Our Nation is blessed by vibrant Muslim communities. On this holiday, all Americans celebrate our religious liberty, and we remember that religious freedom belongs not to any one nation but to the world.

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

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Remarks at the United States Military Academy at West Point in West Point, New York
December 9, 2008

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, General, for your warm welcome. Thank you for inviting me here to West Point. I now know why you're so happy I'm here—[*laughter*]—all classes were canceled.

I had the honor of sitting next to the General and Judy during the game over the weekend. I am disappointed I could not bring the Commander in Chief's Trophy with me. However, you just get the Commander in Chief.

This is my last visit to a military academy as President, so I thought I would exercise a certain prerogative of office one last time: I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. As always, I always—I leave it to General Hagenbeck to determine what "minor" means. [*Laughter*]

I really am proud to be with you today. I appreciate General Mike Linnington and his wife Brenda for meeting me. It turns out Brenda was a—is a 1981 West Point graduate.

I appreciate being here with General Pat Finnegan and Joan. Today on Air Force One, Congressman John Shimkus, 1980 West Point graduate, and Congressman Geoff Davis, 1981 West Point graduate, flew down with me. It's my honor to let them fly on the big bird. [*Laughter*]

There are many honors that come with the Presidency, but none higher than serving as Commander in Chief in the greatest Armed Forces on Earth. Every one of you is a volunteer. You came to this academy in a time of war, knowing all the risks that come with military service. I want to thank you for making the noble and selfless decision to serve our country. And I will always be grateful to the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military.

As West Point cadets, you're part of a generation that has witnessed extraordinary change in the world. Two decades ago, the cold war was nearing its end, and the Soviet Union was about to collapse. You were

just beginning your lives. About the same time, another threat was quietly gathering. In hidden corners of the world, violent religious extremists were plotting ways to advance their radical aims and their grim ideology. We saw the results in a series of horrifying blows: the truck bombing of the World Trade Center, the attack of Khobar Towers, the bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the strike on the USS *Cole*.

For many years, America treated these attacks as isolated incidents and responded with limited measures. And then came September the 11th, 2001. In the space of a single morning, we realized that we were facing a worldwide movement of fanatics pledged to our destruction. We saw that conditions of repression and despair on the other side of the world could bring suffering and death to our own streets.

As a result, America reshaped our approach to national security. Here at home, we hardened our defenses and created the Department of Homeland Security. We gave our national security professionals vital new tools, like the PATRIOT Act and the ability to monitor terrorist communications. We reorganized our intelligence community to better meet the needs of war against these terrorists, including increasing the number of intelligence officers. We deployed aggressive financial measures to freeze their assets and to cut off their money. We launched diplomatic initiatives to pressure our adversaries and attract new partners to our cause.

We also made dramatic changes to both our military strategy and our—the military itself. We resolved that we would not wait to be attacked again, and so we went on the offense against the terrorists overseas so we never had to face them here at home. We recognized that we needed strong partners at our side, so we helped strengthen the counterterrorism capabilities of our allies. We understood, as I said here at West Point in 2002, "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long." So we made clear that hostile regimes sponsoring terror or pursuing weapons of mass destruction would be held to account.

We concluded that we are engaged in an ideological struggle, so we launched an effort to discredit the hateful vision of the extremists and advance the hopeful alternative of freedom. We saw the urgency of staying a step ahead of our enemies, so we transformed our military both to prevail on the battlefields of today and to meet the threats of tomorrow.

These changes will have a direct impact on your military careers. This morning I'm going to give you a report on where we stand in each of these areas and the challenges that lie ahead.

First, within weeks of September the 11th, our Armed Forces began taking the fight to the terrorists around the world, and we have not stopped. From the Horn of Africa to the islands of Southeast Asia to wherever these thugs hide, we and our allies applied the full range of military and intelligence assets to keep unrelenting pressure on Al Qaida and its affiliates. We have severely weakened the terrorists. We've disrupted plots to attack our homeland. We have captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida leaders and operatives in more than two dozen countries, including the man who mastermind the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

The terrorists continue to pose serious challenges, as the world saw in the terrible attack in Mumbai last month. Al Qaida's top two leaders remain at large. Yet they are facing pressure so intense that the only way they can stay alive is to stay underground. The day will come, the day will come when they receive the justice they deserve.

Second, we've helped key partners and allies strengthen their capabilities in the fight against the terrorists. We've increased intelligence sharing with friends and allies around the world. We've provided training and support to counterterrorism partners

like the Philippines and Indonesia and Jordan and Saudi Arabia. These partners have made enormous contributions in the war on terror. For example, Indonesia has crippled the terrorist group JI. Saudi Arabia has killed or captured hundreds of Al Qaida terrorists. And in Europe, security services have broken up terrorist cells in Germany and Denmark, in Turkey and the United Kingdom.

One of the most important challenges we will face, and you will face, in the years ahead is helping our partners assert control over ungoverned spaces. This problem is most pronounced in Pakistan, where areas along the Afghanistan border are home to Taliban and to Al Qaida fighters. The Pakistani Government and people understand the threat, because they have been victims of terror themselves. They're working to enforce the law and fight terror in the border areas. And our Government is providing strong support for these efforts. And at the same time, we have made it clear to Pakistan, and to all our partners, that we will do what is necessary to protect American troops and the American people.

Third, we have made clear that governments that sponsor terror are as guilty as the terrorists and will be held to account. After 9/11, we applied the doctrine to Afghanistan. We removed the Taliban from power. We shut down training camps where Al Qaida planned the attacks on our country. We liberated more than 25 million Afghans. Now America and our 25 NATO allies and 17 partner nations are standing with the Afghan people as they defend their free society. The enemy is determined, the terrain is harsh, and the battle is difficult, but our coalition will stay in this fight. We will not let the Taliban or Al Qaida return to power. And Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists.

We also took a hard look at the danger posed by Iraq, a country that combined support for terror, the development and the use of weapons of mass destruction, violence against its own people, aggression against its neighbors, hostility to the United States, and systemic violation of United Nations resolutions. After seeing the destruction of September the 11th, we concluded that America could not afford to allow a regime with such a threatening and violent record to remain in the heart of the Middle East. So we offered Saddam Hussein a final chance to peacefully resolve the issue. And when he refused, we acted with a coalition of nations to protect our people and liberated 25 million Iraqis.

The battle in Iraq has been longer and more difficult than expected. Foreign terrorists, former regime elements, and Iraqi insurgents—often with outside support—combined to drive up violence and bring the country to the verge of chaos. So we adopted a new strategy, and rather than retreating, sent more troops into Baghdad in Iraq. And when the surge met its objective, we began to bring our troops home under a policy of return on success. Last week, Iraq approved two agreements that formalize diplomatic and economic and security ties with America and set a framework for the drawdown of American forces as the fight in Iraq nears a successful end.

Fourth, America recognized the only way to defeat the terrorists in the long run is to present an alternative to their hateful ideology. So when we overthrew the dictators in Afghanistan and Iraq, we refused to take the easy option and instill friendly strongmen in their place. Instead, we're doing the tough work of helping democratic societies emerge as examples for people all across the Middle East. We're pressing nations around the world, including our friends, to trust their people with greater freedom of speech and worship and assembly. We're advancing a broader vision of reform that includes economic prosperity and quality health care and education and vibrant civil societies and women's rights.

The results of these efforts are unfolding slowly and unevenly, but there are encouraging signs. From Iraq and Afghanistan to

Lebanon and Pakistan, voters defied the terrorists to cast their ballots in free elections. In places like Iraq's Anbar Province, people have seen what life under the Taliban looks like, and they decided they want no part it—actually, it was life under Al Qaida looks like.

You know, mothers don't want to raise their child in a neighborhood where thugs run and where thugs brutalize people. People want to live in peace. People want to live in freedom. Muslims from Jordan and Turkey to India and Indonesia have seen their brothers and sisters massacred and recoil from the terrorists. And even within the jihadist ranks, religious scholars have begun to criticize Al Qaida and its brutal tactics. In these ideological rejections, we see the beginning of Al Qaida's ultimate demise, because in the long run, the ideology of hatred and fear cannot possibly compete with the power of hope and freedom.

Finally, we are transforming our military for a new kind of war that we're fighting now and for wars of tomorrow. This transformation was a top priority for the enterprising leader who served as my first Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. Today, because of his leadership and the leadership of Secretary Bob Gates, we have made our military better trained, better equipped, and better prepared to meet the threats facing America today and tomorrow and long in the future.

As part of our transformation effort, we are arming our troops with intelligence and weapons and training and support they need to face an enemy that wages asymmetric battle. See, this enemy hides among the civilian population, and they use terror tactics like roadside bombs to attack our forces, to demoralize local population, and to try to shake the will of the American people.

To defeat this enemy, we have equipped our troops with real-time battlefield intelligence capabilities that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. In Iraq and Afghanistan, troops in the field have used advanced technologies like global positioning systems to direct air strikes that take out the enemy while sparing innocent life. We've expanded America's arsenal of unmanned aerial vehicles from fewer than 170 when I took office to more than 6,000 today. We're arming Predator drones. We're using them to stay on the hunt against the terrorists who would do us harm.

We've expanded America's special operations forces. With more forces—more of these forces on the battlefield, we can respond more quickly to actionable intelligence on the terrorists who are in hiding. Over the past 8 years, we have more than doubled funding for special operators. We created the first-ever special operations command within the Marines. We have given Special Operations Command the lead role in the global war against the terrorists.

In addition to these upgrades in our counterterrorism capabilities, we have placed a new focus on counterinsurgency. The Army has published a new counterinsurgency manual written by a distinguished graduate of this academy, General David Petraeus. The central objectives of this counterinsurgency strategy are to secure the population and gain support of the people and train local forces to take the responsibility on their own.

One of the reasons we're meeting these objectives in Iraq is the ability to rapidly deploy brigade combat teams. These teams can join the battle on short notice as organized and cohesive units. With these teams in the fight, our Army is better able to carry out its counterinsurgency objectives and better equipped to defeat the enemies we'll face as the 21st century unfolds.

Our counterinsurgency strategy also stresses the importance of following up security gains with real benefits in people's daily lives. To better meet that objective, we created Provincial Reconstruction Teams or PRTs. These teams pair with

military personnel civilian experts in areas like economics and agriculture and law enforcement and education. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, these teams are helping local communities create jobs and deliver basic services and keep the terrorists from coming back. PRTs bring diplomats, aid workers, and other experts from across the government into the fight, and we must expand them in the years to come.

To better institutionalize all the changes we've made in recent years, we have transformed the education and training our troops receive. We're taking the lessons we've learned in Afghanistan and Iraq and teaching them at military academies and training centers across our country. For example, every branch of the military now receives the counterinsurgency training that was once reserved for special operations forces. Here at West Point, you've created a new Combating Terrorism Center that allows you to gain insights from the battles of today and apply them as you lead our military into the future.

In addition to making these changes to help our troops prevail in the war on terror, we've been transforming our military since early 2001 to confront other challenges that may emerge in the decades ahead. For example, we have begun the most sweeping transformation of America's global force posture since the end of World War II. We're shifting troops from cold war garrisons in Europe and Asia so they can surge more rapidly to troubled spots around the world. We've established new military commands to meet challenges unique to Africa and to support our homeland.

We've invested more than a half a trillion dollars in research and development, so we can build even more advanced capabilities to protect America from the dangers of a new century. We're making our forces more joint and interoperable, so they can cooperate seamlessly across different services and with foreign partners. And to confront an emerging threat to our economy, our defense systems, and individual citizens, the Federal Government is cooperating closely with the private sector to improve security in cyberspace.

One of the most serious dangers facing our people is the threat of a rogue regime armed with ballistic missiles. In 2001, I announced withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. I did so because it constrained our ability to develop the technologies needed to defend ourselves against the threat of blackmail by rogue states. With these constraints removed, we have developed and deployed new defenses capable of protecting American cities from ballistic missile attack.

This system can now defend America against limited missile attacks from Northeast Asia. Concluded agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic to establish missile defense sites on their territories to help protect against ballistic missile attacks from the Middle East. Because we acted, America now has an initial capability to protect our people from a ballistic missile attack.

As we built new defenses against a missile attack, we also worked with Russia to make historic reductions in offensive nuclear weapons. When these reductions are complete, the total U.S. nuclear stockpile will be at its lowest level since the Eisenhower administration. These reductions are part of a new approach to strategic deterrence that relies on both nuclear and conventional strike forces, as well as strong defenses. We're investing in new technologies that will ensure the long-term safety and security and reliability and effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent. This approach sends a clear message to the world: We'll reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons while keeping America's strategic deterrent unchallenged.

With all the actions we've taken these past 8 years, we've laid a solid foundation on which future Presidents and future military leaders can build. America's military today is stronger, more agile, and better prepared to confront threats to our people than it was 8 years ago. In the years ahead,

our Nation must continue developing the capabilities to take the fight to our enemies across the world. We must stay on the offensive. We must be determined, and we must be relentless to do our duty to protect the American people from harm.

We must stand by the friends and allies who are making tough decisions and taking risks to defeat the terrorists. We must keep up the pressure on regimes that sponsor terror and pursue weapons of mass destruction. We must continue to support dissidents and reformers who are speaking out against extremism and in favor of liberty. We must continue transforming our Armed Forces so that the next generation inherits a military that is capable of keeping the American people safe and advancing the cause of peace. And above all, we must always ensure that our troops have the funds and resources they need to do their jobs and that their families receive the full support they deserve.

I have great confidence in the future because I have confidence in you all. Ultimately, the security of our Nation depends on the courage of those who wear the uniform. I see that courage in all of you. I thank you for your patriotism. I thank you for your devotion to duty. May God bless you in all your endeavors. May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in Eisenhower Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, USA, superintendent, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, who introduced the President, and his wife Judy; Brig. Gen. Michael S. Linnington, USA, commandant, U.S. Military Academy at West Point; Brig. Gen. Patrick Finnegan, USA, dean, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and his wife Joan; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe
December 9, 2008

As my administration has made clear, it is time for Robert Mugabe to go. Across the continent, African voices are bravely speaking out to say now is the time for him to step down. These leaders share the desire of ordinary Zimbabweans for a return to peace, democracy, and prosperity. We urge others from the region to step up and join the growing chorus of voices calling for an end to Mugabe's tyranny.

The United States will continue to work with our partners around the world to halt the violence and stem the humanitarian disaster that the Mugabe regime is inflicting on its people. We stand ready to help rebuild Zimbabwe once a legitimate government has been formed that reflects the results of the March elections.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Darfur Human Rights Activist Halima Bashir
December 10, 2008

The President. I have just had the distinct pleasure and honor of visiting with Dr. Halima Bashir, who wrote a book called "Tears of the Desert." This good soul brings firsthand accounts to what life is like in Darfur. She has witnessed violence, deprivation, and she carries a message of a lot of people who want our help.

I assured her that, in spite of the economic difficulties, our aid will continue to flow. We will use our influence to make sure the aid gets to the people of Darfur.

I also made it clear that I am frustrated with the pace of activities, that the United Nations must expedite sending troops, peacekeepers, to provide security for the people. That's what they want; they want to be able to have a secure life, and that we'll help.

The United States continues to stand at the ready to provide airlift. The pace of action out of the United Nations is too slow. We support the mediation process by the A.U.-U.N. mediator. In other words, we recognize in order for there to be peace in Darfur that parties must come to the table in good faith and solve the problems.

And finally, it's very important for President Bashir of Sudan to know that he cannot escape accountability, that if he so choose, he could change people's lives—the condition of people's lives very quickly.

I've appointed a Special Envoy to Sudan to help put pressure on the Government. The United States must continue to rally the international community to put pressure on the Government as well. The urgency of the situation is never more apparent than when I had the honor of visiting with this brave soul.

And so I welcome you to the Oval Office. And I welcome any comments you want to make.

Halima Bashir. Yes, of course. Thank you very much for the President to invite me to the White House. And I think this is—I'm very happy because now Darfur victims' voices is heard in the White House and to the American people and to the world. And I think the President, the message I send to him is going to do more work in Darfur to handle the situation, and to—[*inaudible*]—and the ICC ruling and just to stop the genocide and the crisis in Darfur. Because now more than 5 years, and we do not need to wait anymore. We need real action.

And thank you very much.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Djibril Yipene Bassole, Joint A.U.–U.N. Mediator for Darfur; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Richard S. Williamson.

Remarks Following a Discussion on Drug Use Reduction
December 11, 2008

I've just had an extraordinary discussion with a group of our fellow citizens; some are pastors, some are ex-cons, some are baseball players, some are docs, some are

community activists, all who have come together to talk about a comprehensive strategy to deal with drug use in America.

And our strategy is threefold: one, reduce demand, interdict supply, and then help people who have become addicts. And we're making progress. No question, there's still work to do in America, but we are making progress. And one way to note the progress is this statistic: Since 2001, teenage drug use has declined by 25 percent; that means 900,000 fewer teens on drugs.

The strategy can be measured. The implementation requires understanding that grassroots activists—for example, like the faith community—can play an integral work in working alongside government to achieve our objectives. The Admiral here has—Admiral Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, reported about our interdiction efforts—that we've been making great progress at interdicting, for example, cocaine being trafficked primarily out of South America and Central America into our country.

And finally, I am pleased that the Access to Recovery program and programs like that are vibrant and active, which basically says to an addict: If you so choose, you can redeem your health, redeem your money at a place of love in the faith community.

Lives are changing. People's lives are being saved. I say government is justice, government is law and—but government must not fear places of love. And so this has been a positive report and a great meeting, and I want to thank you all for coming. More importantly, I want to thank you for being citizens and not spectators, people who have decided to do something about your personal lives, as well as the lives of those in your communities. It is the collective effort of thousands of social entrepreneurs that help make America a hopeful place.

There will be more work done after I'm out of here, but we have laid the foundation for a successful effort against drug use, drug supply, and helping those who have been addicted.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Commencement Address at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas

December 12, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Howdy!

Audience members. Howdy!

The President. I am thrilled to be back in Aggieland. And it's always an honor to be introduced by the President of the United States, especially when he's your dad. And how about mom? Mom, I've been meaning to say this publicly for a long time: thanks, thanks for the gray hair. [*Laughter*]

I congratulate the graduates of the Fighting Texas Aggie classes of 2008, class of 2007, the class of 2006—I'd better stop. [*Laughter*] Let's just say that I hope there's no one left from when I spoke to the commencement in 1998. [*Laughter*] If so, I hope you're walking out of here with a Ph.D. [*Laughter*]

I am grateful to the faculty and staff of Texas A&M for their devotion to learning and their example of scholarship. I appreciate your outstanding president, Dr. Elsa Murano. And I am glad to be with—[*applause*]—there you go. And I am glad to have traveled from Washington today

with three fine Aggies representing Texas in the United States Congress, Congressmen Chet Edwards, Joe Barton, and Jeb Hensarling.

I am pleased to see so many of your families and loved ones here today. While you bled maroon, they bled a lot of green. [*Laughter*] So please join me in thanking all those whose support made it possible for you to reach this proud day. [*Applause*]

There is one person who wishes he could be here today, and that's your former president and America's Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates. You know, he's got an excused absence. It's not like he's over at the Dixie Chicken. [*Laughter*] He's traveling to the Middle East, consulting with our generals, and showing his support for the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

When I asked Bob to be the Secretary of Defense, it was clear how much he loved Texas A&M. After all, he refused to come to Washington until after he attended the winter commencement. And I was even more impressed when he insisted on standing during the Cabinet meetings—[*laughter*]—claiming he was the Twelfth Man. [*Laughter*] One day, he explained it all. He said, "Mr. President, I'm 'red ass.' "

I'll say this for A&M, you've got some mighty fine traditions. Back in my day, I think I would have enjoyed dunking my ring. I would have loved to have taken Laura to Midnight Yell. I especially like the traditions around Reveille. Any time she barks during a class lecture, everyone in the room is dismissed. God, I wish she had been there for some of those press conferences. [*Laughter*]

This campus is home to solemn rituals that demonstrate the strength of your bonds. In playing of Silver Taps to honor fallen classmates, in the reunion of students and alumni to read the roll call at Muster, and in wearing of your timeless rings, you affirm a powerful truth: once an Aggie, always an Aggie.

Traditions like these are central to the A&M experience. And so is academic excellence, and all of you will benefit from your rigorous courses of study. I suspect you'll also find that some of your most important learning took place outside the classroom, in the friendships you formed, perspective you gained, and the things you discovered about yourselves. When you leave this campus, you will be well prepared for any endeavor you choose. To those of you who have jobs lined up, I—congratulations. To those not exactly sure what comes next, I know how you feel. [*Laughter*]

As our days in the White House wind down, we're going through a series of "lasts." I pardoned my last Thanksgiving turkey, Laura decorated for her last Christmas in the White House, and Barney bit his last reporter. [*Laughter*] Or at least that's what we hope. [*Laughter*]

This is also my last commencement address as President. And it is fitting that it takes place here in Texas, where I have been so blessed over the years. I was raised here by wonderful parents, surrounded by brothers and sisters whose love still sustains me. And Texas is where I went to a backyard barbeque and met a beautiful teacher named Laura Welch. Texas is where our girls were born and our lifelong friends live. And next month, when our time in Washington is done, Texas is where we're coming home.

These days, I'm asked a lot about my time as President. Some days have been happy, some days not so happy, every day joyous. It's been a tremendous privilege. I have traveled across our Nation and to 74 countries around the world. I have slept in Buckingham Palace; I have feasted in the desert of Abu Dhabi; I have watched the sunrise in Jerusalem. I have spoken to campaign rallies in packed stadiums and to hundreds of thousands in Romania's revolutionary—Revolution Square. I've taken Marine One into America's biggest cities and visited many of our smallest towns. Through it all, nothing has inspired me more than the character of the American people, the acts of courage and service that

sustain our free society and make this the greatest nation on Earth.

Courage and service are cherished here at A&M, and they are values that I hope will guide you for the years to come. So this morning, I thought I would share a few of the most powerful examples of courage and service that I have witnessed over the past 8 years.

No act of courage or service is more impressive than volunteering for the United States military. Eight years ago, a brave 17-year-old named Christian Bagge made that noble choice when he stepped forward to join the Oregon National Guard. In 2005, Christian's unit was on patrol in Iraq when his Humvee hit a roadside bomb. He lost both his legs, and he thought he would lose his life. But with determination and superb medical care, this good man survived.

I met him at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He told me he used to be a runner and he planned to run again. I was impressed by his courage, but it was hard to imagine a man with such severe injuries ever being able to run. I said to him offhandedly, "You know, when you're ready to run, just call me. I'll be glad to run with you," and moved on.

Well, then one day, a phone call came to the Oval Office. It was Christian. He said, "I'm ready to take you up on your offer, Mr. President." Just 5 months after I'd seen him in the hospital, he showed up at the White House with legs made of carbon fiber and a spirit stronger than steel. Together, we took a lap around the South Lawn. I'll admit, he left his Commander in Chief in the dust. [*Laughter*] And he left me with great admiration for his unshakable determination, his upbeat spirit, and his inspiring example for all Americans.

People like Christian show the true strength of our military, and so do the families who support them. Last year in Reno, Nevada, I met a orthopedic surgeon named Bill Krissoff. His son Nathan, a marine, had given his life in Iraq. Dr. Krissoff told me he wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in Nathan's honor. I looked at this remarkable man, I said, "How old are you?" He said he was 60 years old. He needed a special waiver to qualify for the Navy. I was thinking, I was 61, so he didn't sound all that old. [*Laughter*] I asked his wife what she thought of the whole thing, and she said she supported his decision. So I went back to Washington, and surprisingly enough, a few days later the waiver came through.

Since then, Dr. Krissoff has undergone extensive training in battlefield medicine. And soon he will deploy to Iraq, where he'll help save the wounded, uphold the legacy of his fallen son, and inspire the United States of America.

Petty Officer Greg Guillory is also in the Navy. But that is not the only way he serves. Greg lost his mother in a car accident at a young age, and his stepmother suffered from a serious drug addiction. Greg earned a 4-year scholarship to play college football; he was a high school player here in the State of Texas. But he turned down that scholarship so he could stay home to help his family confront its problems. Eventually, he decided to join the Navy, where he found a strong and supportive environment.

While stationed in San Diego, Greg met his wife Shonda, who had also endured a painful childhood. Together, they resolved to help children trapped in difficult circumstances and made the selfless and compassionate decision to become foster parents. They spent a year caring for a 17-year-old who'd been abused. Then they took in a 14-year-old who had been beaten, then a baby born with drugs in her system, and then a 3-year-old whose mother was in jail. Today, they are caring for two children, a brother and sister, as well as the baby girl Shonda delivered last month.

And all the while, Greg has been carrying out his duties in uniform. He is stationed at Camp David, Maryland, and this generous man who has given so much to others feels so grateful himself. During a moving testimony at the Camp David chapel that I was fortunate enough to witness this past Thanksgiving, he said, "I am thankful that God continues to bless me so I can be a blessing for children in need."

America is blessed to have citizens like Greg and Shonda, whose hearts are big enough to share the greatest gift of all, the gift of love.

Kendrick Kennedy shared that gift too, after Hurricane Katrina struck his hometown of Biloxi, Mississippi. Even though his own house had been damaged, Kendrick put others first, helping family members find shelter and cleaning up debris in neighbors' yards. There's another piece of the story: Kendrick is blind. A few years before the storm, he lost his sight and his job. But he refused to hold—let that hold him back. He enrolled at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. I met him there when I spoke at his commencement. He went on to the University of Southern Mississippi, where he became the first blind student to graduate summa cum laude. Now he's in law school in Ole Miss. And this good man has set a high goal to serve our country as a Justice on the Supreme Court.

Other Americans show courage by summoning the hidden strength to overcome their weaknesses. Four years ago, I met Leticia Chavez-Paulette. She had been addicted to drugs; she served time for her mistakes. While in prison, she joined a faith-based program called Celebrate Recovery, and it helped turn her life around. When she was released, Letitia was determined to support other women returning to society. So she started a transitional home called A Peaceful Habitation, a name taken from the Book of Isaiah. Here's what Letitia said: "God's grace has kept me going. His love has kept me strong. And my faith is a gift that is helping me help others."

In these stories, we see the courage and service that defined America at its best. And that same spirit has long defined Texas A&M. It's the spirit of General Earl Rudder, who helped lead the D-day invasion and served more than a decade as A&M's president. It is the spirit of the Corps of Cadet, which includes nearly 1,800 Aggies. It is the spirit of your ROTC program, which routinely commissions more officers than any school outside the service academies. It's the spirit of the 21 Aggies who've given their lives to keep America safe since September the 11th, 2001, a sacrifice that will be honored forever by your Freedom from Terrorism memorial.

That same spirit is visible on this campus in many ways beyond the military. A&M is home to the Big Event, the largest student-run community service project in the Nation. After Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast, you welcomed more than 1,600 Sea Aggies from A&M's Galveston campus to College Station. And in countless other acts of volunteerism and charity, you have made Texas A&M's name synonymous with service.

On your last day as A&M students, my call to you is to continue this spirit long after you leave the campus. There are so many needs to be met and so many ways you can help, from mentoring a child to becoming a teacher, to volunteering to feed the hungry or heal the sick overseas. If you hear the call to service in the military or government, answer it. If you enter the private sector, be proud of contributing to our prosperity and give back to your communities. Wherever life leads you, pursue the path of service, and you will find fulfillment beyond measure.

As you embark on this journey, let me leave you with a few last pieces of advice. First, listen to your mother. [*Laughter*] As you can see, mom is out of the hospital, and everything is back to normal. After all, she's still telling me what to do. [*Laughter*]

Second, develop a set of principles to live by, convictions and ideals to guide your course. There will be times when people tell you a different way is more accepted or popular. Remember that popularity is as fleeting as the Texas wind. Character and conscience are as sturdy as the oaks on this campus. If you go home at night, look in the mirror, and be satisfied that you have done what is right, you will pass the only test that matters.

And finally, be on the lookout for role models, people whose conduct you admire and whose path you can follow. With that in mind, I have one last example of courage and service. It's a story of a young man who left comfort behind to answer his Nation's call, became the youngest pilot in the Navy, and nearly gave his life in World War II. When he came back home, he devoted his career to public service and proved that success in politics can be accomplished with decency and grace. He reached the pinnacle in Government, but he defines his life by other roles: a father who gave unconditional love, a grandfather devoted to his grandchildren, and a beloved husband of the sweetheart he married a lifetime ago. Some of you will leave A&M with a degree that carries this good man's name, George Bush. I have been blessed and honored to have carried it for 62 years.

I want to thank you. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share this special day with you. I congratulate you. When I leave office next month, I will depart confident in the future of our country, because I have faith in each of you. I will depart uplifted by the many acts of courage and service that I have witnessed these past 8 years. I will depart grateful for the outpouring of support and prayers that have strengthened Laura and me. And I will depart ready to come home to the people I have missed and the place I love, the State of Texas.

And so, after all this, there is only one thing left to say: Gig'em Aggies! Congratulations, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Krissoff, wife of Lt. Comdr. William B. Krissoff, USN. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address
December 13, 2008

Good morning. This week, our country received good news in the fight against illegal drugs. New data show that illicit drug use amongst young people continues to decline and that we are making good progress in our efforts to help thousands of Americans renew their health and hope.

Substance abuse is a serious challenge for our Nation. Addiction breaks hearts, destroys families, and keeps our citizens from fulfilling their God-given potential. The drug trade also enriches our enemies and brings crime and violence to our streets. So, in 2002, I committed our Nation to an ambitious effort to cut drug use by limiting demand, reducing supply, and helping addicts get treatment.

Over the past 6 years, we've made great strides toward these goals. Parents, teachers, mentors, and counselors have done fantastic work to educate children about the dangers of drug abuse. Law enforcement officers have risked their lives to cut the supply of drugs on city streets. And with help from our international partners, we're pursuing drug dealers around the world and interdicting supply before it reaches our shores. This year, the Coast Guard took

possession of more than 360,000 pounds of South American cocaine, an alltime record.

To help Americans break the chains of addiction, we've built strong partnerships with faith-based and community groups. These groups open minds and change hearts in a way no government bureaucracy can, so my administration has supported their life-changing work. Through our Access to Recovery program, addicts receive vouchers they can redeem at treatment centers of their choice, including faith-based centers. So far, this program has helped more than 260,000 addicts along the path toward clean lives.

Taken together, our efforts to reduce demand, cut supply, and help people break the chains of addiction are yielding measurable results. Over the past 7 years, marijuana use by young people has dropped by 25 percent. Methamphetamine use by young people is down by 50 percent. And the use of cocaine, hallucinogens, steroids, and alcohol by America's youth are all on the decline. Overall, illegal drug use by Americans is down by 25 percent, meaning we have helped approximately 900,000 young people stay clean.

These statistics reflect successful government policies. They also represent the courage and compassion of Americans who are determined to help their fellow citizens win their struggle against drugs. On Thursday, I met with some of these people at the White House, and I am inspired by their stories.

I was especially interested in a young man named Josh. At age 19, Josh had never touched drugs or alcohol. He had a promising life and career ahead of him. Yet after a car accident left him injured and unable to work, Josh started abusing alcohol and cocaine. He put his marriage and career in jeopardy. Eight different treatment programs failed to turn his life around, but the intervention of his grandmother, the support of his wife, and the loving influence of God did. Today, this young man is free of drugs. He's a caring husband and father. And Josh Hamilton of the Texas Rangers is one of the best players in Major League Baseball. More importantly, he and his wife Katie make time to share their blessings. Through their ministry, they're helping other Americans avoid the suffering their family endured.

Josh Hamilton shows that the devastation of drug addiction can happen to anyone, but that with faith and determination, anyone can turn a life around. So today I ask every American with a drug or alcohol problem to seek treatment, because your life is precious to the people who love you. Our Nation needs your contributions, and there is a more hopeful future ahead. I ask all Americans to reach out to your neighbors in need and do your part to help our Nation win the fight against illegal drugs.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:55 a.m. on December 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 13. In the address, the President referred to Mary Holt, grandmother of Josh Hamilton, centerfielder, Major League Baseball's Texas Rangers. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq in Baghdad, Iraq
December 14, 2008

President Talabani. Today we have the pleasure and honor of receiving our great friend for Iraqi people, President George W. Bush, who helped us to liberate our country and to reach this day, which we have democracy, human rights, and prosperity gradually in our country. Thanks to him and to his courageous leadership that we are here now in this building.

So we are very glad really to have him with us, and we discussed with him all our problems very frankly and friendly. And we hope that we will continue friendship with him, even he'll be back in Texas.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you and the Vice Presidents for greeting me. I've known these men for a long time, and I have come to admire them for their courage and for their determination to succeed. I am also here to herald the passage of the SFA/SOFA as a reminder of our friendship and as a way forward to help the Iraqi people realize the blessings of a free society.

And the work hasn't been easy, but it has been necessary for American security, Iraqi hope, and world peace. And so, Mr. President, thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your hospitality. I'm looking forward to meeting all the folks who are involved in the political process—leading this political process. And I am just so grateful that I had a chance to come back to Iraq before my Presidency ends.

President Talabani. You are welcome.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Talabani. They want a picture with you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Oh, absolutely.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:01 p.m. at Al Salam Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Presidents Tariq al-Hashimi and Adil Abd Al-Mahdi of Iraq. The President also referred to SFA, the strategic framework agreement; and SOFA, the status of forces agreement.

Remarks at a Signing Ceremony for the Strategic Framework Agreement and the Status of Forces Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters in Baghdad
December 14, 2008

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate. I would like to welcome the President of the United States, President George W. Bush. I would like to welcome you here as a guest of Iraq. You have stood by Iraq and the Iraqi people for a very long time, starting with the—getting rid of the dictatorship, to fight—helping the Iraqis to fight terrorism.

Your visit today to Iraq, Mr. President, comes after the signing of the agreement between the two countries, which represents the solid foundation and draws a roadmap that will govern and guide the relationship between the two states.

I believe that Iraq, we have performed and have done great work in a cooperative and integrated way in fighting terror. We have succeeded in Iraq, and we hope that

efforts also around the world will succeed in defeating terrorism.

Today, Iraq is moving forward in every field. Through the new Iraqi political system, we are working very hard through this, as well as developing the Iraqi economy and reconstruction of Iraq. We are doing all of this in order for Iraq to restore its rightful place among nations and among the world, and away from the previous reckless policies that focused on wars with the previous regime.

The various political institutions have taken a very strong leadership positions, and the agreement was ratified, was approved by our political system, our Parliament, and various institutions of the Iraqi Government. They have approved and ratified the SOFA agreement and the withdrawal of American forces. We believe that these efforts culminated the height of real understanding and cooperation and friendship between Iraq and the United States. Now remains the part of implementing such an agreement. Now we are in the process of forming the proper committees that will carry out all elements of the various two agreements that were signed, and I'm referring to the various fields, military, scientific, educational, commerce, as well as economic fields.

President Bush, you have played a very supportive role in achieving and concluding this agreement. And prior to the actual date of starting to implement this agreement, January 1st, '09, we already start working through the United Nations Security Council. We are in the process of drafting a resolution that will make it very clear that Iraq no longer represents a threat to world peace and security. And also a resolution that will set the basis for the protection of Iraqi financial capabilities and bring Iraq back to its rightful place among world communities.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you, Mr. President. Once again, I wish you a very joyful stay here in Baghdad and a safe trip back home.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your kind invitation and your hospitality. I also want to thank the Presidency Council for their hospitality as well. And I'm looking forward to some food. [*Laughter*]

I am also looking forward to signing the joint statement here affirming two landmark agreements that solidify Iraq's democratic gains, that recognize Iraq's sovereignty, and that puts the relations between our two countries on a solid footing today and a solid footing tomorrow. They cement a strategic partnership between our two countries, and they pave the way for American forces to return home, as the war in Iraq approaches a successful end.

The strategic framework agreement formalizes a relationship, as it says in the agreement—formalizes a relationship of friendship and cooperation between our two countries' economic, diplomatic, cultural, and security fields. Under this agreement, we will work together to bring greater stability to Iraq and the region, as well as promote trade and investment between our nations. We will work to strengthen democratic institutions.

I'm sure you can remember what life was 2 years ago. When we were working together during that period such an agreement seemed unimaginable. Chaos and violence were consuming Iraq. The terrorists were seizing new ground, and the Iraqi people were beginning to divide the Iraqi people along sectarian lines. But you were determined, and I was determined, to do something differently, not to allow Iraq to fall into civil war.

And our plan is working. You notice I say "our plan." Today, violence is down dramatically. Al Qaida is driven from its safe havens. Sunnis, Shi'a, and Kurds are sitting together at the same table to part—to peacefully chart a—the future of this country. There is hope in the eyes of Iraqis' young. This is a future of what we've been fighting for: a strong and capable democratic Iraq that will be a force of freedom

and a force for peace in the heart of the Middle East; a country that will serve as a source for stability in a volatile region; a country that will deny a safe haven to Al Qaida. As a result of these successes, Mr. Prime Minister, the American people are safer.

We're also signing a security agreement. The agreement provides American troops and Defense Department officials with authorizations and protections to continue supporting Iraq's democracy once the U.N. mandate expires at the end of this year. This agreement respects the sovereignty and the authority of Iraq's democracy. The agreement lays out a framework for the withdrawal of American forces in Iraq, a withdrawal that is possible because of the success of the surge.

These agreements result from careful consultations with the Prime Minister and the officials of Iraq, as well as our diplomats and our military commanders. They represent a shared vision on the way forward in Iraq.

The American people have sacrificed a great deal to reach this moment. The battle in Iraq has required a great amount of time and resources. Thousands of our finest citizens have given their lives to make our country safer and to bring us to this new day.

We also praise the thousands of the coalition forces that came and the sacrifices that those countries have made. And the Iraqi people have sacrificed a lot. They've suffered car bombings and suicide attacks and IEDs, and desperate efforts by terrorists to destroy a young democracy. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have stepped forward to defend this democracy, and many have paid a dear price.

With these agreements, Mr. Prime Minister, we're honoring the sacrifices that I just described in the best possible way, by building a freer and safer and more hopeful world. By signing these agreements we're showing the people of Iraq the United States of America keeps its word. And we are showing the people of the Middle East that America stands firmly for liberty and justice and peace. And we are leaving the next President with a stable foundation for the future and an approach that can enjoy broad bipartisan support at home.

There is still more work to be done. The war is not over, but with the conclusion of these agreements and the courage of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi troops and American troops and civilian personnel, it is decisively on its way to being won.

Shukran jazeelan.

[*At this point, Iraqi journalist Muntadar al-Zaidi shouted in Arabic and threw his shoes at President Bush.*]

President Bush. All I can report is that it was a size 10. [*Laughter*] Yes. Okay, everybody calm down for a minute. First of all, thank you for apologizing on behalf of the Iraqi people. It doesn't bother me. And if you want some—if you want the facts, it's a size 10 shoe. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your concerns; do not worry about it.

U.S. Troop Withdrawal from Iraq/Status of Forces Agreement

Q. A question, Mr. Prime Minister and others, you all talked about the various gains that will come as a result of signing this agreement. But just quickly, I have one question about the withdrawal of American forces. Is this going to be an accelerated process that will happen quickly and perhaps prematurely?

President Bush. First of all, we're here at the request of the Iraqi Government, an elected government. There are certain benchmarks that will be met, such as troops out of the cities by June of '09. And then there's a benchmark at the end of the agreement.

As to the pace of meeting those agreements, that will depend of course upon the Iraqi Government, the recommendations of the Iraqi military, and the close coordination between General Odierno and our military.

Look, these are very important agreements, and the Government of Iraq worked very hard to get them through the Parliament. You want—okay.

Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Audience Disruption/Strategic Framework Agreement/Status of Forces Agreement

Q. Sir, a man just threw his shoes at you——

President Bush. The what?

Q. Sir, a man just threw his shoes at you, and it appears that there are terrible roadside bombings——

President Bush. So what if a guy threw a shoe at me?

Q. But you are also here to talk about progress and to mark progress with an agreement like this. And the kind of security gains you talked about. Do you consider this a victory lap?

President Bush. Right. No, I consider it a important step in—on the road toward an Iraq that can sustain itself, govern itself, and defend itself.

But let me talk about the guy throwing the shoe. It is one way to grab—gain attention. It's like going to a political rally and having people yell at you. It's like driving down the street and have people not gesturing with all five fingers. It's a way for people to draw, you know, attention. I don't know what the guy's cause is. But one thing is for certain: He caused you to ask me a question about it. I didn't feel the least bit threatened by it. These journalists here were very apologetic; they were—said, "This doesn't represent the Iraqi people." But that's what happens in free societies, where people try to draw attention to themselves. And so I guess he was effective, because he caused you to say something about it.

Now, in terms of the agreements, this is a major achievement. Is it the end? Absolutely not. There is more work to be done. And all this basically says is we made good progress, and we'll continue to work together to achieve peace. That's what we want: freedom and peace. And so, no, I'm honored to be back here. It's my fourth visit to Iraq and—as a sitting President, and I have been looking forward to this visit. It's very kind of you, Mr. Prime Minister, to have invited me here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. at the Prime Minister's Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and President-elect Barack Obama. Prime Minister Maliki and a reporter spoke in Arabic, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to Military Personnel at Camp Victory in Baghdad
December 14, 2008

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. There you go. Thank you for coming out to say hello. General, thank you for the introduction; I am honored to be at Camp Victory.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Laura and I have been having a lot of Christmas parties at the White House, so I thought it would be kind of neat to change the scenery.

I would rather be with the men and women of the United States military than with anybody else.

So, as you can see, I decided to fly over, and in the spirit of the season we renamed Air Force One to "Rudolph One."

Thanks for coming. I bring greetings from a proud and grateful nation. Merry Christmas to you, happy holidays. Congratulations on your inspiring accomplishments here in Iraq. And above all, thank you very much for volunteering to defend our country in a time of danger.

This is a time of year to give thanks for our many blessings. And the greatest blessing we have is freedom and the fact that we've got a United States military to defend that freedom.

So, General, thank you very much for your leadership. I'm proud to be with you again. I appreciate the leadership of General Austin as well. Ambassador Crocker and Christine are with us today. I had the pleasure of meeting Sergeant—Command Sergeant Major Lawrence Wilson, Command Sergeant Major Joe Allen, Major General Hammond——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Put it together for Hammond. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Command Sergeant Major Gioia——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. There you go. Major General Oates. Have you ever heard of—how about, have you ever heard of a guy named Redmore?

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. There you go. Thanks for coming out. I am thrilled to be here with the diplomats and Embassy personnel that are so critical to our success.

I want to thank the Iraqi citizens who are here with us today. I appreciate your courage. I know there are members of the coalition who are here with us. There have been a lot of troops from around the world who have come to help this young democracy survive and thrive. And so I want to thank the citizens of those country and the troops who have served here before us.

This is my fourth trip to Iraq, and you've probably heard I'm heading into retirement—[*laughter*]—so it's going to be my last trip as the President. But thanks to you, the Iraq we stand in tonight is dramatically freer, dramatically safer, and dramatically better than the Iraq we found 8 years ago.

And as a result of the sacrifices of our troops, America is safer, and America is more secure.

I want to take you back to what life was like 8 years ago here in Iraq. Iraq had a record of supporting terror, a record of developing and using weapons of mass destruction, was routinely firing at American military personnel, systematically violating United Nations resolutions. Life for the Iraqi people was a nightmare, with Saddam Hussein torturing and murdering anyone who did not support his repressive rule. Iraq was a sworn enemy of the United States at the heart of the Middle East; the region was a serious threat to us.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, America concluded we could not tolerate a regime like this in a pivotal region of the world. I gave Saddam Hussein a chance to peacefully resolve the question as to whether or not he had weapons of mass destruction. You might remember, I went to the United Nations, where the—that body said, "Disarm, disclose, or face serious consequence." It was his choice to make, and he made the wrong choice. And so the United States military, with a vast coalition, removed this man from power, and the world is better off for it.

Audience members. Hooah! U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I doubt in his worst nightmares, he ever would have dreamt that we'd be standing in one of his palaces.

Thanks to you, 25 million Iraqis are free. Thanks to you, Iraq is no longer sponsoring terror, it is fighting terror. It's making American people safer as a result.

The enemies of freedom in Iraq are determined, and this fight has been tough.

Two years ago, the situation had grown dire, the political process was frozen, and sectarian violence was spiraling out of control. Some of you were here then. Many said the mission was hopeless; many called for retreat. Retreat would have meant failure, and failure is never an option.

So instead of pulling troops out, we sent more troops in, called the surge. And because of you and because of your courage, the surge is one of the greatest successes in the history of the United States military.

Terrorists who once held safe havens across the country are being driven out of their strongholds. The political process that was once stalled is moving forward. Iraqi citizens once afraid to leave their homes are going back to school and shopping in markets and leading a more normal life. And American troops are returning home because of success.

The dramatic turnaround you led in Iraq culminated in two agreements completed last month, which the Prime Minister and I affirmed in a ceremony earlier today.

These agreements formalize the ties between our two democracies in areas ranging from security and diplomacy to culture and trade. These agreements show the way forward toward a historic day, when American forces withdraw from a democratic and successful Iraq and the war in this land is won.

There's more hard work to do before we reach that day. But if there is any—but if there is no doubt—but there is no doubt in my mind, there's just no doubt that we're going to reach that day. I am confident because our cause is just and freedom is universal. I'm confident because the Iraqi people are showing unshakable determination and courage.

And above all, I am confident because I know the character and the strength of those who wear the uniform of the United States military.

Over the past 5 years, you have shown the world some unmistakable truths. You have shown that when America is tested, we rise to meet the test. You have shown that the desire for freedom is more powerful than the intimidation of terrorists. You have shown that there is no task too difficult for the United States military.

And so I have a message for you and all who serve our country: I want to thank you for making the noble choice to serve and to protect your fellow Americans. Sometimes it can be hard to tell when history is being made, particularly if you're in the middle of the action. What you're doing in Iraq is as important and courageous and selfless as what American troops did in places like Normandy and Iwo Jima and Korea. Your generation is every bit as great as any that came before it. And the work you do every day will shape history for generations to come.

I guess what I'm telling you is, your grandchildren some day are going to say, "Thank God you showed up and served."

America now has a strong friend and a partner in the fight against extremism in the heart of the Middle East, and that is historic.

People across this troubled region of the world now have an example for a more hopeful path, a model of liberty that can prevail over tyranny and terror. Killers who wanted to take the lives of Americans back home have been brought to justice before they reached our shores.

Because of you all who worked to protect this Nation—and all who work to protect the Nation—America has done something many said was impossible: We have gone 7 years without a terrorist attack.

We think of those who have laid down their lives for freedom here in Iraq. Their children are growing up without a mom or a dad. But all the—of our children are growing up with something else: the promise of a safer America and a better world. And that is the lasting memorial of all who have sacrificed here in Iraq. And thanks to you, that memorial will be achieved, and their sacrifice will not be in vain.

We think of your comrades who have been wounded. And this Nation pledges that we will give them all the care and all the support they need to recover.

We think of all your families back home. I know many of you have a sweetheart who misses you, or a daughter who longs for her dad, or a mom who worries about you day and night. For many of you, it won't be your first holiday away, and that certainly doesn't make it easier. So I'm going to give you an order: When you get out of here, call home or e-mail home, you tell your families you love them, and you tell the Commander in Chief came by to thank them for their sacrifice along with yours.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Thanks for coming by to let me say hello. Thanks for serving the United States of America. They ask me what I'm going to miss as the President. I'll tell you what I'm going to miss: being the Commander in Chief of such a fabulous group of folks. May God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 p.m. at Al Faw Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq, who introduced the President; Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin, USA, commander, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Christine Barnes, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, USA, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, USA, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, USA, commander, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and 4th Infantry Division; Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Gioia, USA, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and 4th Infantry Division; Command Sgt. Maj. James W. Redmore, USA, Multi-National Division—Center; Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, USA, commander, Multi-National Division—Center; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Interview With Members of the White House Press Pool
December 14, 2008

Audience Disruption at the Signing Ceremony With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq

Q. Quick ducking there, sir.

The President. I was worried about you. I thought you were going to have a heart attack.

Q. I thought I was too. [*Laughter*] I'm with you on that.

The President. Okay, my opening statement: I didn't know what the guy said, but I saw his sole. [*Laughter*] You were more concerned than I was. I was watching your faces.

Q. I saw something black and round go by my face.

Q. Just to see that——

The President. ——his first—other than shoes. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——to duck. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm pretty good at ducking, as most of you will know——

Q. You were quick.

Q. ——ducking——

The President. I'm talking about ducking your questions. [*Laughter*]

Q. So you weren't a lame duck. [*Groans*]

The President. That bad? You know, I—look, I mean it was just a bizarre moment, but I've had other bizarre moments in the Presidency. I remember when Hu Jintao was here. Remember we had the big event? He's speaking, and all of a sudden I hear this noise, had no earthly idea what was

taking place, but it was the Falun Gong woman screaming at the top of her lungs. It was kind of an odd moment.

Questions? We're going to Afghanistan now, in case you hadn't been told. You probably thought we were going home, but no. Then we're going to go to—never mind. [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, not to belabor the point too much, on this man, but I have a serious question about it. Obviously, he's expressing a vein of anger that exists in Iraq, and——

The President. How do you know? I mean, how do we know what he's expressing? Who——

Q. We had a translator who said he shouted about the widows and orphans.

The President. I don't know. I've heard all kinds of stories. I heard he was representing a Baathist TV station. I don't know the facts, but let's find out the facts. All I'm telling you, it was a bizarre moment.

Q. I wanted to ask something broader.

The President. I don't think you can take one guy throwing shoes and say this represents a broad movement in Iraq. You can try to do that if you want to. I don't think it would be accurate.

Q. Well, then, separately from him——

The President. That's exactly what he wanted you to do. Like, I answered on your question, what he wanted you to do was to pay attention to him. And sure enough, you did. Now, look, I'm not suggesting you can't avoid it. But it——

U.S. Troop Withdrawal from Iraq/Progress in Iraq

Q. Well, how do you—how well do you think Iraq will transition from U.S. forces moving out of cities, pulling out, taking over——

The President. Well, obviously, I think it's going to be that the gains we have made are strong enough to accept the movement of troops into—out of cities into bases by June of this year. But more importantly, that's what General Odierno thinks is possible.

Q. ——at this point about when you look at Iraq, and you still have over 140,000 troops. What are the challenges you see?

The President. I think the challenges—many of the challenges are political. In other words, the first big challenge is to have Provincial elections that enable people to vote and feel a part of the system, followed by national elections. That's a challenge. This is a challenge, however, that the Iraqis have met before. And obviously, you know, like the SOFA debate, it was a challenge to get SOFA through the—and SFA through the Council of Representatives because of the politics. But nevertheless, they came together.

Young democracies, when they debate big issues, sometimes can be strained. For example, there's a big debate going on between the central Government and the Provincial governments. But we went through the same debates ourselves. And as the society matures, they're going to be able to handle these debates in better fashion. So one of the important things was the success of the SFA/SOFA.

I remember the headlines: falling apart, may not make, confident it will happen, not confident it will happen. I mean, there was a lot of different opinions about whether or not this would eventually happen. And one reason why is because many of the people from the outside covering the debate on the inside were perplexed by the politics that was going on. But this is a democratic society. So I think the political process will be a challenge.

Progress in Iraq

Q. Sir, you got your first look at a part of Baghdad that wasn't the green zone and wasn't a military base. What did you think of it?

The President. You know, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], look, I can't look at a stretch of road and draw a conclusion. I can only really react to what the people

who have been here for a period of time tell me. And I mean, the statistics tell you one thing. Obviously, when you look at the violence chart, it's down. But what's more important from my perspective is, can a government meet the needs of its people? Can they get beyond differences and come together and meet the needs of its people? As well as, are the Iraqi forces becoming more capable of providing more security? Is command and control structure better? Are the training missions better? Are they able to move from point A to point B in a way that is—enable them to have successful missions? When there's actionable intelligence, can they move?

And when you couple that with a political process that is relatively new compared to older democracies and the need to provide basic services for its people, one of the things that struck me was not the road, but was the amount of electricity there was inside Baghdad. It looked like a pretty well-lit city.

The other thing that struck me was, there was a lot of activity on the ground. Now, you got to remember, my frame of reference is different from you all, you who have been there. I saw a lot of kids playing soccer; I saw a lot of activity, a lot of street activity on the route we took. And General Odierno said a while ago that wouldn't have been the case.

U.S. Troop Withdrawal from Iraq

Q. You've always urged patience in withdrawing troops, coming out; you move slowly on that based on conditions on the ground. Now you're talking about within 6 months, that we'll be drawing combat brigades from the city.

The President. Cities, right.

Q. Do you think that the Iraqis are ready to step up to that now? Do you think that there are flaws or there—not flaws, but potential conflicts——

The President. First of all, I strongly objected to a politics timetable. The debate over the timetable of withdrawal was a—was one that was unilateral in nature proposed by people who didn't think we ought to be in Iraq in the first place.

Secondly, I agreed to the terms of the SOFA because General Petraeus and General Odierno said that these terms are reasonable terms, and that is, we'll be moving troops out of cities into bases, close by to help if need be. Just because a troop is on a base doesn't mean that that troop won't be available to help the Iraqi forces. So they've come to the considered judgment that in the cities, the Iraqis are capable of providing security.

There is a plan in place that has been executed—successfully executed—that now the Iraqis can assume and continue to fulfill. That's a lot different than it was 18 months ago, when the plan was on paper and hadn't been executed yet. And so there's been a model for success.

Presidential Transition/Iraq Policy/Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA)/Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

Q. Is that what you meant by a bipartisan foundation now looking ahead to the next Presidency?

The President. I meant by a bipartisan foundation that the debates on whether or not it was the right thing or not are past, the need to make sure that we continue the successes can be a bipartisan—can be bipartisan and should be bipartisan.

President-elect Obama has now got a seasoned general in Baghdad with a SFA/SOFA agreed to by the United States and Iraq, and by the way, has been kept abreast upon election about what the SOFA—or the SFA/SOFA means.

And one of the challenges for the Iraqis is going to be—for the U.S. is to get up to our committees and get working on the SFA, which we're going to do. Part of my mission here was to remind the Iraqi Government that there is still a lot of work to be done on SFA/SOFA; our embassy agrees with that as well. And that—but I also told them that I—that our transition

is going to be a seamless transition, and that—I'm never going to put words into President-elect Obama's mouth, but by the decisions he made with Secretary Gates, for example, I believe he understands the strategic importance of Iraq. And now he's got a framework from which to make decisions.

National Economy/U.S. Auto Industry

Q. Mr. President, Iraq is obviously a big concern for Americans, but the economy seems to be even more of a concern. The automakers are in dire straits. How soon do you think your administration will be coming out with its plan for emergency aid? And are you leaning towards dipping into TARP to help——

The President. No question that the economy is number one on people's mind, and it should be. We're in a recession. These are serious economic times. People are concerned about their jobs; people are concerned about their value of their 401(k)s. This is a very difficult period.

We took note that there was a majority in the House and the Senate that voted for a package for the autos that would have caused them to begin to show how they're going to be viable. In other words, I have made this statement that given the status of the financial system, an abrupt bankruptcy for the autos could be devastating for the economy. And therefore, we've tried to work with Congress to accomplish the objective of not cratering the economy as well as making sure good money doesn't go after bad.

So we're now in the process of working through with the stakeholders a way forward, and we're not quite ready to announce that yet.

Q. Do you have any timetable, though, that you're looking at?

The President. Obviously, we're—this will not be a long process because of the economic—the fragility of the autos.

Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)

Q. And, sir, are you leaning towards using the TARP money?

The President. I signaled that that's a possibility.

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino. You guys have 8 minutes left. You're going to Afghanistan. You might want to ask——

Q. ——talk about it.

The President. Is that where we're going?

Military Operations in Afghanistan

Q. I think so. That's what you said. And I trust you with that. Can you tell me what—define the mission of the troops going in there in January and those who Secretary Gates wants in by the summer, the additional——

The President. The mission we had before, which is help this young democracy develop the institutions so it can survive on its own, to not repeat the mistakes of the 1980s, which is achieve an objective and leave, and deny a safe haven for Al Qaida.

Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News] asked me the question about the conditions in Afghanistan. No question, the violence is up. But one reason why the violence is up is that we're now putting troops into places where there hadn't been troops, begin to press these guys in places where they hadn't been pressed.

Just like the surge. You might remember, violence went up when we went into Iraq with more troops. And so the objective is to provide enough security so that a political system can develop that will be a—provide a stable platform for economic viability, and get a good education and good health.

Now the degree of difficulty in Afghanistan is high. This is a significantly larger country than Iraq and significantly poorer. The infrastructure is difficult. But nevertheless, the mission is essential, and that is,

we cannot achieve our objective of removing Al Qaida safe havens by kicking out Taliban and saying, "Okay, now let's leave."

And so I recognize we needed more troops. You know, President-elect Obama is going to be making decisions on troops, and we've been calling upon our NATO allies to put in more troops. One of the things that when—was barely noticed was the quiet surge in Afghanistan. We had kind of level platform of troops; then we moved in quite a few number, and so did our NATO allies. And now there's going to be—ramp up some more.

Pakistan/Military Operations in Afghanistan

Q. In Pakistan, I know that there are plans being worked up that combine—that you have to look at Pakistan and Afghanistan as the problem. Can you talk a little bit about that?

The President. Obviously, if Pakistan is a place from which people feel comfortable attacking infrastructure, citizens, troops, then it's still going—it's going to make it difficult to succeed in Afghanistan. That's why we're working with the Pakistan Government to keep the pressure on the extremists. And the more that we can get Pakistan and Afghanistan to cooperate, the easier it will be to enforce that part of the border region.

Q. What's your assessment of how Pakistan is doing on that front? Are they——

The President. Well, first of all, the first question is, is there a determination——

[*At this point, there was a slight disturbance aboard Air Force One.*]

The President. ——the other shoe just dropped. [*Laughter*] Look, I'm going to be thinking of shoe jokes for a long time. [*Laughter*]

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Are you?

Q. Yes.

The President. I haven't heard any good ones yet.

President Zardari is determined; he's said so publicly, and he's said so to me privately. He looked at me in the eye and said, "You don't need to talk to me about extremist violence; after all, my wife got killed by extremists." Like a lot of other situations in which you're trying to deal with extremists who get embedded in the population, there are two aspects. One is to pressure them and to bring them to justice and, simultaneously, try to win the hearts and minds of the local folks, which is what is happening Iraq.

See, in Iraq, just remember, we did a clear, semi-build, and no hold. And it's the same concept in Afghanistan: clear, build, and hold. And it required 30,000 more troops to get that done, plus the training mission in Iraq to get enough troops to hold. Obviously, our commanders believe that the hold part is good enough for us to be able to move our troops. You understand the reason I moved troops out of cities into bases is to enhance the credibility of the Government.

Well, in Afghanistan, the same principle applies. We have cleared, and we have built some, but in certain Provinces we have not held. So now more troops will go in, and as they start to move, you'll see violence tick up because they're clearing new areas. PRTs, which were very successful in Iraq, are now being increased in Afghanistan. That's part of the build part. And training up Afghanis to be a part of the hold is going to take a while. But nevertheless, there's optimism there because the Afghan fighters are good fighters; they're proud to be in the military, and we're headed toward 135,000.

Pakistan/War on Terror

Q. You said there were two elements to Pakistan's work though. You said one was whether Zardari was determined; you said he was. What was the——

The President. That's the press—find them and get them, press them hard, and

then win the hearts and minds of the locals through economic development.

Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Regions

Q. Sir, was that made more difficult by the use of UAVs? Are you and Hamid Karzai on the same page on that?

The President. Well, as you know—you know very well that when it comes to certain matters, the U.S. Government doesn't discuss operations.

Support for President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan/Free Elections

Q. Sir, Afghanistan is made up of a lot of different ethnic groups.

The President. Yes.

Q. A lot of them do not support Hamid Karzai. Is he the right person to lead the country through the next——

The President. Well, that will be determined by the Afghanistan people. That's the great thing about elections. He got 55 percent. You know, some of us would have loved to have 55 percent. [*Laughter*] And 51.5, not bad.

So the way you resolve a question like that is to have open and transparent elections. I believe strongly in the election process because it is the best way to determine for certain what people think. You know, a controversial decision of mine was to press forward with the elections in the Palestinian territories. I was told, "Well, the wrong side may win." My attitude is, the best way to determine what the people think is to let them vote.

And Hamas didn't win because they said we promise you violence; Hamas said we'd win because we promise you better services. So my answer to the losers of the election is, if they have credibility at providing better services, why don't you figure out how you can do a better job and respond to the people? That's what elections do.

So the election process in Afghanistan will once again provide people an opportunity to say, "We're tired of this, or we appreciate that." And it's the good public servant who listens to what the people say.

Middle East

Q. Mr. President, if there was one—I'm sorry, go ahead.

Q. You mentioned the Middle East. Is there any more to do in your remaining 37 days on that?

The President. Ed [Edwin Chen, Bloomberg News], we've—Condi is working a U.N. Security Council that affirms the Annapolis process. The question would be, will President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert want to lay out a specific state? And that's to be determined. But there is a way forward now.

The big sea change in the Middle East on this issue is that by far the majority of people recognize that the only way to peace is two states. And in 2001, that was not the case. In 2001, most of the Israeli political class believed that "greater Israel" was the only way to have security. And the Palestinian Authority was run by a person who could not deliver peace and was not trustworthy. So now you've got a Palestinian President who recognizes Israel's right to exist, and a Israeli political class that says, "If we want security, if we want peace, we've got to work for a Palestinian state." So the framework is there.

And the other point—the other significant change was that Annapolis brought many in the Arab world to the table. And in order for there to ever be a Palestinian state, any Palestinian leader is going to have to have strong backing from the neighboring states, which was one of the reasons why Camp David fell apart under my predecessor. In other words, the other reason why is because the interlocutor on the Palestinian side just was—failed the Palestinian people. Not President—this was not President Clinton's fault.

White House Press Secretary Perino. Going to take one more.

End of Presidential Term/North Korea

Q. Just—in fact, it's sort of a wrap-up question——

The President. I'm going to go take a nap. Anybody—[*laughter*].

Q. If there is one thing you wish——

The President. Steven Lee [Steven Lee Myers, The New York Times], you want to take a nap?

Q. No, I'm all right.

Q. He doesn't need sleep.

The President. You look a little—[*laughter*]. Mind if I call you Jimmy Lee?

Q. Steven Lee.

The President. Stevie Lee, I mean.

Q. Stevie. [*Laughter*]

Q. If there is anything, when you look at this last month or so you have left, that you wish you could accomplish, in the foreign policy arena, or anything you want to say? If you had a single thing that you want to accomplish, what would it be?

The President. Last month? Well, it's to solidify the frameworks that will enable problems to be solved.

Take, for example, the North Korean issue. It is much easier to solve a problem diplomatically when there is more than one voice speaking to the leader of North Korea. And a success of this administration is to put a framework in place that has China, the United States, and South Korea and Russia and Japan all at the table, all saying the same thing. In this case, the message is, we need to have a verifiable process in place to determine whether or not you're fulfilling your obligations.

Secondly, in the old process it used to be, we will give you what you ask for and hope that you respond. Now it is, here's what you must do if you want our help. We've reversed the process. And it's not just the United States speaking. So right now what you're watching is that the leader of North Korea is trying to test the process. First he said something Japan, and now he's saying something about so-and-so. And so the objective is to keep our partners firm on the understanding that the six-party process is the best way to solve the North Korean issue.

So he'll test—and this isn't the first time he's tested. He signed an agreement in September of 2005. Everybody said, "Great, looks like we're on our way to having the problem solved." And then he tested and changed his mind and did this, that, and the other. And the key is to be firm and patient with a structure that will enable the next President or the next President after that to be able to solve the problem diplomatically.

So there's one area right there that we're working on. Obviously, the Security Council resolution on dealing with the Annapolis process. We got the SOFA—SFA/SOFA done on Iraq.

Q. You got India done.

The President. Well, India was done, but she said the last month.

End of Presidential Term/Afghanistan

Q. Anything on Iraq, sir, in the last month?

Q. Afghanistan?

The President. Well, I think I should travel to Afghanistan in the last month of my Presidency, although it's not exactly the last month. So what's the date?

White House Press Secretary Perino. The 14th.

The President. Fourteen. Seventeen plus 17, 37 days.

Q. Why is it you want to be in Afghanistan?

The President. I want to be in Afghanistan to say thank you to President Karzai, to let the people of Afghanistan know that the United States has stood with them and will stand with them. See, it's—if you notice, Steven Lee asked a good question—bipartisan foundation. These nations need to know that the United States has been with them, is with them, and will be with them. So the trip is a way to, say thanks to leaders that I have been working with for a long period of time.

By the way, both leaders in my last conversations, or the last couple of them, have been saying, "You must come and visit us before you leave." And of course, I never committed until however long it was ago, 48 hours ago.

So okay, I'm going to go take a nap.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:39 p.m. aboard Air Force One en route to Afghanistan. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hu Jintao of China; Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan; former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who was killed in a suicide attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on December 27, 2007; Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 15. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks to Military Personnel at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan
December 15, 2008

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for coming out to greet me at a kind of a strange hour. [*Laughter*] General, I appreciate your accommodating what I'm calling Rudolph One. [*Laughter*] After all, it is the holiday season. You might have heard, we made a little refueling stop in Baghdad earlier today. And now I'm proud to be back in Afghanistan. You might call it as—a early-morning wake-up call. Or in some of your cases, I might have shut—cut your evening off. We won't go there. [*Laughter*] In either case, I am proud to be with brave souls serving the United States of America.

And my dear wife sends her very best regards. So on behalf of Laura and everybody else back home, Merry Christmas and a happy holidays. Congratulations on your tremendous accomplishments. And above all, thank you for volunteering to defend the United States of America.

You know, they often say, "What are you going to miss?" I'll miss the airplane, of course. [*Laughter*] But I'm mainly going to miss being the Commander in Chief of such an outstanding group of men and women.

I appreciate Sergeant Major Vince Camacho for his service. I want to thank Ambassador Bill Wood; the commanding general of U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, General David McKiernan; Brigadier General Mike Holmes, commanding general, 45th [455th] * Expeditionary Wing; soldiers of the 101st Airborne, the Screaming Eagles.

I told the General that I had the honor of going to Fort Campbell the other day. And I saw a lot of your comrades, and I saw a lot of your families. And they have a message for you: Air Assault!

I thank the airmen of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing. I kind of like your motto: "Start right, finish strong."

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Yes, that sounds pretty good for a guy with 36 days left. [*Laughter*]

The soldiers of the 3d Brigade Combat Team; 1st Infantry Division, the Big Red One; soldiers of the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Task Force Warrior; I want to thank all the troops from our coalition partners.

* White House correction.

I appreciate your countries for supporting this noble cause. I want to thank all the civilians, the diplomats, the Embassy personnel who are critical to our success. I thank all the other brave Americans here today, including members of the United States Navy, the United States Marine combat personnel, FBI agents——

Audience members. Whoo!

The President. And last but not least—[*laughter*]. They may sound small, but they're plenty tough. And last but not least, the 101st Army Band. You probably played some high notes to keep the folks awake. [*Laughter*]

Afghanistan is a dramatically different country than it was 8 years ago. When I took office in 2001, the Taliban was brutally repressing the Afghan people. Girls were denied access to school. People who did not submit to the regime's radical beliefs were beaten in the public or executed in soccer stadiums. Al Qaida had freedom rein to operate the country—in the country. And it was here in Afghanistan that the terrorists planned the attacks of September the 11th, 2001.

After that date, America gave the Taliban a choice: You can turn over the leaders of Al Qaida, or you can share in their fate. And when they refused, our just demands were enforced by the United States military. And thanks to you, the Taliban has gone from power, the Al Qaida training camps are closed, and 25 million Iraqis are free. And the American people, your loved ones, are more secure.

Removing the Taliban was a landmark achievement, but our work did not end there. See, we could have replaced one group of thugs with another strongman. But all that would have done is invited the same problems that brought us the Al Qaida safe havens and the attacks on America in the first place. Those were the mistakes of the 1980s and 1990s, and we were not going to repeat them again in the 21st century.

So America set an ambitious goal to help Afghanistan's young democracy grow and thrive and emerge as an alternative to the ideology of hate and extremism and terror. This is a difficult and long effort. It's not easy to do this. It would have been so much simpler to say we got rid of one bunch and here's another one. But that's not what we believe is right. We want to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. We want to do the hard work now so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a peaceful world.

So we rallied good allies to our side, including every member of NATO. We've developed civilian experts in the form of [civilian] * reconstruction teams. And together with the determined people of Afghanistan, we are making hopeful gains.

Thanks to you, girls are back in school across Afghanistan. Does that matter? I think it does. I think it does. Thanks to you, boys are playing soccer again and flying kites and learning to be Boy Scouts. Thanks to you, access to health care is up dramatically. Thanks to you, Afghanistan's economy has more than doubled in size. And thanks to you, the Afghan people are preparing to go to the polls next year for another round of free elections. Thanks to you, Afghanistan has a democratic Government that is no longer an enemy of America; it is a friend of America.

The enemies of freedom in Afghanistan are determined, no question about it. And the fight has been tough, I don't need to tell you. This is a large country. It has a long way—it's a long way away from a modern economy with a viable infrastructure. It's hard to get around Afghanistan. Yet we have a strategic interest, and I believe a moral interest, in a prosperous and peaceful democratic Afghanistan. And no matter how long it takes, we will help the people of Afghanistan succeed.

As a sign of our commitment, we've increased American troop levels in Afghanistan. Our NATO allies have done the same, and so have the Afghan people. The Afghan

* White House correction.

Army and police have grown. I call it a quiet surge. It's a surge that hasn't gotten much attention. But it has an unmistakable message: The Taliban has gone from power, and it's not coming back. Al Qaida terrorists have lost their safe haven in Afghanistan, and they're not going to get it back. Afghanistan will be a successful society and a hopeful society and a free society. And Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists to attack the United States of America.

In recent months, the violence has increased in some parts of Afghanistan. This is partly because we're going into new areas where the terrorists have never been challenged before. And if the enemy are fighting back, they don't like it when we show up. But ultimately, they will be no match for the Afghan people or her coalition partners. And they're certainly no match for the men and women of the United States military.

I am confident we will succeed in Afghanistan because our cause is just, our coalition and Afghan partners are determined. And I am confident because I believe freedom is a gift of an Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth. Above all, I know the strength and character of you all. As I conclude this final trip, I have a message to you and to all who serve our country: Thank you for making the noble choice to serve and protect your fellow Americans.

What you're doing in Afghanistan is an—is important, it is courageous, and it is selfless. It's akin to what American troops did in places like Normandy and Iwo Jima and Korea. Your generation is every bit as great as any that has come before. And the work you do every day is shaping history for generations to come.

Because of you, America now has a strong friend and partner in the fight against extremism in a pivotal part of the world. Because of you, people across the broader east—Middle East now have an example of a more hopeful path, a model of liberty that can prevail over tyranny and terror. Because of you, killers who wanted to take the lives of Americans back home have been brought to justice before they reached our shores. And because of you and all who work to protect our Nation, America has done something many said was impossible: We have gone more than 7 years without a terrorist attack on our homeland.

This time of year is especially a time when we thank the Almighty for our freedoms. And we think of those who laid down their lives to protect those freedoms. Back home their children are growing up without a mom or a dad. But all of our children are growing up with something else: the promise of a safer America, the promise of a better world, and the more likelihood for peace.

This is a lasting memorial, all who have sacrificed here in Afghanistan. And thanks to you, that memorial will be achieved, and the sacrifice of your comrades will not have been in vain. We think of the comrades who have been wounded. And our Nation pledges that we will give them all the care and all the support they need to recover.

And finally, we think of your families back home. You've got a loved one wondering what you're doing, how you're doing; I want you to do me a favor: When you get back to wherever you're getting back to, call them, e-mail them, or write them. Tell them you love them and tell them the Commander in Chief thanks them for their sacrifice, thanks them for loving you like they do, and thanks for—thank them for standing with you as you serve the noble cause of peace.

I am proud to be with you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent Camacho, USA, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

The President's News Conference With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan in Kabul, Afghanistan
December 15, 2008

[*At this point, President Karzai spoke in Dari, and no translation was provided.*]

President Karzai. Most welcome, Mr. President. Most welcome.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Yes, thanks, Mr. President; it's good to be with a dear friend. You and I have spent a lot of time together, and we have done a lot of work together, all aiming to give the people of Afghanistan a better life. And I'm proud to be with you.

I hope you understand why it is important for me to get back to Washington, and that is because my wife expects for me to be back in Washington. [*Laughter*] We have a holiday reception at the White House, and so I'm going to have to hustle back; after all, I did sneak out of town under the dark of night. And now I'm going to go back home having visited this important country. So thanks for having me. And she sends her best. As you well know, that Laura's—one of her great passions is to stand with the courageous women in Afghanistan. And I can assure you, Mr. President, that after our time in Washington, we both look forward to continuing to stay in touch and to continuing to stay engaged with the people of Afghanistan. So Laura sends her deep respect and great affection for the people of Afghanistan.

You know, I was thinking when I—right before we landed, how much Afghanistan has changed since I have been the President. And sometimes it's hard when you're in the midst of a difficult situation, it's hard to get perspective. In 2001, the Taliban were brutally repressing the people of this country. I remember the images of women being stoned or people being executed in the soccer stadium because of their beliefs. There was a group of killers that were hiding here and training here and plotting here to kill citizens in my country.

Right after the attacks, I made it abundantly clear that we would bring people to justice for our own security and made it abundantly clear that if a group of people harbored a terrorist, they were equally as guilty as a terrorist. And we gave the Taliban an opportunity to respond; they didn't. And American troops proudly liberated the people of Afghanistan. That's what life was like.

Now we could have replaced one power person with another. That would have been, I guess, the easy route, and then just left it behind, say we've done our duty and we've upheld the doctrine, and said, "Okay, we're now going to take this group, replace them with this group," and just got out of the way. But that's not—that, one, didn't learn the lessons of the eighties and the nineties. And secondly, the interest is to build a flourishing democracy as an alternative to an hateful ideology. And it's not easy work. Afghanistan is a huge country. The road system is not nearly as well developed as a lot of other countries. You're just beginning to develop your resource base in a way that I hope benefits the people of Afghanistan; after all, it's their resources.

It's difficult because extremists refuse to accept the beauty of democracy. They've got a different vision, and so therefore, they're willing to kill innocent people to achieve their objectives.

There has been a lot of progress since 2001; after all, girls are back in school. I happen to believe that's important. As the father of twin girls, I couldn't imagine living in a society where my little girls couldn't have a chance to realize their God-given potential.

President Karzai. Yes.

President Bush. You've got boys flying kites again in Afghanistan. You've got health clinics up all across the country. The President was telling me of a health clinic in the remote northeast region of Afghanistan, a place where it had been unimaginable.

President Karzai. [*Inaudible*]

President Bush. Yes. The economy has more than doubled in size. It needs to double in size again, and then double in size again, no question. But it has doubled in size. Security forces are growing stronger. You've got good people in Afghanistan who are—you know, want to work to provide security so that a political process can grow behind it.

Now there's been good progress made, but there are a lot of tough challenges. One of the great, interesting things that I'll be watching—since I believe so strongly in democracy—are the upcoming elections. And I've talked to General McKiernan, he said—who's told me that—about the strategy, along with Ambassador Wood, about the strategy to help the Afghan folks—the military, and political leaders—get the elections up and running. And it's going to be an exciting time for the people of Afghanistan, to go to the polls and be able to express their opinion. And I'm sure the press corps, the Afghanistan press corps, is looking forward to covering the elections. It'll give you something to do in a very important part of your country's history.

I told the President that you can count on the United States; just like you've been able to count on this administration, you'll be able to count on the next administration as well. It's in our interest that Afghanistan's democracy flourish. It's in America's interest that we forever deny safe haven for people who still want to kill our citizens.

And so, Mr. President, I come bringing the greetings of the country. It has been a privilege to work with you over these years. I have come to admire you, I appreciate your service, and I wish you and the people of Afghanistan all the very best.

President Karzai. Most welcome, Mr. President; it's our pleasure and honor. Most welcome.

Presidential Transition/President-Elect Obama's Foreign Policy

Q. My question is from His Excellency, the President of the United States. First, if President-elect Obama brings any change in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan or any change in the strategy to—towards Afghanistan or in the policies? Being from the Republicans, will your party support his plannings?

And second, regarding he said he was in Pakistan and the terrorists in Pakistan, what's your message to Obama that how he should deal with Pakistani Government regarding terrorists, about the diplomat—using diplomatic ways or using military?

President Bush. Yes. Thank you. First, I am of a different political party than President-elect Obama. But I want him to succeed. I want him to do well. And to this end, we have worked hard to help the transition.

Secondly, I think it is interesting that he has picked Secretary Gates, the Secretary of Defense under—the last couple of years under my administration, who will be the Secretary of Defense under his administration. And I think that should send a clear signal to the people of Afghanistan that the transition will be a smooth transition.

I expect you'll see more U.S. troops here as quickly as possible in parts of the country that are being challenged by the Taliban. I remember when President Karzai and President Musharraf and I had the famous dinner at the White House.

President Karzai. Yes.

President Bush. And it—you know, the discussions really are the same today as they were then, and that is that extremists and terrorists and people who use car bombs and suicide bombers to achieve political objectives are a threat to all of us.

And that there needs to be a comprehensive strategy in helping the Pakistan Government deal with those who bring great harm on their citizens and bring harm on the citizens of Afghanistan.

So to answer your question, I think it's a—we need to have a collaborative strategy. We need to work together in a constructive way. And we are making progress along those lines. You know, I was with President Zardari in—I think it was in New York. And I had never met him before, and I was reminding him that I'm, you know, a person who says that we will defend our country and defend our people. The most important job for the President of the United States is defend our people from attack.

He said, "You don't have to talk to me about extremists attacking people, extremists killed my wife." And so we're—there's a lot of consultations going on with the President—I think you're going to be meeting with President Zardari soon.

President Karzai. Yes.

President Bush. And that's good, and I appreciate that.

Olivier [Olivier Knox, Agence France-Presse].

Military Operations in Afghanistan/Troop Levels in Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, gentlemen. I have one question for the two of you. Canada has announced it's pulling out in 2011; South Korea is already gone. In that context are you concerned about the level of international support for the war here, and are the 20,000 additional U.S. troops enough to bring this conflict to a close?

President Bush. Yes. Well, first of all, as you know, I've always relied upon our military commanders to make the recommendations necessary to achieve the objectives we've set forth. We have added troops during—twice during my Presidency—obviously, in the initial move in and then we added troops to that. I've announced we're going to send in more troops. And then, of course, the Obama administration will be analyzing the situation, and it sounds like that they intend to expedite the—sending more troops in.

So—and why do we do that? Because this is what our generals suggest we do. To answer your—this is just going to be a long struggle, first of all. This doesn't end tomorrow. Ideological struggles take time. As a civil society whose firm political institutions begin to develop, extremism begins to wither; it gets marginalized, and then it withers away. And so it's going to take time. I can't tell you the troop levels we'll need; all I know is our generals said, this is what we need now. And they—I listened to them, and I'm confident President-elect Obama will listen to the commanders as well.

President Karzai. We are already very grateful to all those countries, nations who have come to help Afghanistan, and who have already helped Afghanistan. Canada is among the countries that's the frontrunner in assistance to Afghanistan. Their plans to withdraw their troops by 2011 or '12 is not in contradiction to the understanding that we have with them. They will continue to assist us in various other forms in Afghanistan.

What is important here is that while we are continuing to fight terrorism and to bring the institutional strength and stability to Afghanistan, with an improved economy and improved governance and service delivery by the Government, we also work on enabling Afghanistan to eventually stand on its own feet. The Afghan people don't want to be a burden on the international community forever. And we are grateful already that the international community is helping us in blood and their taxpayers' money.

We are grateful to Canada. We are grateful to all other countries, as partners for building Afghanistan, for fighting terrorists who are the enemies of all of us. So we are happy in any form of assistance other countries give us and will be grateful for it.

One—pick up one more question, Mr. President? You'd like to continue?

President Bush. All those who want another question, raise your hand. [*Laughter*] I guess so, Mr. President.

[*A reporter began to ask a question in Dari.*]

President Bush. Hold on a second.

Progress in Afghanistan/Military Operations in Afghanistan

[*The reporter continued his question, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. I respectfully disagree with you. The Taliban was brutalizing the people of Afghanistan. And they're not in power. And I just cited the progress that is undeniable.

Now, is there more work to be done? You bet. I never said the Taliban was eliminated; I said they were removed from power. And I said girls are going back to school, and boys are flying kites, and health clinics are opening, and the number of university students is dramatically expanding, and the number of schools around the country is growing, and there's a ring road built. Yes, there's no question there's a Taliban that wants to fight back. Why? Because they want to regain power. They can't stand the thought of a free society. And they're lethal, and they are tough. No question about it, no question about it.

So therefore, is the suggestion because they're tough that we just withdraw, that it's too hard work? Not as far as I'm concerned. I think it's necessary work. And it's in the interest of the United States that we not allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven again for Al Qaida. Al Qaida is greatly weakened since 2001. As a matter of fact, they at one point declared the most central front in the war on terror in Iraq, where they're doing very poorly.

And they're not doing so well here either. Now, they can hide in remote regions. They can hide, but we will stay on the hunt, and we will keep the pressure on them, because it's in the people—the peaceful people of Afghanistan's interest, just like it's in the interest of this country.

And so is there still difficult days ahead? Absolutely. But are the conditions a lot better today in Afghanistan than they were in 2001? Unquestionably, undoubtedly, they're better.

[*President Karzai spoke in Dari, and no translation was provided.*]

President Karzai. Mr. President.

President Bush. Steven Lee [Steven Lee Myers, New York Times].

Troop Levels in Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. If I could ask President Karzai first. We just came from Iraq, where they've signed an agreement outlining a security arrangement, and it includes a withdrawal of American forces within 3 years. I wonder if you envisioned a similar kind of arrangement where—would you like to see a scheduled withdrawal or a timetable of withdrawal for the foreign forces who are in Afghanistan? Thank you.

President Karzai. Well, sir, Afghanistan is in a cooperative arrangement with the United States and the rest of the international community. The decision in Afghanistan is to continue our cooperation with the international community until we have defeated terrorism and extremism and the threat that emanates from them to us, to our neighbors, and to the rest of the world. And Afghanistan will not allow the international community to leave it before we are fully on our feet, before we are strong enough to defend our country, before we are powerful enough to have a good economy, and before we have taken from President Bush and the next administration billions and billions of more dollars—[*laughter*]—no way that they can let you go.

President Bush. Yes, you better hurry up, in my case. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, sir. Thank you, all.

President Karzai. Most welcome, most welcome. Take care. Thanks very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 7:53 a.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David D. McKiernan, USA, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; former President Pervez Musharraf and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan; and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who was killed in a suicide attack in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on December 27, 2007. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this press conference.

Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah
December 15, 2008

Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. You may have heard I've had a pretty eventful weekend. [*Laughter*]

So I slipped out Saturday night to Andrews Air Force Base, boarded Air Force One, and landed in Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday afternoon. It was an unbelievable experience—it really was—to stand next to the President of a democracy and hold my hand over my heart as they played the national anthem in front of one of Saddam Hussein's palaces. I then had—[*applause*]. And then I had the honor to thank our brave troops who have helped make the transformation in Iraq possible.

This morning we landed in Afghanistan. I spoke to American forces serving courageously to make sure that Afghanistan never becomes a safe haven from which the killers could launch attacks on the homeland.

And then I met with President Karzai, who is determined to help the young democracy survive. And so he said, "Why don't you hang around for a while?" And I said, "Well, you don't understand. [*Laughter*] I need to get back to the White House for an important event." [*Laughter*] The Hanukkah reception is always one of the most special events of the season. Laura and I are pleased to be with so many friends. And we are honored to gather with leaders of the Jewish community to celebrate our final Hanukkah here in the White House.

I want to thank our Attorney General for joining us. General, I appreciate you and Susan joining us. I am proud to be here with one of America's great United States Senators, Joe Lieberman—[*applause*]—his greatness made possible by his wife Hadassah, I might add. [*Laughter*] And one of the young leaders of the United States Congress, Eric Cantor, and his wife Diana. And we're proud to be here with Kol Zimra as well, who will perform later.

The story of Hanukkah recalls the miraculous victory of a small band of patriots against tyranny and the oil that burned for eight nights. Through centuries of exile and persecution, Jews have lit the menorah. Each year, they behold its glow with faith in the power of God and love for His greatest gift, freedom.

This Hanukkah we celebrate another miraculous victory, the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. When President Harry Truman led the world in recognizing Israel in May of 1948, many wondered whether the small nation could possibly survive. Yet from the first days of independence, the people of Israel defied dire predictions. With determination and hard work, they turned a rocky desert into fertile soil. They built a thriving democracy, a strong economy, and one of the mightiest

military forces on Earth. Like the Maccabees, Israel has defended itself bravely against enemies seeking its destruction. And today, Israel is a light unto the nations and one of America's closest friends.

This evening we have the great privilege of celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary and Hanukkah in a very special way. Thanks to the generosity of the Truman Library, we are fortunate to light the menorah presented to President Truman in 1951 as a symbol of friendship by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion.

A decade after President Truman received this gift, he visited Prime Minister Ben-Gurion for one of the last times. As they parted, Ben-Gurion told the President that as a foreigner he could not judge President Truman's place in American history, but the President's courageous decision to recognize the new State of Israel gave him an immortal place in Jewish history. Those words filled the President's eyes with uncharacteristic tears. And later, Ben-Gurion would say he rarely had seen somebody so moved.

And so tonight I'm deeply moved to welcome the grandsons of these two great men—Clifton Truman Daniel and Yariv Ben-Eliezer—to light the Truman menorah together.

Laura and I wish all the people of Jewish faith a happy Hanukkah and many joyous Hanukkahs in the years ahead. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jalal Talabani of Iraq; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Susan Mukasey, wife of Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey; and entertainers Kol Zimra. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador

December 16, 2008

President Bush. Mr. President, *benvenido de nuevo*. I am honored to have you back. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your strong leadership for the people of our close ally, El Salvador.

We've had a very good discussion. First, I want to thank you for your support of freedom in Iraq. You and—have been steadfast in recognizing that freedom is the way to help build lasting peace.

I appreciate very much the fact that your country is a vibrant democracy. You've been steadfast in your support for your—the right of your people to express themselves in a free society, and I applaud you for that strength.

I want to thank you very much for investing in your people. You're a—we've got a partnership through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. And part of your commitment was honest government and the investment in the health and education of your people. And you've honored that agreement. I thank you very much for understanding that the benefits of trade are good for your people and our people as well. And you're a very strong advocate of CAFTA, which is working very well.

And finally, you've been very strong when it comes to helping interdict the flow of drugs. I explained to the President that since 2001, drug use in the United States amongst teenagers has declined by 25 percent. And the reason I said that is because in order to affect the flow of drugs there must be a comprehensive approach. First of all, we got to—we in the United States must reduce demand. But it also requires

a strong cooperative spirit to interdict supply. And you have been very strong in that.

And so I thank you. It's been a pleasure to work with you. You may have heard that I'm about to retire. And as I head toward the great State of Texas, I will have very fond memories of our time together and the strength of our friendship and of your leadership.

So welcome.

President Saca Gonzalez. Muchas gracias.

President Bush. Si.

President Saca Gonzalez. Thank you so much. I also thank President Bush. I think that we have got a very fruitful relationship and one that is very concerned for our people. I think that El Salvador is a good example of a country that moved from war to peace. And we've always had the contribution of the United States in all of the stages of this peace.

I always tell President Bush that free trade was so important, as well as the immigration issue for our people. And all these issues have been worked out, especially regarding cooperation with regards to the combat against drugs. I have confirmed President Bush that El Salvador is going to renew the FOL that we have at the Pacific coast. And that has allowed us to capture a lot of drug traffickers and seize a lot of drugs also for the Pacific coast.

So a mid-income country like El Salvador knows perfectly well that the path towards prosperity is effort and hard work and freedom. And this is something that Salvadorans practice on a daily basis. We have worked hand in hand with ILEA. And ILEA is the place where our judges and our prosecutors are being trained, and it is something that we're doing together with the United States of America.

With regards to the Millennium account, we have been very successful. We're working very fast. We're going to build a highway, a 300-kilometer-long highway in the northern part of the country. And at the same time, we're going to develop the rural areas along that highway. And all this has been done hand in hand with the United States.

I wish you the best of luck in your new life. I was just in Dallas recently, because I went to promote the TPS for our people. And everybody knew there that President Bush was going to move to Dallas. [*Laughter*]

You are leaving on January 20. And I leave on the 1st of June.

President Bush. Si. [*Laughter*]

President Saca Gonzalez. So I hope that I can go and visit you and talk to you——

President Bush. Por cierto, por cierto.

President Saca Gonzalez. Lo damos por cierto.

President Bush. Si.

President Saca Gonzalez. Okay. President Bush has been a strong advocate of freedom. And I think that the United States has much to thank President Bush, especially the fact that the U.S. has not been attacked again by the terrorist groups. This is something quite intangible, because you cannot touch it, you cannot feel it, until that, unfortunately, something like that would happen again.

You can always count with the support of El Salvador on these issues, Mr. President, and the United States in general, the new President, because the historical relationship between the United States of America and El Salvador is a relationship of shared values, and we will continue to share in this friendship strongly, as it is now.

Thank you so much.

President Bush Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Saca Gonzalez referred to President-elect Barack Obama; FOL, the U.S. Military Forward Operating Location in Comalapa, El Salvador; ILEA, the Department of Homeland Security's International Law Enforcement Academies; and TPS, temporary protected immigration status. President Saca Gonzalez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks

were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World
December 16, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and in Kosovo.

THE WAR ON TERROR

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 31,000, of which approximately 13,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently for a 12-month period from October 13, 2008, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1833 of September 22, 2008. The mission of ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows for continued reconstruction and the exercise and extension of Afghan authority. Currently, more than 40 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 26 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support

forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 of December 18, 2007, set to expire on December 31, 2008. Under Resolutions 1546, 1637, 1723, and 1790, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. These contributions have included, but have not been limited to, assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces, supporting the development of Iraq's political institutions, improving local governance, enhancing ministerial capacity, and providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis. The U.S. contribution to the MNF fluctuates over time depending on the conditions in theater as determined by the commanders on the ground; the current U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 152,035 U.S. military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped and combat-support forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

NATO-LED KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR)

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999.

The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, to verify, and, when necessary, to enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and Serbia (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international police, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment that facilitates the work of the United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union (EU)-led International Civilian Office, and the evolving EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX).

Currently, 25 NATO nations contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is about 1,500 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 9 percent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 15,500 personnel.

The U.S. participating forces in KFOR have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo but also have operated in other areas of the country based on mission requirements. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, helping to maintain a safe and secure environment remains the principal military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR currently coordinates with and supports UNMIK

within means and capabilities and has provided similar assurances of cooperation to EULEX. The KFOR provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the country-side; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, to protect all elements of the population living in Kosovo, and to help instill a feeling of confidence in all ethnic communities throughout Kosovo.

NATO continues periodically to conduct a formal review of KFOR's mission. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans.

The UNMIK international police and Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have primary responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have assumed responsibility for guarding some patrimonial sites and operating border crossings. The KFOR supports these police forces when requested and augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as events on the ground dictate.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania
December 17, 2008

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm sorry I'm late. [*Laughter*] But I am honored to be back at the Army War College. A few weeks ago, you celebrated this college's 107th birthday. I was interested to learn that the school was originally located across the street from the White House. Apparently after a few years on Pennsylvania Avenue, it was time to pack up your bags. [*Laughter*] Laura and I know the feeling. [*Laughter*]

General Williams, thank you for your leadership. Sergeant Major Powell, thank you for greeting me.

I'm traveling today with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Peake. I assume he got a seat. [*Laughter*] Peake, how are you—finally, yes! [*Laughter*] He actually was a 1988 graduate of the U.S. Army War College. He claimed he was the president of the class. [*Laughter*] But he also modestly informed me that the reason why is because he was the oldest member of the class. [*Laughter*] Anyway, Mr. Secretary, thanks for your service.

Students, faculty, and staff, it's good to be with you.

Over the past century, this important institution has become one of our Nation's most revered places. It really has been. After all, the graduates of this college are legendary—and perhaps I'm looking at legends—Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, George Patton to Norm Schwarzkopf, Tommy Franks, and a man who I visited

with recently, Ray Odierno. I want to thank you for continuing this college's noble tradition of military scholarship. I thank you for volunteering to serve our Nation during a time of war. I appreciate the officers from our partner nations who are studying here and who are strengthening their countries' friendship with the United States.

I know many of you have served overseas in the war on terror. This weekend I was honored to make one final trip to the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan. During my trip, I had the opportunity to spend time with men and women in uniform, and I've got to tell you, there is nothing better, to be the Commander in Chief and stand in front of brave souls who bring such dignity to the United States of America.

They say, "What are you going to miss?" I'm going to miss a lot of things, like no traffic jams on the way from Harrisburg. [*Laughter*] But I'm most going to miss being the Commander in Chief. It is amazing to serve with people who are willing to stand up and step forward to address the great challenge to freedom and democracy of our time. We have been called to action, and many have agreed to serve.

You know, the threat alert emerged long before September the 11th. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the followers of a hateful and twisted ideology grew in strength and number. In lands where repression and despair reigned, these extremists found willing recruits for their murderous vision. They unleashed an unprecedented campaign of terror against the United States, attacking the World Trade Center in 1993, bombing two of our Embassies in Africa in 1998, striking the USS *Cole* in 2000.

For many years, our Nation viewed these attacks as isolated incidents, and we responded with limited measures. That changed on September the 11th, 2001. On that morning, Americans woke to news of a plane crashing into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Within the span of 90 minutes, a second plane struck the South Tower, a third one pierced the rings of the Pentagon, and a fourth vanished from the skies above Pennsylvania. By nightfall, the sun had set on a very different world. With rumors of more attacks swirling, Americans went to bed wondering what the future would bring.

On that night, virtually no one would have predicted that more than 7 years would pass without another terrorist attack on our soil. It's not a matter of luck. It is a tribute to the dedicated men and women who work day and night to defend our great land. It's the result of tough decisions that we began making immediately after September the 11th.

You see, in those uncertain first weeks, there was no obvious precedent to follow. We faced a choice among many different courses of action. On one end of the spectrum, we could have responded with a purely defensive strategy, hunkering down behind our borders and retreating from the world stage. On the other end of the spectrum, we could have sought revenge through instant retaliation, attacking nations that support terror with no broader strategy to address the root cause of the problem.

I rejected both these extremes in favor of a deliberate and comprehensive approach, one where we used all elements of our national power to keep America safe at home, the understanding we needed to take the fight to the enemy abroad, and the idea of promoting liberty as the alternative to terror.

Last week, I spoke at West Point about transforming our military to wage this war. And today I'm going to talk to you about the strategy we pursued to keep our country safe, the results we've achieved, and the institutions we leave behind for future Presidents to carry on this struggle.

After September the 11th, we fundamentally reshaped our strategy for protecting the American people around three core principles. First, we recognized that our homeland security and intelligence capabilities were inadequate. So we launched the

largest reorganization of the Federal Government since the beginning of the cold war with one overriding purpose, and that was to prevent new attacks.

Secondly, we recognized that even with the best defenses, we could not afford to wait for the terrorists to attack again. So we launched a global campaign to take the fight to the terrorists abroad, to dismantle their networks, to dry up their financing, and find their leaders and bring them to justice. We sent a clear message that America will make no distinction between the terrorists and those who harbor them.

Immediately after September the 11th, we gave the Taliban in Afghanistan two options: surrender the leaders of Al Qaida, or you can share in their fate. When the regime leaders made their choice, we made ours. We removed the Taliban from power, we shut down the terrorist training camps, and we liberated more than 25 million Afghans.

After 9/11, we also reexamined the danger posed by Iraq, a country that combined support for terror, the development and use of weapons of mass destruction, aggression against its neighbors, routine attacks on American forces, systemic violations of U.N. resolutions. We concluded that the world could not tolerate such a destabilizing and dangerous force in the heart of the Middle East. I offered Saddam Hussein a final chance to resolve the issue peacefully. It was his choice to make. And when he refused, we acted with a coalition of nations to protect our people and liberate 25 million Iraqis.

Thirdly, we recognized that the war on terror is more than a battle of arms. It is an ideological struggle for hearts and minds. And to prevail, we must counter the terrorists' hateful ideology with a more hopeful alternative based on liberty and justice. So after removing the threatening regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, we refused to take the easy course of trading one strongman for another. Instead, we stayed to help young democracies emerge as beacons for hope for people across the Middle East. We increased our support for democratic reformers and dissidents around the world. We expanded our efforts to combat the conditions of despair and hopelessness that give rise to rage and radicalism.

While there's room for honest and healthy debate about the decisions I've made—and there's plenty of debate—there can be no debate about the results in keeping America safe.

Here at home we prevented numerous terrorist attacks, including an attempt to bomb fuel tanks at JFK Airport, a plot to blow up airliners bound for the east coast, a scheme to attack a shopping mall in the Chicago area, and a plan to destroy the tallest skyscraper in Los Angeles. We'll never know how many lives have been saved. But this is for certain: Since 9/11, there's not been another terrorist attack on American soil.

And this is certain as well: Around the world, we're driving the terrorists from their safe havens. We are choking off their financing. We are severely disrupting their operations. Together with our allies, we killed or captured hundreds of Al Qaida leaders and operatives, including the architect of the September the 11th attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. And thanks to the success of the surge, the courage of our troops, and the determination of the Iraqi people, we have delivered a devastating blow to Al Qaida in the land Usama bin Laden once called the central battleground in the war on terror.

In the broader struggle between freedom and terror, people around the world have made their choice clear. In Afghanistan, 8 million men and women went to the polls to elect a President for the first time in their history. In Iraq, 12 million people defied the terrorists and elected a representative government. You know, one of the things I'll never forget are the ink-stained fingers of people who had a chance to vote their conscience. In countries from Liberia

and Lebanon to Georgia and Ukraine, citizens have taken to the streets to cast off the chains of tyranny and demand their God-given right for freedom. And around the world, more people live in liberty than at any other time in human history.

This is a hopeful beginning. Yet it is only a beginning. Like the struggle against communism during the cold war, the struggle against terror will be a generational conflict, one that will continue long beyond my Presidency. As my administration leaves office next month, we will leave behind the institutions and tools our country needs to prevail in the long struggle ahead.

We'll leave behind a vastly upgraded network of homeland defenses. Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers are working together more closely than ever before. The number of Border Patrol agents has doubled since 2001. Our airports and seaports have bolstered screening procedures. Major cities have installed early-warning systems for detecting biological and radiological attacks. And to better coordinate a comprehensive strategy for keeping our people safe, we have a new Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security.

We'll leave behind a revamped intelligence community that has new tools for staying one step ahead of our enemies. Under the new Director of National Intelligence, Federal agencies are collecting and sharing information more effectively than ever before. At the new National Counterterrorism Center, representatives from 16 different Federal agencies are working side by side to track any new threat. The FBI: Agents and analysts have shifted their focus from investigating terrorist attacks after they happen to gathering intelligence to prevent them from happening in the first place. The Treasury Department: There are new programs to shut down financing for terrorism. The CIA: Human intelligence capabilities have improved. More operations officers have deployed overseas to penetrate the terrorist organizations. There's a program to interrogate key terrorist leaders. At the NSA, there are expanded efforts to monitor terrorist communications around the world. We need to quickly figure out who the terrorists are talking to and what they're saying in order to protect the homeland.

We will leave behind new technologies and resources for our military to keep the pressure on the enemy. Our forces are more mobile and more agile and better positioned now to deploy to trouble spots around the world. On the battlefield, they have access to real-time intelligence that would have been unimaginable just a couple of years ago. With weapons like the Predator drone in our arsenal, our troops can conduct precision strikes on terrorists in hard-to-reach areas while sparing innocent life. At institutions like the Army War College, our men and women in uniform are studying new counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies, because we're going to depend on you. Long after I'm gone, Presidents will count on you.

We will leave behind a strong coalition of more than 90 nations—composing almost half the world—who have committed to combating terror and sharing intelligence and keeping our citizens safe. This coalition includes Saudi Arabia, the nation that produced 15 of the 9/11 hijackers and now serves as a staunch ally in the war on terror. This coalition includes Pakistan, a country that was a supporter of the Taliban before September the 11th and today is a strong partner of the United States. This coalition includes two of America's newest and most courageous friends, the free nations of Afghanistan and Iraq. This coalition includes members of the new Proliferation Security Initiative and the new Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, who are working to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

We will leave behind new programs to help change the conditions of suffering and hopelessness that give rise to extremism and terror. In Afghanistan and Iraq, new

Provincial Reconstruction Teams are helping rebuild war-torn communities and revive local economies and restore basic government services. On the continent of Africa, millions are receiving lifesaving treatment, thanks to America's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. And around the world, countries that govern wisely and open up their economy and invest in the health and education of their people are receiving strong support through Millennium Challenge grants.

And finally, we leave behind an unprecedented commitment to extending the reach of liberty and democracy. Key organizations devoted to supporting freedom enjoy stronger government support than ever before. Official U.S. policy now requires our diplomats to seek out and support dissidents and democratic reformers in unfree nations. And it is now the stated policy of the United States to seek the end of tyranny in all nations, for all time.

Until that day comes, the United States will not rest in our fight against oppression and terror. As President, I've had no higher responsibility than waging this struggle for the security and liberty of our people. After 9/11, I vowed that I would never forget the wounds from that day, and I'm not. That day defined my Presidency, and that day changed the course of history. And while we cannot know the path ahead, we can be confident in the destination: a world where the American people are safe and children around the world grow up with hope and peace.

We can be confident because freedom is universal. I strongly believe there's an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom. We can be confident because we're blessed with men and women who willingly put the welfare of their nation before themselves. As long as we have defenders of such character and courage, our Nation will always be in good hands and the future will always be bright.

So I thank you for inviting me today. I thank you for having given me the honor of a lifetime to serve as your Commander in Chief. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:58 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Robert M. Williams, USA, commandant, U.S. Army War College, who introduced the President; and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose M. Powell, USA, U.S. Army War College; Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., USA (Ret.), former commander, and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring the United States-Afghan Women's Council

December 18, 2008

Well, thank you for inviting me. [*Laughter*] A couple of things: One, Jack, thanks very much for lending the prestige of Georgetown to advance a noble cause that I agree is in our Nation's national security interests and our moral interests, and that is the empowerment of women in Afghanistan.

Ambassador, thank you for coming; thank you for working with our Government.

And I'm so proud of Laura. She could have come in and said, "Oh, why did you

drag me into this?" [*Laughter*] But instead chose to use her position to take on some important causes. And the advancement of women's rights in Afghanistan or freedom in Burma are noble causes that are essential to the peace of the world. And so I thank you for your leadership on this.

I just came back from Afghanistan, Ambassador, and I told the people there that the United States will not forget them, that it's essential that the people in Afghanistan realize that even though the Presidents have changed, our commitment to Afghanistan remains very strong at the governmental level, as well as in the private sector. And I am confident that the Afghan Women's Council sends that same signal that you can take a risk for peace and freedom, that your courage won't be really isolated in the face of thugs who can't stand the idea of women having freedom.

And so I take great heart in knowing that the Afghan Women's Council will survive beyond our time. Having said that, I can assure you that Laura is going to be involved, and so will I if she lets me. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, I'm off to give a little talk here, but I did want to come by and thank you all very much. I thank you for representing the best of America, and I thank you for recognizing that sometimes hard things require a lot of effort. It is really hard to go from tyranny to freedom. But it's going to happen. It is inevitable, because freedom is universal.

And so I'm glad to come by, and thanks for letting me butt in.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Yellow Oval Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John J. DeGioia, president, Georgetown University; and Afghanistan's Ambassador to the U.S. Said Tayeb Jawad. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included remarks by the First Lady, Ambassador Jawad, and Dr. DeGioia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the American Enterprise Institute and a Question-and-Answer Session

December 18, 2008

Christopher DeMuth. Mr. President, what's on your mind this morning?

The President. First, thanking you for being the leader that you've been, and thanking AEI for generating good thought. People in the public arena need to have support for philosophy, and that's what you provide. So I appreciate all your hard work.

I thought I'd share some thoughts about the Presidency; you could call it "reflections on a—by a guy who's headed out of town." [*Laughter*] And then I'd be glad to answer questions—and foreign policy, if you want to.

First, I have found that—and by the way, every President is going to conduct their own way of doing business there in the White House. So mine is just mine. I have found that in order to have good decisionmaking and a White House that functions well, that the President needs to articulate a set of principles from which he will not defer. In other words, a set of principles that are inviolate, such as the universality of freedom. That's part of my foreign policy. A cornerstone of my foreign policy is my firm belief that freedom is universal. And freedom applies to Methodists and Muslims, men and women.

I've just come from an Afghan Women's Council that Laura was hosting. I believe that Afghan women have a right to be free

just like women in America have a right to be free.

I believe in the collective wisdom of the American people. In other words, I believe we ought to trust individuals to be making decisions for their families. And it's always a tension between government—who can spend the money better, government or the individual? And that's been the basis of my tax cut policy.

The tax cuts, of course, have been, you know, obscured—the benefits of the tax cuts have been obscured by the recent economic crisis, no question about it. But when they finally take a look back at whether or not tax cuts were effective or not, it's hard to argue against 52 uninterrupted months of job growth as a result of tax policy. And so my hope is, is that after this crisis passes—and it will—that people continue to write about and articulate a public policy of low taxes.

My health care policy also was all aimed at empowering individuals to make decisions for themselves and an attempt to establish a marketplace for individual policy by changing the Tax Code or health savings accounts.

I've been a firm believer in markets. That may sound contradictory to some of the policies that I have been making recently, which I'd be glad to discuss with you. [*Laughter*] But I strongly believe in the principle that markets really do represent the—a free society. I mean, after all, people produce goods and services based upon the demand of the individual.

I can remember going to China when my dad was the envoy there, and everybody had the same clothes on. It was like there was no demand. And then having gone back at the Olympics and saw a society in which the marketplace is beginning to function, it's just a vastly different society. And I happen to believe it's a society that—societies based upon the marketplace will be not only more free but more hopeful.

I have found that a President should take on tough problems. The temptation in politics sometimes is just kick them down the road; like, it's too hard to do, so let's just let somebody else do it. One such problem was immigration reform. And in this case I chose to put the spotlight directly on the issue by giving an Oval Office address. Obviously, we weren't successful about getting comprehensive immigration reform. Nevertheless, I feel good about having tried.

Part of the Presidency is the willingness to say, no matter how tough the issue may look, if it requires solution, go after it. And we did. And I do believe there will be a blueprint for a way forward. In other words, we must change the system. It's not working. Obviously, there needs to be more border enforcement—and we're doing that—but people need to be treated with dignity, and there needs to be a way forward for people who are lawful citizens. And there needs to be a temporary-worker program, for example, so that our employers who are relying upon people who are doing jobs Americans weren't doing aren't criminalized.

Anyway, the job of the President is to tackle these problems. And finally, the job of the President is to look over the horizon. And that's—sometimes that gets you in conflict with the legislative branch. The legislative branch tends to have a shorter term horizon than the executive branch. And so Chris mentioned Social Security; it's an example of a President looking beyond the moment and recognizing that this system is going to be bust unless we change it.

And I worked to lay out solutions. Rather than just call attention to the issue, I actually used my State of the Union Address a couple of times to talk about how we can look at changing the benefit structure, based upon wealth, as a way forward.

And I also talked about something that was quite controversial, and that's personal savings accounts. And of course, any time you go from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan, and you're the

person who gets to define the benefits, you're not likely to want to give up that ability. Nevertheless, there too is an issue where the—it didn't succeed. But nevertheless, I used the Presidency, the executive branch, the concept of the Presidency, to lay out a way forward. And so I appreciate you giving me a chance to come by and just share thoughts.

One final thought on the Presidency is, the Presidency—the institution of the Presidency is more important than the individual. And that's what really makes our country great. The Presidents will come and go with their strengths and weaknesses, but the ship of state sails on because of the institution being greater than the person.

And so the job of the President is to not only make decisions—you campaign for office, and you lay out what you're going to do—but a lot of times decisions come that you didn't expect. You got to be hoping for the best and planning for the worst in your Presidency. But it's also to bring stability to the institution itself.

And so there are some reflections for you. I'd be glad to answer some of the questions.

Presidential Powers

Mr. DeMuth. I have a batch here for you. And I'd like to start with a few questions about the institution of the Presidency and with a genuinely hard, difficult question involving the President as constitutional officer. When you were a candidate in 2000, you said that you thought that you would veto legislation that you thought was unconstitutional. In office you've done what all of your predecessors—recent predecessor—have done, which is to sign legislation and leave the constitutional questions to the courts.

It was pretty clear, at least to me, that you had real constitutional reservations about McCain-Feingold. But you signed it, your Justice Department argued for it, rather than against it, in the Supreme Court and won. And I'm wondering if, looking back, what you think of the old practice, which is for the President to stick to his own views on the Constitution, rather than leaving the Supreme Court as the sole decider.

The President. Well, there's been a big debate about war powers inherent in the Constitution. And I made some decisions during this war based upon what I thought was my constitutional power. And so there's an example of—as opposed to a piece of legislation, there's an example of me not allowing—you know, initially having the courts define what the power is. And that's—this has been a long-time debate, constitutional debate, is what are the war powers of a President?

And as you know, I have been aggressive at pursuing the enemy within the bounds of the Constitution. And some of the decisions I have made are being adjudicated in the Court. And so I'll dodge the one on legislation, but I won't when it comes to taking a constitutional view of the office of the Presidency.

Working With Congress

Mr. DeMuth. On legislation and dealings with the Congress, tell me, which is harder for a Republican President, a Democratic Congress or a Republican Congress? [*Laughter*]

The President. Sometimes they're both equally difficult. [*Laughter*] A Republican Congress was easier in some ways because we were able to work with the leadership to—on the timing of votes, for example, or judicial nominees. In some ways it was more difficult because when you worked with the Congress, there was a ability at times to forgo Republican principles, and it put the President in a awkward position.

For example, budgeting: Without the line-item veto, the President is in an awkward position when it comes to budgeting. So we sit down the leadership and say, here's the top line. We agreed to the top line. That's what the budgets did in the

top line—with the top line. And yet, the slices of the pie were, in the recent past, really earmarks. And so without the line-item veto, it made it very difficult for me to bring budgets discipline. They could have—people said, well, just veto the whole budget. And my answer to that is, we, in good faith, negotiated the size of the pie. And so some Republican principles were violated when it came to earmarks, for example.

It's easier to veto bills when you're going against the—when the Democrats are in power, because, after all, it's Republicans who crafted the bills coming in. And so both are difficult, and both are necessary, and both have been interesting. [*Laughter*]

No Child Left Behind Act/Medicare

Mr. DeMuth. Presidents have to make compromises to get legislation that they really want. You made several compromises in winning your first big legislative victory, the No Child Left Behind program. Were there compromises that you made in obtaining that legislation, in legislation or execution, that you regret as you look back on it?

The President. I'm pleased with the progress in No Child Left Behind. The philosophy of No Child Left Behind was that in return for money, you must measure. That, of course, created some issues. Some Republicans and conservatives said, "What business is it of the Federal Government to insist upon accountability?" After all, there shouldn't be much of a role for the Federal Government. And people on the other side said, "We don't want to be measured."

I believe it is a Republican and conservative principle that we ought to ask for results. And if you're going to spend money, then it makes sense to say, "Are we achieving results?"

Secondly, as you know, I campaigned on compassionate conservatism. It's conservative to ask for accountability, and it's compassionate to insist that inner-city children be able to read at the fourth grade level. And yet, oftentimes the system was so process oriented that the school districts would say, how old are you, and if you're 10, you're supposed to be here; and 11, here; 12, here—without wondering whether or not the child can read or write and add and subtract. So the basic principle inherent in No Child Left Behind, the philosophy of it, remained very much intact in the bill, and it's working.

And the Medicare bill—a quite controversial bill—was one where Republicans wrote the bill, and there was some compromising inherent in the bill. Nevertheless, the two broad principles remained intact: one, if you're going to make a promise, reform the program so it's effective. So, like, for example, we paid thousands of dollars for surgery but not a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the surgery from being needed in the first place. And we put market-oriented principles in the bill. You probably remember the debate where the—you know, there was a big debate about how much would this cost. And the CBO came up with a number, and I think it's now 40 percent less than what was anticipated because of market principles. Nevertheless, the bill wasn't as strong on market principles as I would have liked to have seen it.

And so yes, you're obviously making compromises all the time with Congress. The key is to compromise without compromising principle. You can compromise points, but don't sell out the principle that is inherent in the bill.

National Economy

Mr. DeMuth. You'll be surprised that I have several questions about the auto bailout. [*Laughter*] Let me put it in the context of this discussion. Isn't the Detroit bailout an example of interest groups thinking they can get a better deal from the executive branch than from the Congress?

The President. That's an interesting way of putting it. First, let me take a step back.

I haven't made up my mind yet, so you're assuming something is going to happen. [*Laughter*] This is a difficult time for a free market person. Under ordinary circumstances, failed entities—failing entities should be allowed to fail.

I have concluded these are not ordinary circumstances, for a lot of reasons. Our financial system is interwoven domestically, internationally. And we got to the point where, if a major institution were to fail, there is great likelihood that there would be a ripple effect throughout the world, and the average person would be really hurt.

And what makes this issue difficult to explain is—to the average guy is, why should I be using my money because of excesses on Wall Street? And I understand that frustration. I completely understand why people are nervous about it. I was in the Roosevelt Room, and Chairman Bernanke and Secretary Paulson, after a month of every weekend where they're calling, saying, we got to do this for AIG, or this for Fannie and Freddie, came in and said, the financial markets are completely frozen, and if we don't do something about it, it is conceivable we will see a depression greater than the Great Depression.

And so I analyzed that and decided I didn't want to be the President during a depression greater than the Great Depression or the beginning of a depression greater than the Great Depression. So we moved, and moved hard. The autos obviously are very fragile, and I've laid out a couple of principles. One, I am worried about a disorderly bankruptcy and what it would do to the psychology and the markets. They're beginning to thaw, but there's still a lot of uncertainty.

I'm also worried about putting good money after bad; that means whether or not these autos will become viable in the future. And frankly, there's one other consideration, and that is, I feel an obligation to my successor. I've thought about what it would be like for me to become President during this period. I have an—I believe that good policy is not to dump him a major catastrophe in his first day of office. So those are some of the considerations that we're weighing.

What was the question on autos? [*Laughter*]

U.S. Auto Industry

Mr. DeMuth. The President-elect said——

The President. Oh, you said Congress and the executive branch.

Mr. DeMuth. Yes, yes.

The President. Well, just remember a majority of Congress voted for a plan that we thought was a good plan. It didn't get the requisite votes in the Senate in order to move it on, but there was a majority vote if you add up the House and the Senate. So the Congress, in one way, expressed its will for a way forward with some—with a plan, or a strategy for viability.

Mr. DeMuth. But there must be some question in your mind whether the two political branches are better at bankruptcy restructuring than a bankruptcy court. I mean, we do have a law.

The President. Absolutely.

Mr. DeMuth. Do you think when everybody stops——

The President. I think under normal circumstances, no question, the bankruptcy court is the best way to sort through credit and debt and restructuring, no question. These aren't normal circumstances; that's the problem. This is—it's a hard issue for political people, because people never know how bad it could have been. And so the decisions you make are easy to—for people to say, "Why did he do that? Why is he wasting our money on this?" Or, "Why is he doing that?" Because without a catastrophe, the reasoning doesn't—it just doesn't really make it down to the grassroots.

People look at, "My money being used because Wall Street got excessive." And I

make the case that I didn't want to do this. It's the last thing I wanted to do. Nevertheless, I felt compelled to do it, because it would make life worse for you. We lost 533,000 jobs last month. What would another million jobs lost do to the economy? What would that do to the psychology in markets? What would that do—how would that affect the working people? And so as you can tell, we're all in, in this administration. And if need be, we'll be in for more.

National Economy

Mr. DeMuth. It may be bad form to recall campaign rhetoric during a transition, but I remember President-elect Obama during the campaign blaming the crisis on Bush deregulation. Do you have any opinion on that assessment of the causes?

The President. I'm looking forward to the true history of this financial crisis being written. No question, part of the crisis came about because of excesses in lending in the housing market. My administration early on expressed concern about implicit government guarantees and the mortgage industry in Fannie and Freddie, and that we were concerned about excesses in lending and concerned about Freddie and Fannie having too much capacity to lend because of the implicit guarantee. And so we called for a regulator.

But this will all be sorted out when they finally analyze what went right or what went wrong. When you're the President, you can think about what went right and what went wrong; you can analyze it. But when you're getting phone calls from the Secretary of the Treasury saying, we got to do something on AIG, otherwise there could be an international collapse, that's where your mind is. And that's where my mind—it turns out this isn't one of the Presidencies where you ride off into the sunset, you know, kind of—[*laughter*]—waving goodbye.

President's Advice to Elected Officials

Mr. DeMuth. Do you have—on Fannie and Freddie, do you have any advice for our new President, such as that they be abolished? [*Laughter*]

The President. No, my advice for all elected officials after this crisis passes is to remember that markets and free enterprise is what made the country great, and that these measures were temporary measures. They're not an excuse for the Government to be running automobile companies, if that's the decision I make, or for the Government to be always involved in mortgages; that there is a proper role for Government, which is oversight; and that the role of Government really is to create an environment in which risk takers feel comfortable taking risk and where capital moves as freely as possible.

That's why I am a big believer in free trade, for example. Trade opens markets; trade gives—and fair trade, I might add—and trade gives people an opportunity to risk and have their products sold in environments other than the domestic environment.

The danger is, of course, that people who believe the government can manage the economy better than the private sector will use this decision as an excuse to keep Government involved. And that's why AEI is going to be important long after my Presidency, to be talking about the merits of markets and the merits of free enterprise.

I hosted this international conference, and what was interesting out of the international conference was that people said we should defend the marketplace and defend trade. One of the great fears I have is—a couple of things—one, that the United States could become isolationist. We have done so in the past, and it's kind of a—could be a fatigue about helping liberate people or helping people advance or helping people on HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa—you know: "We're tired of doing this. Can't other people do it?"

That could lead to isolationism. I'm very worried about that. The world needs America's involvement. We're a compassionate, decent, strong nation.

And I'm worried about protectionism. Protectionism tends to be the twin of isolationism. And I'm worried about protectionism because I—if you study the economic past, protectionism is what caused the Great Depression to be a greater depression: Smoot-Hawley Tariff. If you're interested in development and helping poor nations become less poor, then you ought to be an advocate for trade. It's one thing to give out grants, but the amount of wealth generated by trade overwhelms the amount of money that the world gives out in grants.

And so anyway, keep going.

Government Bureaucracy

Mr. DeMuth. Keep going. I have a question or two about inside the executive branch.

The President. Okay.

Mr. DeMuth. Presidents also have to contend with the fourth branch of Government; that is the bureaucracy, the permanent Government.

The President. Oh, I thought you were going to say the press. [*Laughter*]

Mr. DeMuth. We'll leave the press——

The President. Symbiotic relationship with the press, I want you to know.

Mr. DeMuth. That's right, it's the bureaucracy and the press. The bureaucracy can outmaneuver the White House. And domestic and foreign policy agencies have, you may have noticed, opposed your policies and undermined them on occasion. And I wonder if you have any advice for future Presidents about how to contend with that very difficult problem.

The President. Make sure information gets into the Oval Office on a timely basis so that when you find bureaucracies delaying policy, then you do something about it. It's not inevitable that—the best bureaucratic move, if people disagree with policy, is just to delay and hope the President isn't paying attention.

And so therefore, the structure of the office is going to be important, and I've tried to keep a relatively flat organizational chart so that key players can come into the office on a regular basis. I did so for two reasons. I like to hear different points of view, and I want people to feel comfortable coming and saying, "Here's what I think," or, "Here's this delay taking place." "Do you understand that you said this and then nothing has happened, Mr. President?"

And the other thing is, is that a lot of the job is to build a sense of teamwork, a sense of team. Listen, these people in the White House work incredibly long hours. And if they don't see the President, it creates anxieties. And so people walk in, and they tell me what's on their mind. They go home and say, "You know, I told him—you know, I saw the President." [*Laughter*] They didn't say whether I listened or not. [*Laughter*]

And so one way to deal with the bureaucracy is to be well informed. And the best way to be well informed is to make sure you have an organization that enables information to get in the Oval Office in a timely fashion. And therefore, you're going to need to have a Chief of Staff—at least this is the way I thought it should be done; I'm not telling anybody else how to do it. You scholars can figure out whether it's right or wrong, how it's worked relative to other Presidents.

But my Chiefs of Staff, Andy Card and Josh Bolten, are—have been—are unusual people because they have not said, everybody must go to me before you go see the President. In other words, they're not junior prime ministers. They are facilitators who understand that this system suits me best, and therefore, aren't jealous about the time that I allocate to somebody who they haven't necessarily blessed in the White House, in the Oval Office. And so it's worked pretty good.

President's Staff

Mr. DeMuth. That's fascinating. Let me pursue one point that you made. Ronald Reagan was once asked if it was true that his Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense were arguing openly in front of him. And he said, "All the time." Have you encouraged people to argue to move the hard questions in the Oval Office?

The President. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Creating tension is good for decisionmaking, so long as it doesn't become destructive. And I see Leon there; we've had some serious debates inside the White House on stem cell. And they were open, and they were—all opinions were welcomed. And there was a variety of opinions.

Sometimes issues are easy to resolve, where the national security adviser and the domestic policy adviser could come in and say, "We've discussed the issue internally, Mr. President, and we all agree." But in matters of war, for example, there's difference of opinions, the surge, for example. There was a lot of different opinions on the surge. And that's the way it should be. People say, "Well, do you ever hear any other voices other than, like, a few people?" Of course I do. And I have enjoyed listening to the debates among people I work with. And I also like the idea of people being able to walk into the Oval Office and said, "Have you thought of this?" Or, "The debate is headed this way; I'd like you to consider this."

And sometimes that can be disruptive, obviously, but the President has got to have a—be grounded enough and have enough judgment to know how to manage the advisers.

Bioethics/Stem Cell Research

Mr. DeMuth. You mentioned stem cell research.

The President. Yes.

Mr. DeMuth. Some people forget that before 9/11, that was one of the big issues of your first months in office.

The President. It was.

Mr. DeMuth. It was the subject of your first national address on television.

The President. It was.

Mr. DeMuth. And I wonder if looking back, you think—what you think you're most important legacy is in the area of bioethics? And what you think your most important accomplishments were? If there was more that could have been done?

The President. Well, I told the American people I believe in a culture of life. I believe a healthy society is one that protects the most vulnerable among us. And clearly, the most vulnerable among us are those who aren't born yet. Obviously, abortion is a very controversial subject, and it's one that creates a lot of emotions.

I try to diffuse the emotions by saying, look, good people disagree on the issue; I understand that. But throughout my Presidency, I have tried to help advance the culture of life. And one of the really classic tensions between the culture of life is that with science. And it's—Leon Kass instructed me throughout this process that tensions existed for a long time and will continue to exist.

And the fundamental question with stem cells is, do you destroy life to save life? And it's a difficult issue for a lot of people. I came down on the side that there are other opportunities available to save lives other than the destruction of life. And secondly, I was concerned about using taxpayers' money to—that would end up destroying life. There's a lot of people in our country that don't want their money spent on—for that purpose.

I developed a policy, which I thought sounded rational. And that is, there have been some stem cells lines already developed, embryonic stem cell lines developed prior to this decision; therefore, we should go forward with research on them. But from that point forward, no destruction of life with Federal money. Since then, adult skin cells have been used to develop the equivalent of embryonic stem cells. And so science has advanced, and at the same

time, we were able to stake a claim for the culture of life. It was a very emotional issue. And that's what happens when you confront controversial topics.

And I believe the President should have a core set of beliefs and stand on those beliefs.

Health Care System/Prescription Drugs

Mr. DeMuth. Thank you. The U.S. is one of the—it's the only advanced society that doesn't have comprehensive price controls on pharmaceutical drugs. We have the highest-priced drugs, and we have the highest rate of innovation in lifesaving new drugs. We're moving, clearly, toward increased price controls at the administrative level and in Congress. Pharmaceutical companies are cutting back on their R&D investments. Do you think this trend is inevitable? Do you think that your Medicare Part D reforms will make that problem worse, or by introducing market mechanisms, help be the solution?

The President. The whole medical debate is headed toward whether or not the Government ought to be setting the price of medicine. I believe that we ought to resist that and cause markets to flourish. And we don't have a real functioning market in health care right now. I'm going to get to the drugs in a minute but—generically, to use a drug term that the problem is, is that you've got many people's policies being paid by somebody else, and there's—so therefore, there's no market. People don't say, well, how much is this costing, or what's the quality of health care with this person or this hospital?

So the consumer—there's no consumerism. There's no demand for better price. And so part of the policies I described early were to, like, do health savings accounts or changing the Tax Codes, all aiming at putting the patient in the midst of the market, getting that person to demand better quality at better price.

In terms of drugs, I am concerned about Government pricing drugs to the point where drug manufacturers don't have enough capital to keep reinvesting in new discoveries. One of the great things about our medicine is we're the best in the world. And all policy ought to be aimed at keeping us the best in the world. There are policies in place that allow manufacturers to amortize the cost of their R&D, and then generics become available. And it seems like to me that we can do a better job of making people aware of generic drugs.

And part of Medicare Part D does just that. It shows seniors what options are available, and they get to choose a variety of plans. I remember the debates on Medicare. People said, well—and kind of inherent in the debate was this sense of—that, well, maybe seniors don't know how to choose things. You know, they're used to the Government plan, and therefore, isn't it a—too much of an imposition to provide people with all different options? And when we were selling the Medicare reform, I can remember going to senior centers, and there would be seniors looking at 10 different plans to choose from. And people were competing for their business. And these plans would go out and find the generics, to make them available.

And so I—the marketplace is a much better allocator of resources than the Government trying to allocate resources. And secondly, the American people need to know, if somebody needs financial help, if somebody is poor and destitute, they'll get help in our system. And there's a lot of help for people who are destitute.

National Economy

Mr. DeMuth. A related question is the ownership society, a major theme of yours. Will it survive the financial crisis? Will we recover our bearings? Are the initiatives you put forward in the name of greater ownership going to—are they going to come back after——

The President. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, you know, the danger, of course, is that Government stays so involved that

markets don't really develop. Just some thoughts on this: I am—the markets sometimes create excesses. We're living through the consequences of the excess.

I quipped in Texas that Wall Street got drunk, and we got a hangover. And that's what happened. There wasn't much transparency. There was so much liquidity that people felt like they needed to invent product to get in front of the money train. And the danger, of course, will be that we—instead of having rational regulation that's balanced, we'll overregulate. And if we do, then it's going to make it harder for the ownership society, because it's going to make it harder for free enterprise to flourish. But the idea of owning small businesses has been a integral part of our country's past and should be in the future.

The key there is the tax policy. Will we price small businesses out of the capacity to retain capital and grow? So most small businesses pay individual income taxes because they're subchapter S or limited partnerships. And so when you hear people say, "tax the rich," when they start raising that upper bracket, they're also taxing a lot of small-business owners. And policy ought to be asking the question, how do we encourage small business ownership growth, not how do we penalize it?

So overregulating the overall economy will make it harder for the ownership society, and I just hope that doesn't happen. I don't think it will. I understand the concerns; I share the concerns, and there's going to be a lot of people like AEI speaking out against keeping the Government at the helm of the economy. And good tax policy and good regulatory policy beyond that will help small businesses grow. That's an integral part of the ownership society.

Same with housing. The key on housing is, obviously, the interest rates: How much does it cost to buy a house? And people are going to own homes. And the housing market will lead this recovery when it starts. And it's going to take a while though. I'm not an economist, but it'll take a while. And there are some encouraging signs, not many, but some. Evidently the amount of mortgage applications rose, which is a good sign. I don't know whether that's working off unsold homes yet, but it's a good sign.

And by the way, there's a lot of talk about stimulus. And I'd like to remind our fellow citizens, there is a stimulus package taking place right now, and that is the reduction of gasoline prices. And the reduction of gasoline prices from July to now on an amortized basis—if you take the reduction here, and you amortize it over a year, it's about $2,000 a family, which is an effective stimulus package.

Energy

Mr. DeMuth. Let me ask you two questions, if I may, about energy policy. The first is, are you satisfied with the progress in recent years in reviving nuclear energy? The second is about ethanol. The question says, "Ethanol subsidies are popular with politicians of both parties"——

The President. Like me.

Mr. DeMuth. ——"but not with ordinary folk outside the State of Iowa." [*Laughter*] Does this have something to do with the timing of the first presidential primary?

The President. Sounds like some of my friends in Texas asking that question. [*Laughter*]

Mr. DeMuth. You can talk about nuclear power.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] The country needs to overcome its fear about nuclear power if we want to have ample electricity so we can grow and be good stewards of the environment.

Part of the problem with nuclear power was that the regulatory scheme was such that people would risk a lot of capital and then have to seek permission for final approval late in the process and would find themselves tied up in a court of law. And so they had enormous capital spent, earning no money, waiting for permission to build

the plant. And therefore, capital chose not to go into the nuclear industry.

In terms of safety, the engineering has changed dramatically from the past. And I think people who are objective on this issue would tell you that nuclear power plants are very safe.

In terms of regulatory relief, as a result of the last energy bill I signed—I think it's the last energy bill—we began to streamline the process, and as well was we provided some insurance incentives for people to start building. I'm satisfied that we're beginning to change the environment. I'm satisfied that more Americans understand why we ought to be using nuclear power. I am pleased that there are, I think, like, 13 permits that have been on application. And I am pleased that some plants are beginning to expand on their current footprint.

I am not pleased about how slow we're moving overall though. I think we ought to really get after nuclear power, I mean, if we really want to solve our dependency upon foreign energy.

What's going to happen is, by the way, the technologies will help change our habits. For example, there's going to be battery technologies in automobiles that will enable people to drive the first 40 miles on electricity. And everybody is going to—oh, that's great, hybrid plug-in batteries. The question will be, where do we get the electricity? And it's very important to pursue nuclear energy.

Secondly, I'm a big supporter—I presume I'm one of those guys you were talking about on ethanol, pandering to the corn. Actually, I think it's important—I felt it was important to begin a diversification of our energy sources. And whether or not the ethanol market will stay viable, I don't know, but it has certainly become a relatively significant part of our mix right now. And I laid out a mandatory goal that we ought to head toward, because I'd rather have our farmers growing our energy than rely upon certain parts of the world that don't like us.

Presidential Transition/Defense Spending/ U.S. Armed Forces

Mr. DeMuth. You mentioned the word stimulus. And as you know, your successor is thinking about a big new stimulus program emphasizing public works, I believe. An issue that has interested a lot of people at AEI recently is this: While we're looking for public expenditures to help stimulate the economy, we're also at a point where defense expenditures are I think something like 3.4 or 3.5 percent of GDP, very, very constrained. A lot of weapons systems that a lot of people like to buy from us are being closed down, even after we've only produced fewer of the weapons than had been anticipated.

One of the things we're pursuing is that a very effective stimulus program would be a significant increase in defense expenditures. Have these ideas been kicking around the White House, the Pentagon? This is just think-tankery so far. I wonder if——

The President. No, that's good. I'm glad you're doing it. No, no, we're not going to tell President-elect Obama how to run his administration, nor will I spend a lot of time second-guessing him. I believe once the President gets off the stage, you get off the stage and let the next man do the job.

Matter of fact, I worked hard to make this transition a smooth transition. I want him to succeed. And I know you do as well. And so we really haven't been trying to help him fashion an economic policy. It's his job when he gets sworn in.

And I fully understand, however, your concerns about the defense budgeting. There will be a lot of debate about systems, what's relevant and what's not relevant. One of the successes of this administration—and Secretary Rumsfeld gets a lot of

credit for having started a major transformation of our military, so that the weapons systems we build are relevant to the war that we're going to be fighting in the 21st century, or hopefully, not fighting, but be prepared to fight.

I'm sure you follow this, Chris. We've changed our basing around the world so that our forces no longer are configured based upon cold war problems, but based upon the ability to keep morale high and move quickly. Our soldiers are carrying unbelievably new technologies, using Predators to use over-the-wall intelligence to be able to have better battlefield awareness. They're well equipped.

In terms of the big systems, those will be choices that are always in conflict. I can remember campaigning in 2000, and they said, "Name a weapons system you'll get rid of." I said, the Arrow. [*Laughter*] I think it was the Arrow system; not the bow and arrow, but it was a big, huge cannon. And it turns out, the cannon had parts made in 42 States. Needless to say, it was hard to put the cannon on the shelf. I didn't think we needed a huge cannon that required enormous ships and trucks to move around in a—what turns out to be a battle that requires special operators to move in the dark of night, on real-time intelligence, in a quick way.

So there will be a lot of debate about weapons systems, no question about it. And a lot of communities around the country rely upon defense spending and the jobs that accrue as a result of defense spending.

By the way, people say, "What are you going to miss?" I know I'm not—I'm asking myself questions. [*Laughter*] But I'm going to miss being the Commander in Chief of our military. My view of America is obviously different from everybody else's, but I get to look at these troops, and I marvel at their courage. And I marvel at the fact that these folks have volunteered in a time of war.

And the Commander in Chief—at least I've tried to say to our troops: Thank you. Thank you for your courage; thank your families. You do that by visiting the wounded and meeting with the families of the fallen. I've been reading a lot about Abraham Lincoln recently. I just finished James McPherson's book, and once again, he talks about how Lincoln would visit with the enlisted folks as well as the generals, visit with the widows as well as the moms, visit with the wounded. And it's going to be very important for the country as we head down the future to recognize that this all-volunteer force is—needs to be sustained by commitment as well as—by monetary commitment as well as psychological commitment. We got to be with these kids.

War on Terror

Mr. DeMuth. Another book that you famously read was Eliot Cohen's "Supreme Command." And he later went to work for you.

The President. Yes, he did.

Mr. DeMuth. Do you think he got it right in that book?

The President. I can't even remember the book. [*Laughter*] I remember reading it, but give me a synopsis. [*Laughter*]

Mr. DeMuth. That——

The President. You can't remember it either. [*Laughter*]

Mr. DeMuth. No. [*Laughter*]

The President. Just teasing. Did he work for you at AEI? Is that why you're——

Mr. DeMuth. He was on our council of academic advisers.

The President. Yes, okay. I did read it.

Mr. DeMuth. The essential point is that in history, in wartime, Presidents do well not leaving the war to the military, but being the supreme commander themselves.

The President. Oh, that's right, yes. Well, you're going to have to rely upon the military a lot. There's four basic constituencies for a President during war; one is the American people. And this has been a difficult assignment, to convince the people that what happens in Iraq matters to our own security at home, that what happens

in Afghanistan matters to the security, and that—the first task was to remove the regimes that threatened peace and threatened our security. And the next task is to not replace one strongman with another, but encourage a democracy to grow, because we're in an ideological struggle. And it's the ideology of liberty that defeats the ideology of hate every time.

A second constituency was the enemy. And they got to know we're going to go after them all times, all places, unrelenting pressure on them.

Third, in the case of Iraq, were the Iraqi people; they wanted to know whether or not America was going to keep its word, because if not, they're going to find a local militia that could keep their families safe.

And the fourth is the military. And the military must know that the mission is just, the goals are clear, and the President will not be making decisions with their lives based upon an opinion poll. And, anyway.

Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin of Russia

Mr. DeMuth. Thank you. You said that you'd entertain a question or two about foreign policy.

The President. Sure.

Mr. DeMuth. Let me ask you another one. You caught a lot of flak for saying that you'd looked into Vladimir Putin's soul and seen a friend.

The President. I looked in his eyes and saw his soul.

Mr. DeMuth. In his eyes and saw his soul.

The President. Right.

Mr. DeMuth. Thank you. He——

The President. Sometimes Presidents get misquoted. [*Laughter*]

Russia-U.S. Relations

Mr. DeMuth. That was in I think 2001. And the Putin of 2004 was very different, and in 2008 is different still. What's your thinking on the evolution of the Kremlin during your Presidency?

The President. First of all, there's common ground between Russia and the United States. And one area of common concern is the issue of proliferation. And there's a lot of cooperation taking place to work constructively with Russia to make sure that raw materials don't get in the hands of rogue regimes or terrorist groups.

Secondly, we found common ground on Iran, believe it or not. People don't think we have, but I know we have. And that is that the Russians are just as worried about Iran developing a nuclear weapon and the capacity to deliver it as we are.

And I've told this story publicly, that Vladimir and I were talking—I think it was, like, '06 maybe—and he went to the leader in Iran and said, "You know, George Bush thinks you should have civilian nuclear power and so do I, but we don't believe you should have the right to make that uranium, to enrich it, because you've violated IAEA treaties, and therefore, we don't believe you're trustworthy. And therefore, why don't you just take—we'll deliver the fuel, and we'll pick up the fuel, and you can have your nuclear power. And if you continue to insist on enriching, it must mean you want something other than nuclear power—civilian nuclear power like you've claimed."

Obviously, we have big differences over Georgia. And I saw Vladimir at the Olympics right as the troops moved into Georgia. And I was—I expressed my concerns, and he expressed his. I would say that our relationship is still friendly, although I haven't seen him much because there's a new President. And I really haven't had that much of a chance to get to know President Medvedev.

I will tell you that—my only point is there's common interests, and there's going to be a lot of tensions. And the President has got to be in a position where he can deal with those tensions in a way that doesn't send chilling signals with other allies.

President-Elect Barack Obama

Mr. DeMuth. I have a few general questions. At some point—maybe it's already happened—you'll sit down with President-elect Obama and give him a little candid President-to-President advice, lessons learned. Would you be willing to share any of that advice with the rest of us?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] He came in the Oval Office. We had a very good discussion. I was impressed by the questions he asked. And I told him I wouldn't reveal them, so that if he ever asked for my advice again, he would feel comfortable doing it knowing that it wouldn't be out there for public consumption.

I'll tell you this though, I will say this: The guy loves his family a lot. And we spent some time talking about what it meant to be—for me to be a dad with two daughters in the White House. And he's a dad who will have two daughters in the White House. And his family is a top priority for him.

Presidential Advice for Conservatives

Mr. DeMuth. I have another advice-like question. Political conservatives believe that they're in for a period in the wilderness. What advice do you have for political conservatives in the years ahead?

The President. Look at history. I think you're old enough to remember 1964. Nineteen sixty-four was a wipeout for conservatives and Republicans. In my State of Texas, the legislature was 149 Democrats and 1 Republican. [*Laughter*] And there were no Republicans in the State senate. I think there was one elected Congressman—Bruce Alger out of Dallas—and John Tower wasn't up for election. I don't know if there were any elected Republicans at the courthouse. And yet in 1966, Republicans and conservatives rebounded; one of whom got elected that year, it was George H.W. Bush, by the way, out of Houston.

And my point is, is that things go in cycles in politics. Now, what—in order to win, it's important to recruit good candidates who stand on principle. Most Americans believe what we believe: that Government ought to be limited and wise; that taxes ought to be low; that we ought to encourage entrepreneurship and small businesses; and that we ought to have a strong national defense.

And I'm a little concerned about the tone of the immigration debate, labeling our party as "anti" people. It's one thing to say they want the border enforced, and I understand that. But if a group of people think that a political party is against them, it doesn't matter what else you stand for. And the tone, in my judgment, at times got to be "anti." At one point in our history we had too many Jewish people and too many Italians. I don't know if you remember that. And it was—I'm just confident people were saying, "I can't believe this is the America that I came to live in, where I'm 'anti'—people are 'anti' me."

And so we're going to have to work, like, with the Latino vote to say, we care about you, we hear you, and we share your values: faith and family, small businesses, military vets or, you know, disproportionate—more Latinos serve as a percentage of their—of population in the military than any other group, if I'm not mistaken.

So we'll come back, absolutely. And I'll be out there, the old sage, sitting around, you know—[*laughter*]—"if only you did it this way." [*Laughter*]

President's Post-Presidency Agenda

Mr. DeMuth. I have a couple of old sage questions for you.

The President. Sure, an old sage at 62, but——

Mr. DeMuth. Well——

The President. ——headed to retirement. [*Laughter*]

Mr. DeMuth. Immigration is a subject that you've—you thought a lot about——

The President. I have.

Mr. DeMuth. ——before you came to the White House, had very strong views on. Is this one of the issues that you might

stay involved in in your post-White House——

The President. I'm going to stay involved in the freedom initiative, that's for certain. I am concerned that our country becomes isolationist, I really am. I—you know, there is a debate that basically says, well, maybe certain people shouldn't be free. It's like if you ever heard—people say, "Bush is imposing his view." Well, if you ever hear somebody say that, they must not understand the universality of freedom. Freedom is not mine to give. I happen to believe it's a gift of an Almighty to everybody. And therefore, the role of the United States is to help people be free. And that—you know, sometimes, obviously, you never want to use—I mean, you only use your military reluctantly.

But I'm not talking about just freedom from tyranny, I'm talking about freedom from disease. You know, an enemy that we face, and will face for the next decades, can only recruit when they find hopeless people. Think about their recruiting posters: "Hey, join us, you get to be a suicide bomber." You have to be pretty hopeless to fall prey to that evil.

And so therefore, it's in our national interests to help free people from poverty and disease.

And so I'll be involved with the freedom movement. I'm particularly involved right now with the malaria and HIV/AIDS initiative, PEPFAR. I will be involved with free trade. As I told you, I'm worried about protectionism. I am very disappointed that the Colombia free trade agreement and the Panama free trade agreement and the South Korea free trade agreement did not get a vote prior to the election.

An initiative that I believe is a very important initiative is the faith-based and community-based initiative. The fundamental principle behind that initiative is, if your program works, we should help you, if it meets a societal need. For example, if you're a drug addict, and you know, you believe you need a higher power to help heal your heart so you get off drugs, and the program that you're going to works, I have no problem giving a voucher to that person so they can redeem it at a program that works.

And so there will be a lot of things I'm going to do out of Southern Methodist University. I will—this will not compete with AEI. It's going to be a policy center; it will be complementary—[*laughter*]—to AEI.

Mr. DeMuth. We've talked to them.

The President. And we'll be living in Texas. Laura is going to be—listen, my wife has been a fabulous First Lady, she really has. She has used her position to be able to articulate some important causes. She heralds teachers, she promotes literacy, she believes strongly in freedom in Burma, and she is very much involved in the Afghan women. And she will continue doing—using her position as ex-First Lady to do that.

The Presidency/Texas Sport Teams

Mr. DeMuth. I have two more questions along these same lines.

The President. Okay.

Mr. DeMuth. These are very serious questions, and I'll ask them both. The first is, what will you miss the least? [*Laughter*] And the second is, when you're back in the Lone Star State, which sports teams are you going to be paying the most attention to?

The President. All Texas teams, of course. You know, I have been—first of all, some will probably say, "Oh, the press." Well, that's not true. I've had a good relationship with the White House press. I don't like some of the things they say. Of course, they don't like some of the things I say. But we've had a good relationship with the press. And the press and the Presidency is a very important relationship, and it requires a lot of work to get along. But I recognize they need me for news, and I need them for outlets. And so it's been a good relationship in some ways. I don't—as I say, I don't like everything they write,

so therefore, ignore that part that I don't like. [*Laughter*]

I'll miss the petty name-calling—I mean, I won't miss it. I have been disappointed at times about the politics of personal destruction. It's not the first time it's ever happened in our history, but I was—I came with the idea of changing the tone in Washington, and frankly, didn't do a very good job of it. You know, war brings out a lot of heated rhetoric and a lot of emotion; I fully understand that. I know that's the case. But surely we can do a better job in Washington of treating each other with respect. I don't want to be a self-serving fellow, but I have never used my position as President to personally denigrate somebody.

And so that's something—I'm not going to miss it at all. I'm disappointed in how—the words that came out of people's mouth, and I'm very disappointed of how the process has treated some of my friends. I'm disappointed in the judicial process, for example, where our nominees just got held out there forever. Never had a chance to get a hearing, and yet all kinds of stuff were occasionally floated on them about their reputations. It's going to be hard to attract good people to the political process if people show up and feel like that their integrity or decency will be, you know, challenged at every turn. There's nothing wrong with challenging policy. There is something wrong with tearing people down for the—trying to help somebody else gain politically.

And I won't miss—I'll miss a lot. As I told you, I'll miss being the Commander in Chief. I'll miss the people I've worked with in the White House. We have a—I tell people, some days happy, some days not so happy, every day is joyous. And that's a true statement. I'm working with some awesome people, and I love them dearly and will miss seeing them every morning. But since I'll be an e-mailer again, I'm sure I'll be able to—[*laughter*]—stay in touch.

Mr. DeMuth. President Bush, I—permit me to thank you for coming over here and for these very deep reflections. I'd also like to impose my thanks and that of my colleagues to you for your great service to America——

The President. Thank you.

Mr. DeMuth. ——and for your steadiness of purpose and your tremendous optimism and idealism and serenity of mind, which has been just astonishing to behold.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mr. DeMuth. And I know that these will not be your last words, and I know that we all look forward to welcoming you back to AEI as Citizen Bush early and often.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thanks for letting me come by. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher DeMuth, president, American Enterprise Institute; Leon Kass, former Chairman, President's Council on Bioethics; former Secretary of State George P. Shultz; former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia; and former Rep. Bruce R. Alger. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Steve Scully of C–SPAN
December 18, 2008

The Presidency

Mr. Scully. Mr. President, as we speak to you in the Oval Office, you're really one of only two individuals that can view the Presidency through your dad's eyes and your own. What has surprised you about this job?

The President. Well, first of all, being the son of the President is much harder than being the President. I agonized for my dad. When they would say things about him that I didn't think were fair, I agonized, because I love him so much. And I sometimes didn't react so well. I mean I would get angry at whoever said it and, you know; anyway, I was frustrated.

The President is a much different role, and therefore, I mean, I understand it comes with the job when people say things about you. And so we've got kind of a role reversal. My dad agonizes when he reads stuff about me. So I found that being President is actually easier than being the son of the President in many ways.

2000 Presidential Election

Mr. Scully. You took the job with a Florida recount, a shortened transition period, and as you reflect on that time 8 years ago, were you in any way at a disadvantage in taking over this office?

The President. That's an interesting question. I do think it—the Florida recount set kind of an ugly mood amongst some in the electorate. In other words, the election was—in their minds, was in doubt. That made it harder to come as a—to unify the country after the election.

In terms of the transition, we had—I had a lot of experienced people that were ready to hit the ground. And they did a remarkable job of getting us ready to assume office when we did.

Presidents Meeting

Mr. Scully. You announced yesterday that the former Presidents will meet with the incoming President——

The President. Right.

Mr. Scully. ——here at White House. Has that ever happened before?

The President. I don't think so. And this is an idea that President-elect Obama suggested here in the Oval Office when he came to visit me. And I'm going to follow up on it. I'll be the host, and I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be an interesting lunch.

Mr. Scully. What will you talk about?

The President. I don't know. I'm sure he's going to ask us all questions, I would guess; if not, we'll just share war stories.

President's Farewell Address

Mr. Scully. Will you deliver a farewell address in this office?

The President. Yes, I'm thinking about it. I'm thinking about it. A lot of Presidents have, and I'm giving it serious thought. I don't want it to be, you know, kind of a real emotional goodbye. If I give it, it's going to be trying to leave behind some lessons learned.

Mr. Scully. Well, let me share with you what two former Presidents have said.

The President. Good.

Mr. Scully. First, Dwight Eisenhower in 1961 said: "Crises will continue; [we'll face them]. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular [or] costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties."

The President. Right.

Mr. Scully. And then he talked about the industrial-military complex.

The President. Right. That was an interesting observation. And obviously, each

farewell address is going to be tailored to the circumstances under which the President had to make decisions.

And I suspect if I do one, and I really haven't figured it out yet, but I have talked to a speechwriter about—should I decide to do it, what would we say? And one thing, of course, is going to be we have to be vigilant and can't let our guard down, because a terrorist threat still exists.

Mr. Scully. Ronald Reagan had said, "Are we doing a good enough job teaching our children what America is and what she represents in the long history of the world?" In his statement of saying there's a great tradition of Presidential warnings as they leave the White House.

The President. Interesting. I haven't really viewed the farewell address in terms of Presidential warnings, but I can—it makes sense to say, "I've learned this, and I wish my successor all the best, and America needs to be on the lookout."

One option for me is to talk about isolationism and protectionism, and that it's very important for us to resist those "isms." The world needs our presence. The people dying of AIDS on the continent of Africa need a robust response by the United States to save lives. We need voices calling upon coalition members to stay in the fight against the terrorists. And protectionism is rearing its ugly head; witness the fact that we had trouble getting good free trade agreements through the Congress with Panama and Colombia and South Korea.

And so maybe that's what I'll warn about as well. Thank you for giving me some ideas.

Use of Former Presidents

Mr. Scully. How should we use former Presidents? How do you want to be used, in what capacity, as you leave this office?

The President. Yes. It's an interesting question. One thing I don't want to do is stay on the stage. The spotlight needs to shift to President-elect Obama, and it needs to stay on President-elect Obama, because he's the President. And therefore, I won't try to get it to shift to me. And I'll be very respectful of him during his Presidency.

I think each President is going to have to chart his own way. I'm going to build a policy institute at Southern Methodist to talk about, for example, the "isms"—isolationism and protectionism, and the need to resist them—or the transformative power of freedom.

President-elect Obama, I am confident, will call upon Presidents to take on a mission. I will be happy to do it, particularly if I agree with the mission. For example, I asked Dad and President Clinton to help on the tsunamis. But, you know, each role will be defined according to the comfort level of the ex-President.

George W. Bush Presidential Library

Mr. Scully. Are there some things that you want in your library?

The President. Well, I do want to have a policy center. You mean in terms of how it's going to function?

Mr. Scully. [*Inaudible*]—and the facility, and how it's going to work.

The President. There will be the classic library, you know, rotating exhibitions to keep it relevant so people will be interested in it. And of course, there will be archives. They tell me that we moved 25,000 boxes full of files and memos, and I think they said, like, 30 million e-mails—or 300 million e-mails. I mean, a huge number of e-mails; none of which are mine, by the way, since I haven't been e-mailing.

And there will be a policy center. And this is a place of debate, discussion, a place to herald freedom, a place to continue some of the initiatives that we've started, like the malaria initiative on the continent of Africa, or PEPFAR. And Laura is going to be wanting to be involved with women's movements around the world, the freedom movement in Burma. And that—the policy center and the museum are going to take a lot of time.

President's Second Term

Mr. Scully. You've had a tough couple of years. Most second Presidents have had tough second terms. Why is that?

The President. Well, in my case, I was a wartime President, and war is very exhausting. War is hard for a country. And you know, I made the decision that we were going to win. And there has been some critical moments where I guess I could have taken the popular way out and retreated, like in 2006, but instead went with 30,000 more troops, because I felt strongly that defeat in Iraq would be terrible for the security of the country, it would be terrible for the morale of the military, and it would be really hard for me, the Commander in Chief, to face a mother who lost a son in combat.

The other part of my Presidency that's been hard is we've had, you know, huge economic turmoil recently. And you know, I'm just so sorry it's happening. But it is happening, and therefore, I have made the decision not to let there be a massive collapse, which would hurt the average guy in the street. And what's hard about this one is, a hard-working taxpayer is making his mortgage, wonders why the President is using his money to save firms that got a little over—got a little excessive in their desire to make money. And I understand that complaint. And my answer, of course, is, is that if I thought they could fail without causing the average guy real economic hardship, I'd have let them.

Anyway, so it has been a—it's been an interesting Presidency from that perspective.

U.S. Auto Industry

Mr. Scully. One issue that continues to be in the news: the auto industry.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Scully. Are you looking for concessions from the unions in order to try to figure out how this is all going to come together?

The President. Yes, you see, there's two principles that's driving me on this. One is, a disorderly bankruptcy could be very destabilizing for what is now a fragile financial market. In other words, I am concerned about a shock to the system. I'm also concerned about putting good money after bad. And therefore, it's going to be very important that whatever we do, that there be a plan that the autos—that would be management as well as dealers as well as labor—show how they could be viable for the future.

You know, this is just a very difficult economic time for the country. And I am concerned about people's 401(k)s declining. I'm concerned about joblessness. But I made the decision that my team and myself will not let the economy go down.

Federal Government

Mr. Scully. When you took office, did you expect to have the biggest expansion of the Federal Government under your watch?

The President. I knew the mandatory spending—that would be Social Security and Medicare—were going to rise substantially because baby boomers like me were getting ready to retire. I didn't realize we'd be in war and—because, you know, the attacks of September the 11th came out of nowhere. But once we were in war, I darn sure was going to make our troops—make sure our troops had what they need to succeed. And most of the growth in nonentitlement spending came on the military and homeland side. And you bet I was going to fund the troops, and you bet we're going to make sure the homeland is protected.

Presidential Vetoes

Mr. Scully. Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan in their 8 years used the veto pen three or four or five times as often as you have.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Scully. You've used it about a dozen times.

The President. Right.

Mr. Scully. Why?

The President. Well, primarily because I was working with people in my own party. In other words, for the first 4 years of my Presidency—see, up to '06, we ran the Congress, except in the beginning. And so therefore, I would sit down with colleagues—not "colleagues," but party members and friends, and we'd work out our issues. And we got a lot done that I was satisfied with. Toward the end I had to veto because I didn't agree with what Congress was doing.

And one area where it was very difficult for me was on the budget. See, you sit here in the Oval Office, and we'd agree with the—I'd agree with the Speaker and the leader of the Senate on the size of the pie. "Here's what we need to spend, and here's this much for military and this much for education, this much for health." We all agreed to that. The problem was the slices of the pie got to be a problem because of earmarks. But I didn't have the line-item veto. And therefore, once you agree to the size of the pie, you're pretty well stuck with what's in the pie until the President gets the line-item veto.

Checks and Balances in Government

Mr. Scully. In terms of the institutions, do you think that the checks and balance work between this end of Pennsylvania Avenue and the other end?

The President. Oh, absolutely, yes. I mean—and there's constant back and forth between the executive branch and the legislative branch, and of course, the judiciary weighs in a lot. But yes, we got a great system.

U.S. Supreme Court

Mr. Scully. How often, if at all, do you talk to the Supreme Court Justices?

The President. Rarely. Rarely. You know, Laura and I hosted a dinner for the Justices and their spouses and—but yes, I may see them socially or, you know, at some of these banquets that you go to where the comedian makes fun of the President, then the President makes fun of himself, and everybody has a jolly time, except the President. But yes, the Justices will be at some of these dinners, and I'll just chitchat with them, but never talk policy, of course, with them.

Media Coverage of the President

Mr. Scully. Media, another institution here.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Scully. A lot of cable talk shows, a lot of radio programs talking about you. First of all, do you watch the programs?

The President. No.

Mr. Scully. And have the media treated you fairly?

The President. You know, it's hard to tell. I mean, I will tell you, my relationship with the media is—with the individuals in the media has been very good. And that's all I can expect. Of course, I read what's written, and I, a lot of times, don't like what's written. Then I realize they may not like what I'm saying. But I have no complaints. In other words, I'm not one of these guys who'll say, "Oh, man, everybody misunderstood me because of the media." I'm a little disappointed at some of the platforms that encouraged harsh rhetoric.

Mr. Scully. Such as?

The President. "Bush is a liar." And there's a—it seems like to me that there's such competition for air space that some people feel like if they can yell louder, with harsher rhetoric, then they'll get noticed.

And the tone hasn't been good in Washington, and I've been disappointed in that, and I bear some of the blame for that.

Bipartisan Cooperation

Mr. Scully. Well, in fact, you said on December 14, 2000: "I'm optimistic that we can change the tone in Washington. I believe things happen for a reason, and

I hope the long wait of the last 5 weeks will heighten a desire to move beyond the bitterness and the partisanship."

The President. Yes, yes. That was a hopeful person saying that. And you know, there were some——

Mr. Scully. Are you less hopeful?

The President. Am I less hopeful now? Well, it didn't work out the way I was hoping it to—hoping it would. In other words, the tone didn't—it changed some initially. Remember, we got No Child Left Behind done; we got some—we worked together on PEPFAR. I mean, there were some bipartisan accomplishments. But the rhetoric got very tough. I mean, this is a—some people here in this town use the politics of personal destruction to advance their agenda. I don't want to sound self-serving, but I haven't, and I don't think a President should.

But no, I was hoping for a better tone, and it didn't happen.

President-Elect Barack Obama

Mr. Scully. So what would you tell President-elect Obama? He'll have a Democrat in the House and the Senate, like you did in 2001, and he's talked about trying to unite the country again.

The President. I wish him all the best. I mean, I really do. I hope he succeeds. He may be in a position—maybe he won't have to deal with quite as contentious as issues as I did, or maybe he will, who knows. He came in with a strong vote, and he's got good majorities in the House and Senate, and maybe he'll get some things done.

President's Faith

Mr. Scully. You've talked about your faith. In those quiet moments of prayer, do you want to share what you're thinking about, what you're praying for?

The President. Probably not, but I can tell you the effects of prayer have made this a very—my life is joyous, believe it or not; some days happy, some days not happy, every day joyous.

I have been comforted. I pray for a lot of things. I mean, I pray for my—I pray for strength, and I pray for comfort; I pray for friends; I pray for my family's safety. My relationship with the Almighty is a very personal relationship, as is yours.

The Presidency

Mr. Scully. You are 8 years older. Do you think this job has aged you?

The President. I don't know, what do you think? I mean, I think I'm wiser, and that I've seen a lot more. I know I'm more knowledgeable. My principles haven't changed. But you tell me, has it aged me? I can't—I'm not one of these guys that kind of, you know——

President's Health

Mr. Scully. You're biking on weekends.

The President. Biking pretty good.

Mr. Scully. You're physically fit.

The President. Yes, I'm physically fit.

Mr. Scully. Would you say you're among the healthiest Presidents to serve in this job?

The President. Would I say that? I would think so; I don't know.

Mr. Scully. So how do you do it?

The President. I just work out and stay—I'm a disciplined person. I work out every day except for one day, and I make sure my scheduler knows this. Early on in the Presidency I said, "I want time to work out, because I think it's—I know part of being a—doing this job is to be a disciplined person." Like, I start meetings on time; I end them on time.

I have got a routine that obviously varies depending on the moment, but a routine that's pretty well set. You know, I get here early in the morning and meet with the Chief of Staff and the National Security Adviser, then meet with the intelligence people. And pretty much that way throughout my Presidency. And the reason why

is, is that I think it's important for a President to be predictable among the people with whom he works, so that there's not a sloppiness in the organization.

And anybody can find time to exercise if they put their mind to it.

Importance of Discipline

Mr. Scully. What made you disciplined, though? What in your life created the schedule that you now carry out?

The President. You know, it's an interesting question. I don't really know. I was undisciplined at times. I may have always been slightly disciplined. But you know, I used to drink too much, which is a sign of being undisciplined. And it took discipline to quit and maybe a little help from a higher authority. But I wasn't a knee-walking drunk, but I was—you know, I was drinking, and alcohol was beginning to compete for my affections. And so I quit. One night I had too much to drink in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and haven't had a drink since.

So that's discipline as well. I don't know where it comes from, maybe my mom and dad. I haven't sat around and tried to figure it out; I can just tell you it's true.

President's Reading Habits

Mr. Scully. How much time do you spend reading?

The President. A lot. Yes, I'm a avid reader. I don't really watch a lot of TV, in all due respect. Of course, if I did, I'd be watching you. But I read a lot. I read a lot on airplanes; I read a lot upstairs at the White House; I read on the exercise bicycle.

Mr. Scully. What do you take away from books? I mean, how do you translate what you read into how you make decisions or how you go about your business?

The President. Well, sometimes books are just to escape, like mysteries, and it's just a chance to get your mind off the moment. Sometimes I read books to—a lot of history books, and I can take lessons away from the books, like Abraham Lincoln. I just finished a James McPherson book on Abraham Lincoln and his relationship with his generals, which is an interesting topic for a Commander in Chief. One of the lessons of Abraham Lincoln that all Presidents ought to understand, particularly at times of war, is that the President must pay attention to the troops. And Lincoln went out of his way to be with the sergeants and the enlisted personnel as well as the generals. And he—you know, he visited the wounded a lot, and he visited with widows a lot.

And it's a good lesson for any President. And the lesson is, pay attention to your military and work with your military and show your military that you care for them. And you go to a hospital and see these wounded kids and word gets out all across the—you know, all across the system, where—and I've met with a lot of the families of the fallen, which is my duty, but I think the troops appreciate that, that the President cares enough about their comrades' families that he would meet with them. And yes, it's an interesting experience to do that. The comforter in chief is the person who usually gets comforted.

President Abraham Lincoln

Mr. Scully. You have had a number of events here as we begin to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Scully. His picture is here, obviously, his bust in this office. That's one example about the Lincoln Presidency. But what else in the 17 or 18 books that you've read on Lincoln do you take away from what he meant for this office and the country?

The President. Well, he spoke with moral clarity on certain truths. And one basic truth was, all men are created equal under God; 1864, he could have easily have said, well, maybe not all of us are created equal. But Lincoln spoke with certainty. And I think Presidents need to do that, need to

speak moral truth, have a set of principles that are inviolate.

Self-pity is a horrible trait, and I'm confident all Presidents have been—have thought about saying, "Oh, why me? Why do I have to carry this burden?" And first of all, I don't believe it is a burden to be President. I don't believe there's—it's not a burden to deal with problems. But Lincoln keeps things in perspective. If you think you got a lousy time, think about what Abraham Lincoln went through. I mean, it was a tough time for Lincoln: 600,000 people died; he lost his son upstairs—Willie died in the White House; his wife was not happy. And yet he was a man who stuck to principles and stayed strong and died not having any earthly idea of where his standing would be in history.

President's Staff

Mr. Scully. There have been a couple of kiss-and-tell books about your own Presidency.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Scully. My question is, whether it's Scott McClellan or Paul O'Neill or others, does that affect the way a President deals with his Cabinet, his staff, and does that worry you?

The President. It's interesting you said that. That's a very interesting question, because I had staff members walk up to me and say, "How can you trust me?" And the answer is, I just do. I just do. Trust is a very important part of the White House. And the examples you just cited are very rare, very rare. Every President is going to have to deal with that. And it's essential that the President assure the people—and when these books come out, assure the people here that—"I trust you a lot." And I think my words calmed some of the folks I work with down, that they didn't feel alienated.

That's a fascinating question. First person who's asked me that.

The Oval Office

Mr. Scully. In our remaining minute, let me ask you about this office.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Scully. The picture behind you——

The President. That's called, "A Charge To Keep." It's based upon a Methodist hymn called "A Charge To Keep I Have," that was sung when I was first inaugurated Governor of Texas. And my friend O'Neil, Joe I. O'Neil, from Midland, Texas, said, "I got a painting based upon that hymn. Would you like to use it?" And I looked at it and said, absolutely. It's by W.H.D. Koerner.

The thing about O'Neil that's important is he introduced me and Laura in his backyard. He and Jan had a little barbeque out there, and there was two other guests, me and Laura. And about 3 months later, we were married.

The importance of that painting is that it's obviously a religious painting. And I tell people the President should never promote a religion. But the President always ought to jealously guard and defend the right for anybody to worship or not worship, that we're all equal, if we're Hindu, Jew, Muslim. It doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. The greatness about America is you can choose and worship the way you want to worship.

Resolute Desk

Mr. Scully. And this desk?

The President. Called the Resolute. I entertain people here quite a bit. Recently, youngsters have come in and said, "Hey, where's the hidden drawer?" I said, "What are you talking about?" Well, it turns out the Resolute is famous in "National Treasure," which I have not seen yet. But it's even more famous because Presidents have used it. Roosevelt put the door on there. Out the door John-John Kennedy poked his head in the most famous Oval Office photo. And President Reagan put the bottom there to lift it up.

The desk was given to us by Queen Victoria. The wood is from a ship called the *Resolute*, HMS *Resolute*, that we rescued in the Arctic.

And here's the thing that the desk reminds me of on a regular basis, that the institution of the Presidency is more important than the President, that the office is more important than the individual. And that's important, because whoever is in here will have strengths and weaknesses. And so we will come and go, but because of the institution of stability, the ship of state will sail on. And the job is to make tough calls, and I've had to make some. But the job is also to honor the office.

President's Last Day in Office

Mr. Scully. So finally, you will leave this office the morning of January 20.

The President. That's right.

Q. What will you be thinking?

The President. I'll be wishing—you know, that's an interesting question. First of all, I'll be wishing President-elect Obama all the best—genuinely be wishing him all the best. And I will have said our final farewells. It turns out that the farewell party for the President stretches over about 45 days, it seems like. I mean, everything is a "last"—last this, last Christmas turkey pardon, last this—not Christmas turkey, Thanksgiving turkey pardon, I mean——

Presidential Transition

Mr. Scully. Is it too long? Is the transition too long?

The President. No, no, no. Actually, I think it's going to be good for me. I'm kind of an emotional guy anyway. I would hate to have the next-to-last and last day of the Presidency be one giant hug fest. But we will have packed up, and we will have said goodbye to the folks that we have lived with for 8 years. And it will be emotional in that sense. But I anticipate with great interest watching an historic moment: the swearing in of the 44th President, who happens to be an African American male. And that's a big deal for America. And I will have a front row seat.

Mr. Scully. Mr. President, thank you for your time.

The President. Yes, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 12:52 p.m. in Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former White House Press Secretary Scott B. McClellan; and former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill.

Remarks on the United States Auto Industry
December 19, 2008

Good morning. For years, America's automakers have faced serious challenges: burdensome costs, a shrinking share of the market, and declining profits. In recent months, the global financial crisis has made these challenges even more severe. Now some U.S. auto executives say that their companies are nearing collapse and that the only way they can buy time to restructure is with help from the Federal Government.

This is a difficult situation that involves fundamental questions about the proper role of Government. On the one hand, Government has a responsibility not to undermine the private enterprise system. On the other hand, Government has a responsibility to safeguard the broader health and stability of our economy.

Addressing the challenges in the auto industry requires us to balance these two responsibilities. If we were to allow the free

market to take its course now, it would almost certainly lead to disorderly bankruptcy and liquidation for the automakers. Under ordinary economic circumstances, I would say this is the price that failed companies must pay, and I would not favor intervening to prevent the automakers from going out of business.

But these are not ordinary circumstances. In the midst of a financial crisis and a recession, allowing the U.S. auto industry to collapse is not a responsible course of action. The question is how we can best give it a chance to succeed. Some argue the wisest pass—wisest path is to allow the auto companies to reorganize through chapter 11 provisions of our bankruptcy laws and provide Federal loans to keep them operating while they try to restructure under the supervision of a bankruptcy court. But given the current state of the auto industry and the economy, chapter 11 is unlikely to work for American automakers at this time.

American consumers understand why: If you hear that a car company is suddenly going into bankruptcy, you worry that parts and servicing will not be available, and you question the value of your warranty. And with consumers hesitant to buy new cars from struggling automakers, it would be more difficult for auto companies to recover.

Additionally, the financial cross—crisis brought the auto companies to the brink of bankruptcy much faster than they could have anticipated. And they have not made the legal and financial preparations necessary to carry out an orderly bankruptcy proceeding that could lead to a successful restructuring.

The convergence of these factors means there is too great a risk that bankruptcy now would lead to a disorderly liquidation of American auto companies. My economic advisers believe that such a collapse would deal an unacceptably painful blow to hard-working Americans far beyond the auto industry. It would worsen a weak job market and exacerbate the financial crisis. It could send our suffering economy into a deeper and longer recession, and it would leave the next President to confront the demise of a major American industry in his first days of office.

A more responsible option is to give the auto companies an incentive to restructure outside of bankruptcy and a brief window in which to do it. And that is why my administration worked with Congress on a bill to provide automakers with loans to stave off bankruptcy while they develop plans for viability. This legislation earned bipartisan support from majorities in both Houses of Congress.

Unfortunately, despite extensive debate and agreement that we should prevent disorderly bankruptcies in the American auto industry, Congress was unable to get a bill to my desk before adjourning this year.

This means the only way to avoid a collapse of the U.S. auto industry is for the executive branch to step in. The American people want the auto companies to succeed, and so do I. So today I'm announcing that the Federal Government will grant loans to auto companies under conditions similar to those Congress considered last week.

These loans will provide help in two ways. First, they will give automakers 3 months to put in place plans to restructure into viable companies, which we believe they are capable of doing. Second, if restructuring cannot be accomplished outside of bankruptcy, the loans will provide time for companies to make the legal and financial preparations necessary for an orderly chapter 11 process that offers a better prospect of long-term success and gives consumers confidence that they can continue to buy American cars.

Because Congress failed to make funds available for these loans, the plan I am announcing today will be drawn from the financial rescue package Congress approved earlier this fall. The terms of the loans will require auto companies to demonstrate how

they would become viable. They must pay back all their loans to the Government and show that their firms can earn a profit and achieve a positive net worth. This restructuring will require meaningful concessions from all involved in the auto industry: management, labor unions, creditors, bondholders, dealers, and suppliers.

In particular, automakers must meet conditions that experts agree are necessary for long-term viability, including putting their retirement plans on a sustainable footing, persuading bondholders to convert their debt into capital the companies need to address immediate financial shortfalls, and making their compensation competitive with foreign automakers who have major operations in the United States. If a company fails to come up with a viable plan by March 31, it will be required to repay its Federal loans.

The automakers and unions must understand what is at stake and make hard decisions necessary to reform. These conditions send a clear message to everyone involved in the future of American automakers: The time to make the hard decisions to become viable is now, or the only option will be bankruptcy.

The actions I'm announcing today represent a step that we wish were not necessary. But given the situation, it is the most effective and responsible way to address this challenge facing our Nation. By giving the auto companies a chance to restructure, we will shield the American people from a harsh economic blow at a vulnerable time. And we will give American workers an opportunity to show the world once again they can meet challenges with ingenuity and determination and bounce back from tough times and emerge stronger than before.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Unveiling of the Official Portraits of President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush
December 19, 2008

Secretary Clough, thank you for the introduction. Thanks for coming. I suspected there would be a good-size crowd once the word got out about my hanging. [*Laughter*]

It's a tremendous honor to have my portrait added to this gallery's Presidential collection. This is one of only two institutions with portraits of every President, starting with our first, George Washington. That means this exhibit now has an interesting symmetry. It starts with George W. and ends with George W. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Vice President and Chief Justice for joining us. I thank members of Smithsonian Institute's Board of Regents. I too appreciate Marty Sullivan being here. I want to thank members of my Cabinet, administration, and friends.

I am grateful to all the people who made this painting possible. We really appreciate your generosity. I thank the donors for coming today. They remind me of an interesting story about this collection. In 1857, the artist George Healy was commissioned by Congress to paint Presidents John Q. Adams, Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan. But by the time Healy got to President Buchanan, the Civil War had broken out, and an angry Congress held the former President to blame.

And so when Healy presented his bill for Buchanan's portrait, the lawmakers refused to pay. Things are bad when even Congress refuses to spend money. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the artists. Sasha, you had it easy; it does not take much to make Laura look beautiful. [*Laughter*] Anderson had a bigger challenge. [*Laughter*] And therefore, I needed to find a person who would do the painting that would be a good and forgiving friend. And so I want to thank my buddy—my college classmate Bob Anderson for painting this portrait. It actually looks like me, which is a good sign. [*Laughter*] You did a fabulous job.

This is not the first time that Bob has painted me. He had a warm-up; he did my portrait for the Yale Club. Recently, I asked him what was different this time around. He said, well, this time around he had to use a lot more gray. [*Laughter*] I also understood Bob didn't have any difficulty depicting my eyes or my hands, but he had a lot of trouble with my mouth. And I told him, "That makes two of us." [*Laughter*]

A former Washington resident once said: "Whenever you hear about somebody being done in oil in this town, you can't be sure whether that means painting or boiling." [*Laughter*] That was a wise observation from a good and decent man, one who has offered me a lot of wisdom and advice throughout my life. And I am proud to have my portrait in the same room as President 41, George H.W. Bush.

It's a humbling experience to be included here among so many extraordinary leaders. One of the great things about this collection is that visitors can examine the faces of the men who have shaped our Nation's history and study how history has shaped them. In each of their images, we're reminded of the incredible joys and responsibilities that come with the Presidency. Yet in these two centuries of history, we're also reminded that this office and the enduring ideals it represents are greater than any person.

Being the temporary custodian of the office has been a privilege of a lifetime. Over the past 8 years, I have been inspired by the character and courage of our Nation, especially the men and women of our Armed Forces. I have been moved by the compassion of our citizens, from those who mentor a child to those who save lives around the world. Most of all, I've been uplifted by the many Americans who have sent their prayers.

And so, with deep gratitude, I offer my own: For all of you in this room, for the success of our next President and those who follow, and for God's continued blessings on our wonderful Nation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. at the National Portrait Gallery. In his remarks, he referred to G. Wayne Clough, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Martin E. Sullivan, Director, National Portrait Gallery; and painter Aleksander "Sasha" Titovets. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included remarks by the First Lady.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority
December 19, 2008

President Bush. I'm thinking about the first time I met you—I think it was in Jordan—and I can't help but reflect on how far the process has come to bring peace to the Holy Land.

You have done a lot of important and hard work in helping the region understand the importance of two states living side by side in peace. No question, this is a hard challenge, but nevertheless, people must recognize that we have made a good deal of progress. And a lot of it has to do with your leadership, and I thank you.

I was pleased to note that the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution which confirms that bilateral negotiation—the bilateral negotiation process is irreversible, is—and it's a path to a Palestinian state and a path to peace in the Middle East.

And I've been looking forward to this visit. I'm looking forward to getting a briefing on not only the negotiations, the discussions you've had with Israel, but also the fine progress that's being made on the West Bank, which is a credit to your leadership and the leadership of the Prime Minister.

So welcome, sir, and thank you for coming.

President Abbas. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And thank you for finding the time to meet with us during these days. There is no doubt that we will always remember the efforts that you have undertook to promote the peace process. You were the first sitting President who accepted as a policy the establishment of two states—a state of Israel and a state of Palestine—living next to each other in peace and security. And this policy has became a reality in every corner around the world.

And we also remember very fondly, Mr. President, the great efforts that you have undertook to convene the Annapolis conference after so many years of absent peace process accords. This conference was attended by representatives from more than 50 countries from around the world and made it a reality that the roadmap would be the way to go.

Also the Annapolis conference talked about and promoted the bilateral direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the fundamental and basic issues. These basic issues, as we all know, they include Jerusalem, settlements, borders, refugees, water, security, as well as prisoners. And of course, you pushed very hard for the two sides to carry out their commitments based on phase one of the roadmap and to carry out their responsibilities. And you were clear about both Palestinian commitments as well as Israeli commitments.

On the basis of your efforts and the convening of the Annapolis conference, two other conferences took place—the Paris and the Berlin conferences. And during the Paris conference, there was an agreement in order to support financially, in a very generous way, the Palestinian Authority. After that, we have seen on the grounds that the West Bank was much calmer, and there was performance on security throughout that part of Palestine. And we also appreciate the efforts that were given to us in the area of security, which helped our own security apparatus to carry out their responsibilities.

Also developments took place on issues in the West Bank, such as progress on security, as well as the economic situation, as well as the social conditions.

There is no doubt that we exerted efforts also to promote the peace process under your leadership during the last year, and together, we put the fundamental, basic things needed for the peace process. There is no doubt that we will continue these efforts and the peace negotiations. But everything will be based on the foundation, and that foundation was laid by you during your time in office. Because we are committed to the peace process, and this is not a slogan or a rhetorical commitment: We are practically committed to the peace process. And we are confident all these efforts will be transferred to the new administration that will continue to do its part regarding the peace process.

Some might say that all these efforts perhaps went in vain. I happen to disagree. I believe that they have cemented the real

principles that carried out the peace process and the negotiations forward. And here I have also to mention the Arab League peace initiative to promote peace, which is actually published today in a number of newspapers, including American newspapers today. And the purpose of this also coincides to cement your vision of two states as well as the principle of land for peace.

We are here today, Mr. President, in order to express our appreciation for your efforts. And we know very well that we would not have been able to go that far in our work without your support and the promotion of the peace process.

I also would like to take the opportunity to thank members of your own administration: Secretary Rice, as well as Mr. Hadley, those people who worked with us tirelessly.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. *Shukran jazeelan.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:28 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Extending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to Kosovo and Azerbaijan
December 19, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 502(f)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"), I am notifying the Congress of my intent to add the Republic of Kosovo (Kosovo) and the Republic of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan) to the list of beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program.

In Proclamation 8272 of June 30, 2008, I designated Serbia as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program. On February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. Pursuant to section 502 of the 1974 Act, and having considered the factors set forth in sections 501 and 502(c) of the 1974 Act, and in light of Kosovo's independence from Serbia, I have determined that Kosovo should be designated as a separate GSP beneficiary developing country.

In addition, having considered the factors set forth in sections 501 and 502(c) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that Azerbaijan should be designated as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address
December 20, 2008

Good morning. For years, America's automakers have faced serious challenges: burdensome costs, a shrinking share of the market, and declining profits. In recent months, the global financial crisis has made these challenges even more severe. Now some U.S. auto executives say that their companies are nearing collapse and that the only way they can buy time to restructure is with help from the Federal Government.

This is a difficult situation that involves fundamental questions about government's proper role. On the one hand, government has a responsibility not to undermine the private enterprise system. On the other hand, government has a responsibility to safeguard the broader health and stability of our economy.

Addressing the challenges in the auto industry requires us to balance these two responsibilities. If we were to allow the free market to take its course now, it would almost certainly lead to disorderly bankruptcy and liquidation for the automakers. Under ordinary economic circumstances, I would say this is the price that failed companies must pay, and I would not favor intervening to prevent automakers from going out of business.

But these are not ordinary circumstances. In the midst of a financial crisis and a recession, allowing the U.S. auto industry to collapse is not a responsible course of action. The question is how we can best give it a chance to succeed. Some argue the wisest path is to allow the auto companies to reorganize through chapter 11 provisions of our bankruptcy laws and provide a Federal loan to keep them operating while they try to restructure. But given the current state of the auto industry, my economic advisers believe that bankruptcy could now lead to its disorderly collapse, sending our economy into a deeper and longer recession.

A more responsible option is to give auto companies an incentive to restructure outside of bankruptcy and a brief window in which to do it. My administration proposed legislation to achieve this, but Congress was unable to get a bill to my desk before adjourning for the year. This means the only way to stave off a collapse of the auto industry is for the executive branch to step in. So yesterday I announced that the Federal Government will grant loans to auto companies, which will provide help to them in two ways.

First, the loans will give automakers 3 months to put in place plans to restructure into viable companies, which we believe they are capable of doing. Second, if restructuring cannot be accomplished outside of bankruptcy, the loans will provide time for companies to make the legal and financial preparations necessary for an orderly chapter 11 process that offers a better prospect of long-term success.

The terms of the loans will require the auto companies to demonstrate how they would become viable. They must pay back all their loans to the Government and show that their firms can earn a profit and achieve a positive net worth. This restructuring will require meaningful concessions from all involved in the auto industry: management, labor unions, creditors, bondholders, dealers, and suppliers. If a company fails to come up with a viable plan by March 31, it will be required to repay its Federal loans. Taken together, these conditions send a clear message to everyone involved in American automakers: The time to make the hard decisions to become viable is now, or the only option will be bankruptcy.

The actions I'm taking represent a step that we all wish were not necessary. But given the situation, it is the most effective

and responsible way to address this challenge facing our Nation. By giving the auto companies a chance to restructure, we will shield the American people from a harsh economic blow at a vulnerable time. And we will give American workers an opportunity to show the world once again that they can meet challenges with ingenuity and determination and emerge stronger than before.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12 p.m. on December 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 19, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks During a Visit With Volunteers of the One Warm Coat Service Project

December 22, 2008

The President. Listen, Laura and I are here with the Mayor and other volunteers who are just trying to make a difference in one person's life. And today we're honoring a project called One Warm Coat. And it's an effort—a nationwide effort to convince our fellow citizens to contribute a used, but not overly used, coat to help a soul who may need to be warm this winter.

I think there's 2,000 chapters nationwide. The program was started by this lady right here—who is the ultimate social entrepreneur—and until 1992, this was operated out of San Francisco. And today it's—as I said, there's 2,000 coat drives. If you want to help, you can get on the web page and call onewarmcoat.org—call it up on your computer.

A couple of examples, or a couple of reasons why we've come—and one such example is the great example of how a single citizen, and eventually a group of citizens, can make a difference, positive difference; that our communities are enriched by programs such as these.

We're also here, by the way, at the headquarters for Pathway to Housing, which is a program of—all aimed at helping the homeless find a place to live.

And I want to thank, Mr. Mayor, your leadership—and all of you all for being involved in this vital program.

If you want to serve your Nation, you can find a lot of ways to serve. And I hope you do. I hope you realize the great blessings that come when you put your heart and soul into making somebody else's life better.

And so, Mr. Mayor, Laura and I wish you and the citizens of this fine city a happy holidays, and thank you for joining us today.

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty of Washington, DC. Thank you. Thank you for the donations from your White House staff and yourself personally.

The President. A hundred and fifty coats, I'm so pleased that those good souls who Laura and I work with agreed to contribute.

Anyway, thank you all.

The First Lady. Happy holidays. Thank you.

The President. All get a team picture, come on. Come on, Laura—soldiers in the army of compassion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. at Pathways to Housing DC. In his remarks, he

referred to Lois Pavlow, founder, and Sherri L. Wood, national coordinator, One Warm Coat. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks Following a Visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and an Exchange With Reporters
December 22, 2008

The President. Every time I come here, I get amazed at the quality of care, the professionalism, and the courage of our troops. I can say with certainty that the health care that our troops get in the military medical facilities is excellent. I am so pleased to hear from spouses and other loved ones about the care they get as well, when they come to visit their wounded child or wounded husband or wounded spouse.

And so this will probably be my last time coming here as the Commander in Chief. It gives me a great pleasure to thank all those who serve here and all those who serve throughout our military, the military medical facilities. You know, I oftentimes say being the Commander in Chief of the military is the thing I'll miss the most, and coming here to Walter Reed is a reminder of why I'll miss it.

Thank you very much.

President's Health

Q. How is your shoulder, Mr. President?

The President. Yes, good shape, it's about an 80-mile-an-hour fastball.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m.

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2008
December 23, 2008

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

LUKE 2:10–12

Each year, Christmas brings together families, friends, and communities to rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ and celebrate the wonderful gifts God has bestowed upon us. During this season, we remember Jesus' birth from the Virgin Mary, His justice and mercy that changed the world, and His ultimate sacrifice for all people. Though Jesus was born humbly in a manger, He was destined to be the Savior of the world. The light He brought into the world continues to break through darkness and change people's lives two thousand years later.

This holiday season, as you rejoice in the good news of Jesus' love, forgiveness, acceptance, and peace, I encourage you to show grace to those less fortunate, just as God showed it to us. By serving those in need and through other acts of love and compassion, we can honor God's goodness and affirm the immeasurable value God places on the sanctity of life. We remember the members of our Armed Forces serving to protect our country and secure God's gift of freedom for others around the globe. All Americans are indebted to these men

and women and their families for their sacrifice, devotion to duty, and patriotism.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas. May you be surrounded by loved ones and blessed by the Author of Life during this joyous holiday and throughout the New Year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Message Sending Holiday Greetings to Members of the Armed Forces
December 23, 2008

To the Men and Women of the United States Armed Forces

Laura and I send season's greetings to you and your families during the holidays.

America is blessed to have brave citizens willing to step forward to defend our freedoms and keep us safe from our enemies. For many of you, this holiday season will be spent far from home, and our Nation honors your sacrifice. We remain mindful of your courage, ask God to watch over you, and pray for your safe return.

Your family members serve our country as well. During this time of year, they are a special source of hope and strength to you, and they both deserve and have the thanks and support of our whole Nation. Their selfless dedication sets an example of patriotism for all Americans to follow.

May God bless you and keep you safe, and may God bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President's Radio Address
December 23, 2008

Good morning. This week millions of Americans gather with loved ones for Christmas. This is a season of hope and joy. And it is an occasion to remember a humble birth that has helped shape the world for more than 2000 years.

One of the things that makes Christmas special is that it allows us to step back and take stock of what is truly meaningful in our lives. As years pass by, we often forget about the gifts and the parties, but we remember special moments with families and friends.

This year, as you spend time with those you love, I hope you'll also take time to remember the men and women of our Armed Forces. Every one of them has volunteered to serve our Nation. And with their incredible sacrifices, they preserve the peace and freedom that we celebrate during this season.

This tradition of service is as old as our Nation itself. In 1776, it looked as if America's first Christmas as an independent nation might also be its last. After a series of crippling defeats by the British, George Washington's army was exhausted and disheartened. With their terms of service expiring in just a few weeks, many soldiers were planning on leaving the army. And it seemed that without a miracle, America's fight for freedom would be doomed.

That miracle took place on Christmas night, 1776. George Washington planned a surprise attack on the enemy forces camped across the Delaware River in Trenton, New Jersey. Under the cover of darkness, he led a few thousand soldiers across the icy waters in the midst of a driving snowstorm. Most generals would not have taken such a risk. But the commitment of Washington and his men was absolute. They headed into battle with a bold password, "Victory or death."

In a matter of hours, victory was theirs. Morale immediately improved. And the American people began to believe that our Nation possessed the perseverance and courage to protect our liberty. The turnaround that began that night would end with the United States triumph in the American Revolution and the permanent establishment of a free nation.

Two hundred and thirty-two years have passed since George Washington crossed the Delaware. But on this Christmas, his legacy lives on in the men and women of the United States military. Some of them are spending this holiday helping defend emerging democracies like Iraq and Afghanistan. Others are spending it in lands where we defeated tyranny long ago, such as Germany or Japan. And some of them are spending it stateside, recovering in places like Bethesda National Naval Medical Center or Walter Reed.

Regardless of where they are, our men and women in uniform and the families who support them remind us of a clear lesson: Defending freedom is a full-time job. Our enemies do not take holidays. So the members of our Armed Forces stand ready to protect our freedom at any hour. For their service, they have the thanks of a grateful nation, this Christmas and always.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on December 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa 2008
December 24, 2008

I send greetings to those observing Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa is the celebration of African culture, community, and family traditions. For more than 40 years, millions of people have come together to reaffirm Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. These principles emphasize unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

As people across our country gather to commemorate this seven-day celebration, may we all be reminded that Kwanzaa is an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of our African American citizens.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the 2008 Global Nuclear Security Report
December 23, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, consistent with the requirements of section 3134 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110–181), the enclosed report entitled, "The Global Nuclear Security Report 2008."

This report, compiled by the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy, provides a list of all known sites worldwide containing nuclear weapons, formula quantities of strategic special nuclear material, and related equipment. It also details the United States comprehensive nuclear nonproliferation effort designed to help secure nuclear material, equipment, and expertise worldwide, and cooperation with international partners on this crucial global imperative. The report includes information on program plans and priorities, interagency cooperation, programmatic and budgetary requirements, and international engagement related to this vital national security priority. We have expanded and accelerated our nuclear security and nonproliferation efforts internationally to now include partnerships with over 100 countries worldwide.

I am proud of the significant accomplishments the United States has achieved to help address the risk of nuclear proliferation and secure nuclear materials globally, as outlined in this report.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 29.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying Actions Related to the Protocol Additional to the Agreement Between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in the United States of America
December 30, 2008

Dear _____ :

I have considered the Protocol Additional to the Agreement between the United States of America and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in the United States of America, with Annexes, signed at Vienna on June 12, 1998 (the "U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol") (T. Doc. 107–7), along with the views, recommendations, and statements of all interested executive branch agencies. In accordance with the first condition of the March 31, 2004, Senate resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol, I hereby certify that not later than 180 days after the deposit of the United States instrument of ratification:

1. all necessary regulations will be promulgated and will be in force regarding the use of the National Security Exclusion under Article 1.b of the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol, and

such regulations shall be made in accordance with the principles developed for the application of the National Security Exclusion;

2. the managed access provisions of Articles 7 and 1.c of the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol shall be implemented in accordance with the appropriate and necessary interagency guidance and regulation regarding such access; and
3. the necessary security and counterintelligence training and preparation will have been completed for any declared locations of direct national security significance.

In accordance with the second condition of the March 31, 2004, Senate resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol, I hereby certify that the necessary site vulnerability assessments regarding activities, locations, and information of direct national security significance to the United States will be completed not later than 180 days after the deposit of the United States instrument of ratification for the initial United States declaration to the International Atomic Energy Agency under the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ike Skelton, chairman, and Duncan Hunter, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Carl Levin, chairman, and John McCain, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2009
December 31, 2008

New Year's Day is an opportunity to remember the events of the past and look forward with hope to the year ahead.

This New Year is an exciting time for our country, as the peaceful transfer of power is one of the hallmarks of a true democracy. We are preparing to welcome a new President into office, and we celebrate in a spirit of unity: one Nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

As my time in office comes to a close, I thank the American people for trusting me with the honor of serving our great country. It has been a tremendous privilege, and together we have accomplished a great deal. Among other things, we have advanced the cause of human freedom; we have strengthened our military and our Nation's security; we have empowered parents to demand educational excellence for their children; and we have revolutionized the fight against poverty, corruption, and the scourge of disease around the world.

Earlier this year, I promised that I would sprint to the finish of my time as President. We are working hard to keep that promise. Despite the challenges we face, nothing encourages me more than the character of the American people, whose acts of courage and service sustain our free society and make this the greatest country on Earth.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a happy New Year. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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

The President's Radio Address
January 2, 2009

Good morning. Over the past week, I have been monitoring the situation in the Middle East closely with the members of my national security team. Secretary Rice is actively engaged in diplomacy, and I've been in contact with leaders throughout the region, including the King of Saudi Arabia, the King of Jordan, the President of Egypt, the President and Prime Minister of the Palestinian Territories, and the Prime Minister of Israel.

This recent outburst of violence was instigated by Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist group supported by Iran and Syria that calls for Israel's destruction. Eighteen months ago, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in a coup, and since then has imported thousands of guns and rockets and mortars. Egypt brokered a cease-fire between Hamas and Israel, but Hamas routinely violated that cease-fire by launching rockets into Israel. On December 19, Hamas announced an end to the cease-fire and soon unleashed a barrage of rockets and mortars that deliberately targeted innocent Israelis, an act of terror that is opposed by the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, President Abbas.

In response to these attacks on their people, the leaders of Israel have launched military operations on Hamas positions in Gaza. As a part of their strategy, Hamas terrorists often hide within the civilian population, which puts innocent Palestinians at risk. Regrettably, Palestinian civilians have been killed in recent days.

The United States is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people. Since Hamas's violent takeover in the summer of 2007, living conditions have worsened for Palestinians in Gaza. By spending its resources on rocket launchers instead of roads and schools, Hamas has demonstrated that it has no intention of serving the Palestinian people. America has helped by providing tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, and this week we contributed an additional $85 million through the United Nations. We have consistently called on all in the region to ensure that assistance reaches those in need. And as I told President Mubarak, America appreciates the role Egypt has played in facilitating the delivery of relief supplies in recent days.

In addition to reducing humanitarian suffering, all nations must work toward a lasting end to the violence in the Holy Land and a return to the path of peace. The United States is leading diplomatic efforts to achieve a meaningful cease-fire that is fully respected. Another one-way cease-fire that leads to rocket attacks on Israel is not acceptable. And promises from Hamas will not suffice; there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end. I urge all parties to pressure Hamas to turn away from terror and to support legitimate Palestinian leaders working for peace.

In the days ahead, the United States will stay closely engaged with our partners in the region, in Europe, and in the international community. My administration will continue to keep the President-elect and his team informed. And America's objectives in the Middle East will remain clear: We seek security and peace for our allies, the free people of Israel. For the Palestinian people, we seek a peaceful and democratic Palestinian state that serves its citizens and respects its neighbors. For all in the region, we seek an end to terror. And we seek an enduring peace based on justice, dignity, and human rights for every person in every nation of the Middle East.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on January 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 2. In his address, the President referred to King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; King Abdullah II of Jordan; President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First Vice President of Sudan and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit
January 5, 2009

President Bush. I'm proud to be meeting again with the Vice President of Sudan. He's a friend of mine. He is a strong leader who is dealing with a very difficult situation.

We talked about two important subjects. One is the north-south agreement in Sudan. It's a vital agreement, and it's going to be very important for the United States to pay attention to the implementation of this agreement. And the Vice President brought me up to date on what has been accomplished and what still remains to be accomplished.

And I thank you for, one, your clear briefing, but also your leadership on this important issue.

And then the Vice President and I discussed Darfur. And he has taken the lead in helping the rebels come together so that there would be a more unified voice in negotiating a—hopefully, negotiating a peace with the Bashir Government.

I informed the Vice President that I have provided a waiver to the State Department so they can begin to move 240 containers worth of heavy equipment into Darfur and that the Defense Department will be flying Rwanda equipment into Darfur to help facilitate the peacekeeping missions there.

So I want to thank you very much for coming back. It's good to be with you. He asked me whether or not I was going to still care about Sudan—after all, the north-south agreement was negotiated under my watch—and my answer is, absolutely, Mr. Vice President.

Finally, I've been—Secretary Rice was just here, and prior to Vice President's arrival we did talk about Gaza. I've been closely monitoring the situation in Gaza. I understand Israel's desire to protect itself and that the situation now taking place in Gaza was caused by Hamas. Instead of caring about the people of Gaza, Hamas decided to use Gaza to launch rockets to kill innocent Israelis. And Israel has obviously decided to protect herself and her people.

The United States is concerned about the humanitarian crisis. We care about the people of Gaza and, therefore, have provided millions of dollars of fresh aid to the United Nations to help.

And finally, all of us, of course, would like to see violence stop, but not at expense of an agreement that does not prevent the crisis from happening again. I know people are saying, let's have that cease-fire, and those are noble ambitions. But any cease-fire must have the conditions in it so that Hamas does not use Gaza as a place from which to launch rockets.

There is many hopeful signs in the Middle East. Democracy is taking hold in parts of the world, in the Middle East, but the Hamas reminds us that there are people

who are willing to kill innocent people to stop the advance of free societies. And the challenge for those of us who long for peace, Mr. Vice President, is to recognize the realities of the world, recognize we're in the midst of an ideological conflict, and work with the agents of peace.

I am still hopeful that some day there will be a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. I believe the Palestinian Authority under President Abbas has got the capacity and the foresight and the vision necessary to see that become a reality. In the meantime, all of us are going to have to deal with Hamas, those who threaten peace, those who want to deny the existence of a peaceful Palestinian state.

And so I welcome you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you for coming.

I told the Vice President his hat made me feel very much at home. [*Laughter*]

Vice President Kiir. Well, Your Excellency, thank you very much once again, and we are happy to be in the White House today. And I discussed with the—His Excellency the President the issues that he has raised, but mostly we came here to thank him and his administration for the commitment they have shown to the people of Sudan to bring peace and continue to monitor that peace, which ended the 21-year war. And that peace will remain in his records, that he was the only one who was able to continue monitoring the peace, negotiating it until it was signed.

This peace is now in existence. And we came to thank him and the whole administration and to wish him the best of his luck in his private missions that he's now going to take up after the assignment in the White House.

We have also told His Excellency the President that the people of Southern Sudan, the people of the marginalized areas in the whole Sudan, will never forget him for all that he has done to them. And the people in Darfur, in particular, will still be looking forward to seeing to it that peace is brought to Darfur. It is a joint mission that we have taken upon ourselves, together with them, that we have to bring peace to Darfur the way we have brought peace to Southern Sudan.

We have also talked issues of the LRA, that is the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, which has now shifted to Congo and Southern Sudan, and how to handle it. This is a terrorist organization that does not have any respect of human life. And we'll have to deal with it so that they have to accept the regional changes that are happening and to be brought to—under control.

So this is in brief that I came to the White House, to pass to His Excellency the President of the United States of America, and to keep Sudan very close to his heart. Even if he becomes a private citizen in this country, he will still have a role to play. And we came to pass him also our Christmas and New Year's greetings since we have not met during the Christmas.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a Military Appreciation Parade in Arlington, Virginia
January 6, 2009

Thank you very much. At ease.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for the kind introduction, and thank you for being an outstanding Secretary of Defense. For a while, we expected this event to be a joint retirement party. It didn't turn out that way, did it? [*Laughter*] I am pleased that President-elect Obama has asked you to stay on, and I am confident that you'll continue to be a strong leader as the Secretary of Defense.

And, Admiral Mullen, thank you for your strong advice, your clear thinking, and your years of service to our country.

I want to thank you for honoring Laura, who's been a fabulous First Lady. The military gave her the Distinguished Service Award; a lot of friends from Texas think she deserved the Purple Heart. [*Laughter*] I wish I'd have thought of the roses.

Mr. Vice President, I am proud to have served with you for 8 years. The military has had no stauncher defender in my administration than Vice President Dick Cheney.

I thank members of the Cabinet, members of the administration, and former members of the Cabinet, especially the former Secretary of Defense, who did an outstanding job, Secretary Don Rumsfeld.

I thank the current members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, as well as the former members of the Joint Chiefs and their families, for joining us today. I want to thank those who wear the uniform, distinguished guests.

As my time in office winds down, the days bring a series of lasts. I made my last overseas trip on Air Force One. I have delivered my final college commencement as President. And after much consideration, I pardoned my last Thanksgiving turkey. [*Laughter*] These have all been wonderful experiences. But nothing compares to the honor of standing before you today and addressing America's Armed Forces as your Commander in Chief.

Over the past 8 years, I have seen the valor of the American military time and time again. I saw your valor on September the 11th, 2001, in servicemembers rushing into smoke-filled corridors to save their colleagues at the Pentagon and in planes patrolling the skies above New York City and Washington. I saw your valor in the days after the attack, when Americans crowded into recruiting centers across our country, raised their hands to serve, and pledged to defend our people and our freedom.

I saw your valor in the forces who deployed to Afghanistan. Within weeks of September the 11th, you closed down the terrorist training camps, and you drove the Taliban from power. I saw your valor in the fearless troops who stormed across the Iraqi desert and destroyed a regime that threatened America. I saw your valor in battle-tested warriors who signed up for a second or third or fourth tour and made the surge in Iraq one of the great successes in America's military history.

The valor of America's Armed Forces have made our Nation safer. Because you've taken the fight to the terrorists abroad, we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than 7 years after September the 11th, there has not been another attack on American soil.

The decisions I made as your Commander in Chief have not always been popular. But the cause you have served has always been just and right. The missions you have carried out have always been necessary. And the work you have done has every bit—has been every bit as courageous and idealistic as that of any generation that came before you.

In the years since the war on terror began, America's Armed Forces have led the largest military liberation since World War II. Because of your actions, more than 50 million Afghans and Iraqis have seen the chains of despotism broken and are living in the liberty that the Creator intended. The new wave of freedom in the Middle East has made America more secure at home, because it is undermining the culture of tyranny that fosters radicalism.

There will become a day when your grandchildren will ask, "What did you do during your time in uniform?" And you'll be able to say, "We made the military stronger. We made the world freer. And we made America more secure."

You'll be able to tell them the story of the first decade in the 21st century, their early days of a generational struggle against terror and extremism. It is a story of a global coalition led by the United States that is dedicated to eliminating the forces of oppression and fear. It is the story of the Iraqi people proudly holding up ink-stained fingers to show that the threat of violence could not break their commitment to liberty. It is the story of young girls going to school in Afghanistan after years when educating a woman could be punished with beatings or imprisonment. It is the story about the character in men and women who volunteered to leave the comforts of home to defend freedom and keep our Nation safe.

On behalf of the American people, I thank you for making that sacrifice. I know you have not shouldered the burdens of military life alone. You've had the support of strong and loving families to sustain you. And this morning, I want all of you and your families to hear your Commander in Chief loud and clear: We appreciate you, we love you, and we honor your service.

We also honor our wounded warriors and those who never returned home from the field of battle. In their sacrifices, we see one of the extraordinary legacies of our Armed Forces: the willingness to give everything to secure safety at home and liberty abroad.

As the Admiral pointed out, we saw that selfless spirit in people like Petty Officer Michael Monsoor, a Navy SEAL who served in Iraq. In the fall of 2006, on a rooftop in Iraq, Mike threw himself onto a grenade in order to save the lives of his teammates. As Admiral Mullen mentioned, I had the honor of presenting Michael Monsoor's parents his posthumous Medal of Honor in the White House. On that day, I saw the deep sadness that is familiar to anyone who has lost a loved one in the line of duty. But I also saw the pride that comes with such noble sacrifice and the recognition that our freedom and our security only endure because of the acts of bravery like Michael Monsoor's.

That kind of courage, character, and devotion defines our Armed Forces. So this morning, I cannot accept your kind tribute unless I'm allowed to return the favor. To the men and women of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and all those who serve in the Department of Defense: You have the respect of a grateful nation that you have kept safe. You have the admiration of millions around the world who would have never tasted freedom without you. You have the undying love and respect of a man who has been proud to call himself your Commander in Chief.

Two weeks from today, Laura and I will take our final trip back to Texas, or as you Texans understand, back to the promised land. We have the honor of doing it onboard a 747 piloted by the United States Air Force; Colonel Mark Tillman will be the lead pilot. This brings a fitting symmetry: The military brought me to Washington 8 years ago, and on January the 20th, the military is taking me home.

We will take with us many fond memories that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. We will always remember that you answered the call to serve when your Nation needed you most. We will always

remember that you did your duty with honor and dignity. And we will always remember the debt of gratitude that each of us who lives in freedom owes to each of you who has protected it.

May God bless you. And may God always bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. at Fort Myer. In his remarks, he referred to George and Sally Monsoor, parents of posthumous Medal of Honor recipient PO 2d Class Michael A. Monsoor, USN. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Remarks on Signing Proclamations To Establish the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

January 6, 2009

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for coming, and happy New Year. Laura and I thank all of our distinguished guests, starting with members of my Cabinet: Secretary Kempthorne, Secretary Gutierrez, Administrator Johnson. Admiral, thank you for coming today; we're proud you're here. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here; other members of the administration who have joined us. Members of the conservation community, we're glad you're here.

Governor, I am proud you're here. Thank you for coming. And Josie is with you. Representatives from American Samoa—by the way, Northern Mariana Islands Governor, just in case you don't know him. [*Laughter*] We know him, and we like him. And all the representatives from America Samoa, really appreciate you all coming. Apologize for the weather, but I don't apologize for the policy, because we're fixing to do some fabulous policy.

It's interesting that we're gathered a few steps from the office once occupied by a young Assistant Secretary of the Navy named Theodore Roosevelt. Not long after he left the position, he was back on these grounds as the 26th President of the United States. And exactly a hundred years ago, he embarked on his final weeks as the President—something I can relate to. [*Laughter*]

President Roosevelt left office with many achievements, and the most enduring of all was his commitment to conservation. As he once said, "Of all the questions which can come before the Nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

That spirit has guided the conservation movement for a century. It's guided my administration. Since 2001, we have put commonsense policies in place, and I can say upon departure, our air is cleaner, our water is purer, and our lands are better protected.

To build on this progress, I'm pleased to make several announcements today. Under the Antiquities Act that Theodore Roosevelt signed in 1906, the President can set aside places of historic or scientific significance to be protected as national monuments. With the proclamations I will sign in a few moments, I am using that authority to designate three beautiful and biologically diverse areas of the Pacific Ocean as new marine national monuments.

The first is, we will establish the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. At the heart of this protected area will be much of the Marianas Trench—the site of the deepest point on Earth—and the surrounding arc of undersea volcanoes and thermal vents. This unique geological region is more than five times longer than the Grand Canyon. It is deeper than Mount Everest is tall. It supports life in some of the harshest conditions imaginable. A fascinating array of species survive amid hydrogen-emitting volcanoes, hydrothermal vents that produce highly acidic and boiling water, and the only known location of liquid sulfur this side of Jupiter.

Many scientists—and I want to thank the scientists who have joined us today—believe extreme conditions like these could have been the first incubators of life on Earth. As further research is conducted in these depths, we will learn more about life at the bottom of the sea and about the history of our planet.

The other major features of the new monument are the majestic coral reefs off the coast of the upper three islands in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These islands, some 5,600 miles from California, are home to a striking diversity of marine life, from large predators like sharks and rays to more than 300 species of stony corals. By studying these pristine waters, scientists can advance our understanding of tropical marine ecosystems, not only there, but around the world.

The second new monument will be the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. The monument will span seven areas to the far south and west of Hawaii. One is Wake Island, the site of a pivotal battle in World War II and a key habitat for nesting seabirds and migratory shorebirds. The monument will also include unique trees and grasses and birds adapted to life at the Equator, the rare sea turtles and whales and Hawaiian monk seals that visit Johnston Atoll, and some of the most pristine and spectacular coral reefs in the world. These isolated specks of land and abundant marine ecosystems are almost completely undisturbed by mankind. And as part of the Pacific Remote Islands National Monument, they will be ideal laboratories for scientific research.

The third new monument will be the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. Rose is a diamond-shaped island to the east of American Samoa, our Nation's southernmost territory. It includes rare species of nesting petrels, shearwaters, and terns, which account for its native name, "Island of Seabirds." The waters surrounding the atoll are the home of many rare species, including giant clams and reef sharks, as well as an unusual abundance of rose-colored corals. This area has long been renowned as a place of natural beauty. And now that it's protected by law, it will also be a place of learning for generations to come.

Taken together, these three new national monuments cover nearly 200,000 square miles, and they will now receive our Nation's highest level of environmental recognition and conservation. This decision came after a lot of consultation: consultation with local officials, consultation with prominent scientists, consultation with environmental advocates, consultation with the United States military and the fishing community. Based on these consultations, as well as sound resource management principles, the monuments will prohibit resource destruction or extraction, waste-dumping, and commercial fishing. They will allow for research, free passage, and recreation, including the possibility of recreational fishing one day. For seabirds and marine life, they will be sanctuaries to grow and thrive. For scientists, they will be places to extend the frontiers of discovery. And for the American people, they will be places that honor our duty to be good stewards of the Almighty's creation.

The benefits of today's decision reach far beyond nature. The monuments will preserve sites of cultural and spiritual significance to native peoples. They will ensure full freedom of navigation and include measures to uphold training missions and other military operations. They will open the door to new economic benefits in the territories. After all, if travelers now, or students or scientists, book a ticket to Saipan or Pago Pago, they will know they're headed for a place with friendly people and a vibrant culture, and some of our country's most treasured natural resources.

This morning I'm also pleased—today I'm also pleased to share some news about two other national treasures. One is the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, which I created in 2006. This stunning island chain is the largest single conservation area in American history and the largest fully protected marine area in the world. And the other is Mount Vernon, the home of America's first President and an agricultural pioneer—that would be George Washington. I'm pleased to announce the United States will soon submit a request that these two landmarks become UNESCO World Heritage sites, America's first such submission in 15 years.

The new steps I've announced today are the capstone of an 8-year commitment to strong environmental protection and conservation. Look, I know that sounds contrary to the conventional wisdom of many in the news media. But let me just share a few facts about our record, and you can be the judge for yourself.

Since 2001, air pollution has dropped by 12 percent. The strictest air quality standards in American history are now in place, as are strong regulations on power plant and diesel engine emissions. More than 3.6 million acres of wetlands have been protected, restored, or improved. Millions of acres of vital natural habitat have been conserved on farms. More than 27 million acres of Federal forest land have been protected from catastrophic wildfires. The maintenance backlog in our national parks has been reduced. More than 11,000 abandoned industrial brownfields are on their way back to productive use. We've had a new focus on cleaning debris from our oceans. Popular recreational fish like the striped bass and red drum are gaining new protection. And new marine protected areas are helping improve the health of our fisheries off the southeast coast.

At the same time, we've taken aggressive steps to make America's energy supply cleaner and more secure and confronted the challenge of global climate change. I signed two major energy bills. We raised fuel efficiency standards for automobiles for the first time in more than a decade. We mandated major increases in the use of renewable fuels and the efficiency of lighting and appliances.

We dedicated more than $18 billion to developing clean and efficient technologies like biofuels, advanced batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, solar and wind power, and clean, safe nuclear power. We're providing more than $40 billion in loan guarantees to put these technologies to use.

We forged an international agreement under the Montreal Protocol mandating major cuts in refrigerants that are some of the most potent greenhouse gases. We built international consensus on an approach that will replace the Kyoto Protocol with a global climate agreement that calls for meaningful commitments to reduce greenhouse gases from all major economies, including China and India.

With all these steps, we have charted the way toward a more promising era in environmental stewardship. We have pioneered a new model of cooperative conservation in which government and private citizens and environmental advocates work together to achieve common goals. And while there's a lot more work to be done, we have done our part to leave behind a cleaner and healthier and better world for those who follow us on this Earth.

And now I'd like those who have been assigned the task of standing up here to join me as I sign the national monuments.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., USN (Ret.), in his capacity as Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial of the Northern Mariana Islands and his wife Josepina. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument
January 6, 2009

Ensuring Navigations Rights and Freedoms, and the Global Mobility of U.S. Armed Forces in the World's Oceans

On June 15, 2006, I established the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, and on May 15, 2007, I instructed the U.S. delegation to the International Maritime Organization to submit a proposal for international measures to enhance protection of the monument. On April 4, 2008, the International Maritime Organization adopted our proposal, and the Papahanaumokuakea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) was established.

On this occasion of the establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, I confirm that the policy of the United States shall be to continue measures established in the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument to protect the training, readiness, and global mobility of U.S. Armed Forces, and ensure protection of navigation rights and high seas freedoms under the law of the sea, which are essential to the peace and prosperity of civilized nations.

The security of America, the prosperity of its citizens, and the protection of the ocean environment are complementary and reinforcing priorities. As the United States takes measures to conserve and protect the living and non-living resources of the ocean, it shall ensure preservation of the navigation rights and high seas freedoms enjoyed by all nations under the law of the sea, including in particular:

- The right of innocent passage in territorial seas, without requirement for prior notification to or permission from a coastal state.
- The right of transit passage for ships, submarines, and aircraft in straits used for international navigation; a right that may not be suspended, denied, hampered, or impaired.
- The right of archipelagic sea lanes passage in designated sea lanes and air routes, and passage routes normally used for international navigation in archipelagic nations.
- The exercise of high seas freedoms in exclusive economic zones, including the conduct of military activities, exercises, and surveys.

The United States shall recognize and apply navigation rights and freedoms under the law of the sea when establishing marine protected areas, just as it did in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National

Monument and in today's monument proclamations. The United States will exercise the same rights and freedoms in similarly protected areas and waters of foreign nations. In addition, the United States, through its executive agencies, shall provide for the readiness, training, and global mobility of U.S. Armed Forces in its establishment of marine conservation areas.

Management of Submerged Lands

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is the only United States territory that does not have title to the submerged lands beneath that portion of the United States territorial sea that is within 3 miles of the coastlines of the CNMI. It is appropriate that the CNMI be given the same authority as the other territories. In 2005, my administration supported legislation that would have provided the CNMI with such ownership, consistent with what was granted to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa in October 1974.

My administration also recognizes, as was recognized in 1974, the need to reserve Federal title in certain submerged lands, including submerged lands for use by our Nation's military, which is moving forces to the area from Okinawa, Japan. It is in the interest of the security of our Nation to reserve the necessary areas for national defense, while also ensuring the people of the CNMI have the benefit and enjoyment of the rights coming with ownership of submerged lands out to 3 miles.

To this end, I have asked the Secretary of the Interior to submit legislation that, subject to valid existing rights, transfers to the CNMI the existing rights and title of the Federal Government over submerged lands within 3 miles of the coast of the CNMI, consistent with that provided to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, and I urge the Congress to promptly pass such legislation.

I have also directed the Department of the Interior to develop legislation and procedures for the management and administration of recovery of mineral resources in areas of the Pacific, outside the monument, that are not currently covered by existing offshore mineral resource law, including authority and procedures for obtaining royalties and assessing fees and for revenue sharing, as appropriate.

NOTE: The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks During a Meeting With Former Presidents and the President-Elect

January 7, 2009

I want to thank the President-elect for joining the ex-Presidents for lunch. I am—one message that I have, and I think we all share, is that we want you to succeed. Whether we're a Democrat or Republican, we care deeply about this country. And to the extent we can, we look forward to sharing our experiences with you. All of us who have served in this office itself understand that the office transcends the individual. And we wish you all the very best, and so does the country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and William J. Clinton; and President-elect Barack Obama. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President-elect Obama. The Office

of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the Points of Light Institute
January 7, 2009

Thank you all. Mr. President—[*laughter*]—yes? No—[*laughter*]. Thank you all for coming. I'm told there is seven speakers. So there's now about to be six. I thank you for—I welcome you to the White House. I hope you take advantage of the reception that we have after these seven short speeches. And I want to thank you for your compassion.

The strength of America is not our military, it's not our wallet, it is—lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens, those who hear the universal call to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

And so for those of you who are rallying the armies of compassion, and encouraging the armies of compassion, we thank you.

And now it is my honor to introduce my brother Neil M. Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President George H.W. Bush. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President Bush.

Remarks on the No Child Left Behind Act in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
January 8, 2009

The President. Thank you for the warm welcome. And Laura and I are thrilled to be here at Kearny School. We have come because this is one of the really fine schools in the city of Philadelphia. We bring greetings from the Nation's Capital, but more importantly, we bring appreciation for those who are working so hard to make sure that every child can learn.

You know, 7 years ago today, I had the honor of signing a bill that forever changed America's school systems. It was called the No Child Left Behind Act. I firmly believe that thanks to this law, more students are learning, an achievement gap is closing. And on this anniversary, I have come to talk about why we need to keep the law strong. If you find a piece of legislation that is working, it is important to make sure the underpinnings of that law remain strong.

I do want to thank Laura for joining me. She has been an awesome wife and a great First Lady. Our journey together in Washington has been fantastic, and I thank her very much for her love.

I am proud to be here with Arlene Ackerman. Thank you for your introduction, Arlene, and thank you for being—[*applause*]. Arlene is a reform-minded leader. And by that, I mean you have a superintendent here who is willing to challenge the status quo if the status quo is unacceptable. Sometimes that's hard in public life. You see the status quo, and people are saying, "Oh, let's just leave it the way it is, it's too hard to change." And you have a superintendent here that says, "If we're finding failure, we're going to change." And

I want to thank you for taking on this important assignment.

I'm proud to be here with my buddy. I guess it's okay to call the Secretary of Education your buddy; that means friend. And she has been our friend for a long time. She is a great Secretary of Education. And, Margaret, I want to thank you for being here.

I want to thank the senior Senator—I guess it's okay to call you senior—Arlen Specter. He is a good friend, and he cares a lot about the State of Pennsylvania and the education systems in the State. So thank you for coming, my friend.

Jerry Zahorchak is with us, the Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary. Jerry, thank you for being here, and thank you for serving.

I want to thank all the State and local officials; particularly, the State representative from this district has kindly come by to say hello and participate in a roundtable we just had.

Roy Romer, former Governor of Colorado, and an education reformer, has just spoken, and I want to thank Roy. He happens to be the chairman of Strong American Schools. It's got a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Strong American Schools. That means schools that actually teach people how to read, write, and add and subtract. At least that's my definition of strong American schools.

I want to thank very much the Reverend Al Sharpton. Now, some of you are probably about to fall out of your chair—[*laughter*]—when you know that Al and I have found common ground. And by the way, it's on an important issue. See, he cares just as much as I care about making sure every child learns to read, write, and add and subtract. And I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue, and I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank the teachers who work here. I particularly want to thank Principal Spagnola for her leadership. And the thing about educators, first of all, every good school has got a principal who is a good principal. That's generally the key ingredient to success, somebody who can set high standards and motivate. And this principal can do just that.

And for the teachers, thank you for taking on a noble profession. Laura and I are proud to report that one of our daughters is a teacher, and it makes us feel just incredibly great to know that we've raised a child who is willing to take on an important task of teaching a child to be able to have the skills necessary to succeed in life.

There are a lot of reformers here, and I welcome the reformers. These are people from society who say, "I want to help the school system succeed." When I got off Air Force One today, I met Adam Bruckner. I mentioned to some kids, "Have you ever heard of Adam Bruckner?" And they said, "You're talking about Mr. Adam." I said, "That's who I'm talking about." He is volunteer; he's a mentor. He happens to be a professional soccer coach, which means he knows how to play soccer, and he is willing to lend his skills and, more importantly, his heart, to teach a child the beauty of being a sports person and the lessons of life that come from good competition.

And so I want to thank you very much, Adam, for being here and representing all the folks who volunteer at this program.

At the end of the Presidency, you get to do a lot of lasts. I don't know if you saw on TV, but I pardoned my last Thanksgiving turkey. [*Laughter*] This is my last policy speech. As President of the United States, this is the last policy address I will give. What makes it interesting is that it's the same subject of my first policy address as President of the United States, which is education and education reform.

I hope you can tell that education is dear to my heart. I care a lot about whether or not our children can learn to read, write, and add and subtract. When I was a Governor of Texas, I didn't like it one bit when

I'd go to schools in my State and realize that children were not learning so they could realize their God-given potential. I didn't like it because I knew the future of our society depended upon a good, sound education.

I was sharing this story with people that Laura and I just met with, and at the time I went to a high school in my State, one of our big city high schools. And I said, "Man, thanks for teaching." I met this teacher. I think his name is Brown, if I'm not mistaken——

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. Nelson Brown.

The President. ——Nelson Brown—and he taught geography and history, if I'm not mistaken. I said, "How is it going, Mr. Brown?" He said, "It's going lousy." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because my kids cannot read, and they're in high school." You see, the system was just satisfied with just shuffling kids through: If you're 14, you're supposed to be here; if you're 16, you're supposed to be there. Rarely was the question asked: Can you read? Or can you write? Or can you add and can you subtract?

And so we decided to do something about it. We said such a system is unacceptable to the future of our State. And that's the spirit we brought to Washington, DC. It's unacceptable to our country that vulnerable children slip through the cracks. And by the way, guess who generally those children are? They happen to be inner-city kids, or children whose parents don't speak English as a first language. They're the easiest children to forget about.

We saw a culture of low expectations. You know what happens when you have low expectations? You get lousy results. And when you get lousy results, you have people who say, "There's no future for me in this country."

And so we decided to do something about it. We accepted the responsibility of the office to which I had been elected. It starts with this concept: Every child can learn. We believe that it is important to have a high quality education if you're—one is going to succeed in the 21st century. It's no longer acceptable to be cranking people out of the school system and saying, "Okay, just go—you know, you can make a living just through manual labor alone." That's going to happen for some, but it's not the future of America, if we want to be a competitive nation as we head into the 21st century.

We believe that every child has dignity and worth. But it wasn't just me who believed that. Fortunately, when we got to Washington, a lot of other people believed it, Democrats and Republicans. I know there's a lot of talk about how Washington is divided, and it has been at times, at times. And it can get awfully ugly in Washington. But nevertheless, if you look at the history over the past 8 years, there have been moments where we have come together. And the No Child Left Behind Act is one such moment.

It gives me a chance now to thank Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, Senator Gregg of New Hampshire, Congressman Miller of California, Congressman Boehner of Ohio, Republicans and Democrats who worked together to get this piece of legislation passed. I believe that in signing that bill we enacted the most sweeping education reforms in a long, long time.

The philosophy behind the law is pretty straightforward: Local schools remain under local control. In exchange for Federal dollars, however, we expect results. We're spending money on schools, and shouldn't we determine whether or not the money we're spending is yielding the results society expects?

So States set standards. One reason this school makes sense is because you have a principal who sets high standards, keeps that bar high. And we hold schools accountable for meeting the standards. There—we set an historic goal that—and that is to—every child should learn to read and do math at grade level by 2014.

The key to measuring is to test. And by the way, I've heard every excuse in the book why we should not test: "Oh, there's too many tests; you teach the test; testing is intrusive; testing is not the role of government." How can you possibly determine whether a child can read at grade level if you don't test? And for those who claim we're teaching the test, uh-uh. We're teaching a child to read so he or she can pass the test.

Testing is important to solve problems. You can't solve them unless you diagnose the problem in the first place. Testing is important to make sure children don't slip too far behind. The facts are, if you get too far behind in reading, for example, it's nearly impossible to catch up. That's why it's important to test early.

Measuring results allows us to focus resources on children who need extra help. And measuring gives parents something to compare other schools with. You oftentimes hear, "Oh, gosh, I wish parents were more involved." Well, one way to get parental involvement is to post results. Nothing will get a parent's attention more than if he or she sees that the school her child goes to isn't performing as well as the school around the corner.

Measurement is essential to success. When schools fall short of standards year after year, something has to happen. In other words, there has to be a consequence in order for there to be effective reforms. And one such thing that can happen is parents can enroll their children in another school. It's—to me, measurement is the gateway to true reform, and measurement is the best way to ensure parental involvement.

By the way, school choice was only open to rich people up until No Child Left Behind. It's hard for a lot of parents to be able to afford to go to any other kind of school but their neighborhood school. And now, under this system, if your public school is failing, you'll have the option of transferring to another public school or charter school. And it's—I view that as liberation; I view that as empowerment.

There's been a lot of debates about the requirements of No Child Left Behind. No question, a piece of legislation like this encourages debate, and that's fine. That's part of the democratic process. But there is no debate about the results: the first time all 50 States and the District of Columbia have accountability plans in place. The data is being disaggregated. That means that we—instead of just lumping all children together and say, "Oh, isn't everything beautiful," we actually break each child out to determine whether or not he or she is getting the kind of education parents and society expects. And that's an important reform.

Instead of looking the other way when students are falling behind, policymakers at all levels are now beginning to be focused on how to close the achievement gap. Achievement gap is—it means this: White students are reading here, and African American students are reading here, and Latino students are reading down here. And that is unacceptable for the United States of America.

In the classroom, students are learning from highly qualified teachers. In other words, that's part of the reforms of encouraged—the focus on highly qualified teachers. Schools have adopted research-proven strategies for reading instruction. There's a lot of debate, if you follow the public education debates closely, that there's a lot of debate about what's the best kind of reading program as to how to best teach a child to read. Well, when you measure, it helps you determine which system works the best. The principal was describing to us, we're always adjusting and looking to make sure our education is—fits each individual child. In other words, she's constantly analyzing her instruction strategies, and a measurement system allows you to do so.

There's a new Teacher Incentive Fund in place, as a result of No Child Left Behind reforms, and a city like Philadelphia

are rewarding educators for taking jobs in this city's toughest classrooms, and those who are achieving results. In other words, there's an incentive to make sure good teachers get in the classrooms all throughout the city. And by the way, this is happening all across our country.

You know, I mentioned disclosure. More and more districts are producing annual report cards, and that's really important. And I did mention to you what they call supplemental services. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, when you find a disadvantaged child falling behind where he or she should be, there's extra money for tutoring. And across the country there's now about a half a million students benefiting from the tutoring that comes from No Child Left Behind. It makes sense, doesn't it? It says we're going to measure, and if we determine you need extra help, here's some money to help you so that you don't fall behind, so that you catch up.

The number of charter schools, by the way, has more than doubled over the past 7 years. Charter schools provide good outlets. And I met the head of the—president of the charter school association here in Philadelphia. He said 10 years ago there were four, and today there are—yes, a lot. [*Laughter*] When you get over 60, it's hard to hear. [*Laughter*]

The most important result of the No Child Left Behind is this: Fewer students are falling behind; more students are achieving high standards. We have what's called the Nation's Report Card. For those who wonder whether or not we should strengthen No Child Left Behind, I want you to hear this: fourth graders earned the highest reading and math scores in the history of the test. Minority and disadvantaged students made some of the largest gains, with African Americans and Hispanics posting alltime highs in several categories.

No Child Left Behind is working for all kinds of students in all kinds of schools in every part of the country. That is a fact. There's still a long way to go, however. Secretary Spellings has worked hard to give schools tools and flexibility. She issued new regulations that will reward schools for progress students make from year to year. She helps to provide programs that provide a clear graduation rate. And one of the problems we've had, of course, is getting enough information out in a timely fashion to empower parents to be able to make wise decisions about the future of their children. And she has worked steadily to make sure that information gets to parents in a timely fashion.

Obviously, there's—a piece of legislation like this takes compromise. But there is no compromise to the basic premise of No Child Left Behind, and that is we need to measure on a clear set of goals. We need a few goals that have got maximum impact, and we need to know whether or not those goals are being met. People say, "Can you possibly meet the goal you set?" And the answer is, absolutely can we meet the goals that we've set. And not only is it absolutely—confident we can meet it, I know it is necessary that we do meet those goals.

Laura and I have been privileged to travel to schools over the past 8 years such as this, and you'd be amazed at what we get to see. We get to see hard-working, decent citizens who dedicate their lives to making sure no child is left behind. And we have seen innovators who are willing to try different approaches to achieve the same result. So we went to Harlem to see a school district there. They attend school for 10 hours a day. So the educators, taking advantage of local control, said, "What does it require to make sure that we meet high standards?" In this case, the educators said, "Well, we need to have school 10 hours a day." The teachers give parents their cell phone numbers, so that they can be called anytime. And as the teachers told us, they do get called anytime—[*laughter*]—to help solve problems. I was just thankful that there weren't cell phones when I was going to elementary school. [*Laughter*]

I have seen the resolve for reform and the belief in high standards in Chicago, where reading and math scores are soaring, and where every child still has time to study a foreign language and the fine arts. The school in Chicago we went to, like other schools across the city, have benefited from the vision and leadership of a person named Arne Duncan, and he is going to be the next Secretary of Education. And we are fortunate he has agreed to take on this position. And we wish him all the very best.

Laura and I will never forget the resolve that we saw in New Orleans after Katrina, and the determination by principals and teachers to get their schools up and running. And they did. And by the way, they have placed innovation at the center of a rebuilding school system. They believe in high standards and accountability to make sure that out of the rubble of Katrina comes a world-class education system.

And we've seen the resolve here at Kearny. That's why we're here. Every year—we met a mom, who told us her twins now come to this school. You know, it's interesting what happens when you post scores. Nobody cares more about a child's education, obviously, than the first teacher a child has, which is a parent. And this notion about how parents really don't seem to care, they care, believe me. And when there's transparency in the system it helps them make informed choices. And so mom was saying her twins come here. She also said, by the way, they weren't really reading up to snuff initially, and yet they got extra help. And now guess what? They're reading up to snuff. Kearny School works.

They commute for miles. Some of the families commute for miles because they understand it's a place of excellence. This is a school where a lot of community and faith-based groups come to help. And that is really great of you to do that. And by the way, it happens in other schools too. And if you're interested in how you can serve America, why don't you volunteer in your local school? If you want to be a member of the army of compassion in America, help your schools. Help your schools help each child realize their God-given potential.

I believe that it is going to be important for our citizens to take a hard look at No Child Left Behind, and listen to the facts of No Child Left Behind, and then say with clear voice, for the sake of our children's future, this good law needs to be strengthened and reauthorized by the United States Congress.

There is a growing consensus across the country that now is not the time to water down standards or to roll back accountability. There is a growing consensus that includes leaders of the business communities across America who see an increasingly global economy and, therefore, believe in standards and accountability. There's a growing consensus amongst leaders of civil rights organizations, like La Raza, and the Urban League, and the Education Equality Project. These leaders refuse to accept what I have called the soft bigotry of low expectations. There's a growing consensus includes a lot of parents, and superintendents, and mayors, and Governors who insist that we put our children first.

And so I've come to herald the success of a good piece of legislation. I have come to talk to our citizens about the results this reform has yielded. And I call upon those who can determine the fate of No Child Left Behind in the future to stay strong in the face of criticism, to not weaken the law—because in weakening the law, you weaken the chance for a child to succeed in America—but to strengthen the law for the sake of every child.

Thank you for letting us come by for the last policy address that we have been honored to make. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. at General Philip Kearny School. In his remarks, he referred to Arlene C. Ackerman,

superintendent, School District of Philadelphia; political activist Rev. Alfred C. Sharpton, Jr.; Eileen Spagnola, principal, General Philip Kearny School; Adam Bruckner, assistant coach, Major Indoor Soccer League's Philadelphia Kixx; and Lawrence Jones, president, Pennsylvania Coalition for Charter School.

Statement on the Death of Father Richard John Neuhaus
January 8, 2009

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Father Richard John Neuhaus. Father Neuhaus was an inspirational leader, admired theologian, and accomplished author who devoted his life to the service of the Almighty and to the betterment of our world. He was also a dear friend, and I have treasured his wise counsel and guidance.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Father Neuhaus's family, friends, and fellow clergy during this difficult time.

Statement on Senator Christopher S. "Kit" Bond's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
January 8, 2009

Senator Kit Bond has been a wonderful public servant and statesman for the people of Missouri. During more than three decades of service as Governor and United States Senator, Kit has been a tireless advocate for our children, our military, and our Nation's intelligence community. He played a vital role in the effort to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Because of his leadership, we are protecting the liberties of our citizens while gathering vital information we need to prevent attacks on our soil.

I have been honored to work with Senator Bond during my time as President, and Laura and I wish Kit, Linda, and their son Samuel all the best in the future.

The President's Radio Address
January 10, 2009

Good morning. This week, I gave my official farewell speech to the men and women of America's Armed Forces in a ceremony at Fort Myer, Virginia. For the past 8 years, I have had no higher honor than serving as the Commander in Chief of these brave patriots. And when Laura and I depart for Texas later this month, we will take with us many inspiring memories of the valor that we have seen these brave Americans display time and again.

We saw their valor on September the 11th, 2001, in servicemembers rushing into smoke-filled corridors to save their colleagues at the Pentagon and in planes patrolling the skies above New York City and Washington, DC.

We saw their valor in the days after that attack, when Americans crowded into recruiting centers across our country, raised their hands to serve, and pledged to defend our people and our freedom.

We saw their valor in the forces who deployed to Afghanistan within weeks of 9/11, closed down the terrorist training camps, and drove the Taliban from power.

We saw their valor in the fearless troops who stormed across the Iraqi desert and destroyed a regime that threatened America.

We saw their valor in battle-tested warriors who signed up for a second or third or fourth tour and made the troop surge in Iraq that I announced 2 years ago today one of the great successes in American military history.

America's Armed Forces have liberated more than 50 million people around the world and made our Nation safer. They have taken the fight to the terrorists abroad so that we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than 7 years after September the 11th, there has not been another terrorist attack on American soil. This is no coincidence.

In addition to our military, many other Americans have worked tirelessly to ensure our safety in the years since 9/11. Law enforcement officials have worked to secure our country and remained watchful against future attacks. Intelligence analysts have tracked information that allowed us to disrupt terrorist plots before they reached our shores. And homeland security agents have worked to secure our ports, our borders, and our skies.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all of these patriots. Because of their devotion to service, many Americans live their lives without the fear and uncertainty that they felt in the days just after 9/11. This continued safety has been a blessing. But we must never allow it to foster complacency. America still faces sworn enemies intent on striking our Nation and our people. And we must remain vigilant for as long as that threat remains.

I know that our men and women in uniform have remained vigilant. These Americans answer the call to defend freedom when it is under attack. They put their lives on the line to defend democracy and keep our country safe. And they inspire a nation with their selflessness and their courage. I am proud to have served as their Commander in Chief.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:55 a.m. on January 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 9, 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 the Commissioning Ceremony of the USS *George H.W. Bush* in Norfolk, Virginia
January 10, 2009

The President. Thank you very much. Secretary Gates, thank you for your introduction. I know I speak on behalf of President 41 when I say it has been a privilege for both of us to serve with this fine and distinguished man.

I want to thank you all for coming. Laura and I are thrilled to be here to help commission an awesome ship and to honor an

awesome man: President George H.W. Bush.

To prepare for this day, I went back through some of my father's letters. I thought it was especially interesting to read one that he wrote in the late 1940s. He sent it to a friend, and here's what he said, he said: "You should see Georgie now. Whenever I come home, he greets me and talks a blue streak, sentences disjointed of course." [*Laughter*] "He tries to say everything, and the results are often hilarious." [*Laughter*] Some things do not change. [*Laughter*]

The aircraft carrier, which we commission today, may be the Navy's newest ship, but she has already had an interesting past. Her catapult testing took place during an unseasonable cold snap. Her christening was thrown into chaos by a fierce nor'easter. And during construction, the shipyard was closed down because of Hurricane Isabel. So in keeping with this ship's short history, I brought along an equally strong force of nature: my mother. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Vice President and Lynne, thank you for joining us. Vice President Cheney has been a fabulous Vice President of the United States. Governor Kaine, thank you for your welcoming remarks. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, I appreciate you joining us. Other members of the administration and their families; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen; CNO Gary Roughead; Captain O'Flaherty; other member of the United States Armed Forces and their families; shipyard workers and managers; members of our family who have joined us; and all the friends of George H.W. Bush: We are glad you are here.

The story of the USS *George H.W. Bush* begins in the early days of World War II, when our dad enlisted in the United States Navy. Like many servicemen deployed overseas, he was sustained by a girl he loved back home. From her dorm room, she knitted socks for him. In remote Pacific atolls, he collected seashells for her. And when he returned home from war, the first thing he did was to make her his bride. And for 64 years ago this week, the love of my father's life has been Barbara Bush.

Over the years, our parents have built a family bound forever by closeness, warmth, and unconditional love. Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Doro and I will always feel blessed to have had the best father anyone could ever ask for. We will always be inspired by the faith, humor, patriotism, and compassion he taught us through his own example. And for as long we live, we will carry with us dad's other lessons: that integrity and honor are worth more than any title or treasure, and that the truest strength can come from the gentlest soul.

George H.W. Bush has the deep love of his family, the admiration of his friends, and the thanks of a grateful nation. So today we are faced with the—[*applause*]. So what do you give a guy who has been blessed and has just about everything he has ever needed? Well, an aircraft carrier. [*Laughter*] The ship that bears our dad's name is more than 95,000 tons of aluminum and steel. She will carry nearly 6,000 of the finest sailors and marines in the world. She represents the craftsmanship of many skilled builders and thousands of hours of preparation. And so I congratulate all of you on this tremendous achievement.

This ship is a fitting tribute to a generation of men with whom my dad was privileged to serve. She's also a tribute to a new generation of American soldiers and sailors and Coast Guard men and women, airmen and marines who have stepped forward to defend the United States America. Again our troops are facing down a brutal enemy, again they are making America and the world safer, and again they will come home in victory.

People often ask what I treasure most about being the President. Nothing comes close to the honor of being your Commander in Chief. Every day, I'm amazed by the skill and courage of our men and

women in uniform. And as we send the USS *George H.W. Bush* into service, I know you will do credit to the sailors who served before you and the good man for whom this ship is named. I ask that God protect this ship and let her know only victory and peace. And I ask God's continued blessings on our wonderful Nation.

Thank you.

[*At this point, Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter made brief remarks.*]

The President. I hereby place the United States Ship *George H.W. Bush* in commission. May God bless and guide this warship and all who shall sail in her.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia; Adm. Gary Roughead, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Capt. Kevin E. O'Flaherty, USN, commanding officer, USS *George H.W. Bush*. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President George H.W. Bush. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Interview With Brit Hume of FOX News
January 7, 2009

Mr. Hume. Mr. President, thank you for doing this.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Mr. Hume. Welcome back to FOX News Sunday.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Last Days in Office

Mr. Hume. Less than 2 weeks to go, how do you feel?

President Bush. You know, I've got mixed emotions. I'm going to miss being the Commander in Chief of the military. Earlier the past week, I had the honor of having a military parade that said goodbye to the Commander in Chief, and it was an emotional moment for me and Laura.

Mr. Hume. Why?

President Bush. Just because I've got such great respect for the men and women who wear the uniform, and I've been through a lot with them. I have called upon them to do hard tasks. I have met with the families of the fallen. I have been to Walter Reed to see the wounded. And I have been incredibly inspired by their courage, their bravery, their sacrifice.

And I'm going to miss all the folks who have made our life so comfortable here in the White House.

On the other hand, I am looking forward to going back to Texas. I love Texas. I love my wife. And I'm excited about the next chapter in my life. And so all three of those things, you know, are the sweet part of the—what's going to take place on January the 20th.

Reflections on the President's Time in Office

Mr. Hume. People who come to see you here and meet with you, from the outside, are continually taken by surprise by your evident good humor and good mood and the fact that with low poll ratings and various troubles besetting the country and all you've been through, that you're not down——

President Bush. Yes.

Mr. Hume. ——that you're fine. And everybody remarks on it. How do you explain that?

President Bush. Well, I'm better than fine. I am proud of the accomplishments of this administration. I am thankful for the people that have worked so hard to

serve our country. I know I gave it my all for 8 years. And I did not sell my soul for the sake of popularity. And so when I get back home and look in the mirror, I will be proud of what I see.

President's Principles

Mr. Hume. You have said that you did not compromise your principles in the interest of popularity. How would you describe those principles?

President Bush. Well, one principle is I believe in the universality of freedom, that there is an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom. And therefore, it's incumbent upon those of us with influence to act upon that principle.

And I'll give you a classic example. During the darkest days of Iraq, people came to me and said, "You're creating incredible political difficulties for us." And I said, "Oh, really, what do you suggest I do?" Their suggest—some suggested, retreat, pull out of Iraq. But I have faith that freedom exists in people's souls, and therefore, if given a chance, democracy—an Iraqi style democracy—could survive and work. I didn't compromise that principle for the sake of trying to bail out my political party, for example.

Presidential Powers

Mr. Hume. Talk to me about the Presidency as you found it, its powers, its prerogatives, and how you feel you're leaving it.

President Bush. My Presidency was defined by the attack on the country, and therefore, used the powers inherent in the Constitution to defend this country.

Mr. Hume. Did you find them intact?

President Bush. I found—yes, I did find the Presidential powers intact. I have at times used those powers in ways that people had not anticipated. For example, the idea of, within the law, being able to have our folks question known killers about their intention. Now, many of the decisions I made are being adjudicated. And of course, I have lived by, and future Presidents will live by, the decisions of the Supreme Court. But as a wartime President, what remained intact, by the way, was the Constitution——

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. ——which we have honored.

Checks and Balances in Government

Mr. Hume. It has been argued that what you sought to do is actually expand the powers of the Presidency or in the eyes of some—perhaps in the eyes of the Vice President—to restore them. How do you see that?

President Bush. I see the relationship between the Presidency and the judiciary and the legislative branch as constantly changing throughout the history of the country. And the key thing that's important is that there still be checks and balances. And so however I interpreted the Constitution, I kept in mind what the Constitution said the legality of what my decisions were. But I also fully understood the checks and balances inherent in our system.

Presidential Powers

Mr. Hume. Now, you've spoken of the tools that you believe you put in place and which your successor will now inherit.

President Bush. Yes.

Mr. Hume. How worried are you, if at all, that those tools will be eroded, relinquished in the—because some of them have been——

President Bush. Slightly criticized. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hume. Well, to say the least.

President Bush. I would hope that the team that is—has the honor of serving the country will take a hard look at the realities of the world and the tools now in place to protect the United States from further attack. I would hope they would take a sober assessment, and I believe they will.

Mr. Hume. And what will they find?

President Bush. Well, they will find that with a considerable amount of care and concern for civil liberties, for example, that I have put in place procedures that will enable the professionals to better learn the intentions of Al Qaida, for example. They will realize, I think, when they really study the issue carefully, that we have gone from an administration that was accused of not connecting dots to an administration that is connecting dots, you know, linking pieces of information to better protect the country, with the civil liberties of our citizens in mind.

Intelligence Gathering Program/War on Terror

Mr. Hume. Now, the enhanced interrogation techniques, as some call them, torture, as others call them——

President Bush. Yes.

Mr. Hume. ——are being argued over to this hour. Some are saying you never get any good information by rough stuff, and others have said, more than once, that if we hadn't used these techniques, we wouldn't have had vital information and attacks could have been or would have been carried out on this country. Your view of that.

President Bush. My view is that the techniques were necessary and are necessary to be used on a rare occasion to get information necessary to protect the American people. One such person who gave us information was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. He was the mastermind of the September the 11th, 2001, attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on our soil.

And I'm in the Oval Office, and I am told that we have captured Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and the professionals believe he has information necessary to secure the country. So I ask what tools are available for us to find information from him, and they gave me a list of tools. And I said, are these tools deemed to be legal? And so we got legal opinions before any decision was made. And I think when people study the history of this particular episode——

Mr. Hume. Well, what happened?

President Bush. ——they'll find out we gained good information from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in order to protect our country.

Mr. Hume. Well, how good and how important? And what's the——

President Bush. We believe that the information we gained helped save lives on American soil.

Mr. Hume. Can you be more specific than that?

President Bush. Well, I have said in speeches and, as a matter of fact, when this program was leaked to the press, I actually gave a speech that said to the American people, yes, we're doing this. And—but I also emphasized we were doing it within the law.

Look, I understand why people can get carried away on this issue. But generally, they don't know the facts. And by the way, one of the interesting things that did take place is before anything happened on this particular program that we did brief Members of Congress.

Mr. Hume. Yes.

President Bush. We had an obligation to share information with the legislative branch. And all I can tell the American people is we better have tools in place that are legal and that can help us protect the American people from an enemy that still exists.

And my concern is not for President-elect Obama, because I'm confident that he understands the nature of the world and understands the need to protect America. But I am concerned that America, at some point in time, lets down her guard. And if we ever do that, the country will become highly vulnerable.

Mr. Hume. Well, how badly would it hurt, in your view, if this—these enhanced interrogation techniques that some call torture were abandoned and were not used?

President Bush. Yes, well, obviously, I feel like it would be a problem because these are tools that we have in place. I do want to—you know, I firmly reject the word "torture."

Mr. Hume. I understand that.

President Bush. Everything this administration did was—had a legal basis to it; otherwise, we would not have done it.

Secondly, everything we did was in consultation with professionals in our Government who understand, you know, how to use techniques in a way that gets information with—you know, within the law, necessary to protect the American people.

And I just can't imagine what it would be like to be President without these tools available and we captured a known killer who might have had information about the next attack on America.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. See, what some don't understand, evidently, is that we're at war. And it's a different kind of war, where an enemy uses asymmetrical warfare and they lie in wait and find a soft spot, ready to attack again. And they're willing to kill as many innocent people as they can to advance their agenda.

Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Hume. Right. Speaking of professionals, in the intelligence area, how do you view the selection of Leon Panetta to head the CIA?

President Bush. I really don't feel comfortable commenting upon President-elect Obama's supposed choices, in this case. My only advice would be to recognize that the CIA is full of incredibly bright, hard-working, decent professionals who have got one thing in mind, and that is to serve the United States.

Mr. Hume. And yet this administration, to some extent, has been bedeviled by intelligence leaks believed to have come from the CIA. They seem—and there has been a degree of tension, I think it's probably an understatement to say, between the administration—or the White House, at least, and the CIA.

President Bush. No, I don't think so, Brit. I think that there have been disappointing moments when information came out of the Agency that—but the relationship has been fabulous up and down the line with the CIA.

Mr. Hume. Really?

President Bush. Oh, yes. I would say—I go out there quite frequently, and—or I have gone out there fairly often, I guess, is the best way to put it. And 99 percent of the people out there are anxious to help the administration do its job in a good way. And you can't stop leaks. And you don't know how many people were leaking, but I can assure you the vast majority of people in the CIA were very cooperative and have my highest respect.

I meet with the CIA every day of my Presidency, except for Sundays, since I've been President, at the same time: 7:30 on Saturday, 8 o'clock on every other day. And I will tell you that it is a fascinating experience to be briefed by CIA analysts. It's like taking a geopolitical course, international affairs course, every single day of the Presidency.

President-Elect Barack Obama

Mr. Hume. You've had now some further occasions to meet with Barack Obama and get to know him a little bit better, a man you really didn't know. How did you—how did your interaction with him go?

President Bush. It was a very straightforward——

Mr. Hume. How did you find him?

President Bush. How did I like him? I liked him.

Mr. Hume. Were you—other than——

President Bush. He's obviously—listen, the man is obviously a charismatic person.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. And the man is able to persuade people that they should trust him, and he's got something—he's got a lot going for him.

And I was—you know, wish him all the best. The reason we had the dinner, or the lunch—we call them dinners in Texas—the lunch at the White House was so that he could hear from the current President and former Presidents that we want him to succeed. And he is an engaging person, and I am very impressed by the priority he places on his family.

Republican Party's Future

Mr. Hume. Now, your political family, the Republican Party——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Mr. Hume. ——what do you think is its likely fortunes going forward? How have you left it? What does it need to do?

President Bush. I think—look, I mean, obviously, we got whipped in 2008. And there will be a new wave of leadership arriving on the scene.

I can remember the '64 elections, the Goldwater—the Johnson landslide against Barry Goldwater, and we were—everybody said the party was wiped out. And then a whole new wave of Republicans ran, including George H.W. Bush, who got elected to the United States Congress from the Seventh Congressional District. Same thing will happen. But it's very important for our party not to narrow its focus, not to become so inward-looking that we drive people away from a philosophy that is compassionate and decent.

And I would—my call for our party is to be open-minded about——

Mr. Hume. About what?

President Bush. Well, different people's opinions. We shouldn't have litmus tests as to whether or not you can be a Republican.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. And we should be open-minded about big issues like immigration reform, because if we're viewed as anti somebody—in other words, if the party is viewed as anti-immigrant, then another fellow may say, "Well, if they're against the immigrant, they may be against me." We've got to be a party for a better future, and for hope.

Mr. Hume. You got—do you see new ideas out there that have not been a part of your own agenda or those of your Republican predecessors that might reignite the party's fortunes?

President Bush. You know, look, I think that we shouldn't change our philosophy.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. We may want to change our messaging. We definitely want to change messengers. We need a new group of leaders. You know, but the idea of keeping taxes low——

Mr. Hume. Do you see them emerging? Do you see any emerging who you could identify?

President Bush. Well, I had one in mind——

Mr. Hume. Who's that?

President Bush. ——but he evidently didn't agree with his older brother.

Mr. Hume. You're speaking, of course, about Jeb——

President Bush. That would be Governor Jeb Bush.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. But listen, there will be, you know, leaders. I mean, there's a lot of bright young guys and women in our party that will emerge. And parties go through cycles. There have been parts—times in our political history when the Democrats have felt like there was no future for them. And you know—and so I'm optimistic about it. I don't want the party to feel like it's got to sell its soul on defending the country; that freedom is transformative; that we've got to be compassionate conservatives; that tax—low taxes make sense; that the military needs to be supported. I mean, there's a lot of just basic tenets to our party that make a lot of sense to the average person.

Post-Presidency Agenda

Mr. Hume. You have indicated that you've found this job to be fascinating; everybody does. It's probably the most interesting job in the world. Now you go from doing the most interesting job in the world to being out on your own. How do you feel about that? What do you think your life is going to be like, just sort of day to day? Will you be more time in Dallas, more time at your ranch? How do you expect to spend your time?

President Bush. Yes, it's an interesting question. And I've begun to think about that, because I can remember with a great sense of anticipation coming to Washington, DC, to be the President of the United States. And I have the same sense of anticipation heading out of political life, but without the sense of gravity.

Mr. Hume. Right.

President Bush. And so I don't—I'm going to be fairly footloose for a while. I'm confident Laura will have enough tasks for me to keep me busy. But I imagine I'll spend a fair amount of time in Dallas working on the policy center that will be associated with a library on the SMU campus. And I'm excited about that, because I do want to continue to promote not a political party, not my personality or my record, but a set of values that I think are very important for the country.

And you know, I plan on writing a book.

Mr. Hume. Do you?

President Bush. I do.

Mr. Hume. A history of your Presidency?

President Bush. You know, I'm not quite exactly sure what it's going to be, but I'm toying with the idea of maybe describing the toughest decisions I had to make as President and the context in which I made them, because one of the things that——

Mr. Hume. How soon will we see this book, do you think?

President Bush. That's the kind of question I better not answer, because——

Mr. Hume. Well, do you feel some urgency about getting it done?

President Bush. Well, I'll say 2 years and it will be 4.

Mr. Hume. Got it.

President Bush. I don't know. I mean, yes, I'd like to get it done. I am a type A personality that—you know, I require things to do. And I bet once I get going on this book, I'll be able to get 'er done. But it's—what's evident to me is that it is very hard for people to remember what life was like a mere 4 or 5 years ago. And it's going to be very important for me to recreate the environment in which I had to make certain decisions, particularly the environment right after September the 11th, 2001.

Mr. Hume. Right. Mr. President, thank you for this. Please bear with us, we need to take a break. And when we return, we will have a special visitor. Stay with us.

[*At this point, there was a pause in the interview. It then began again as follows.*]

President's Relationship With His Father

Mr. Hume. Well, we're pleased now to be joined not only of course by President Bush, the current President Bush, but by his father. Mr. President 41, welcome.

Former President George H.W. Bush. Thank you, Brit.

Mr. Hume. I believe this is the first time you two gentlemen have ever been interviewed together.

Former President Bush. I think so. It may be the first time we've been asked to be interviewed. I don't know. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hume. Well, we're delighted to have you. Thank you very much.

Former President Bush. No, that's not true, but we've just gone our separate ways on these interviews.

Mr. Hume. In some sense, it has at least seemed that during your son's Presidency, that while you guys obviously were in touch—your family matters, much to discuss—that apart from that, there wasn't a lot of give and take. Is that true?

President Bush. Well, that's all it takes for give and take. I mean, you don't need—if you mean, am I calling up dad—I mean, "George, here's what you got to do now on Iraq," or something; no, I didn't do that. And we sometimes would talk about policy. But I was determined to stay out of his way and avoid speculation of what's the old guy think. I mean, you don't need that.

Mr. Hume. Well, now it can be told. [*Laughter*] Discuss if you will, both of you, the extent of your consultations on policy and political matters as—while you were President—the frequency of it.

President Bush. See, the interesting thing is that a President has got plenty of advisers, but what a President never has is someone who gave him unconditional love. And therefore, when I talked to my dad, I was more interested in the father-son relationship. You got a lot of people who can give you advice, but you rarely have people who can pick up the phone and say, "I love you, son," or, "Hang in there, son," and be—and provide the kind of comfort that a President needs on occasion.

The Presidency and Public Opinion

Mr. Hume. You have said that when your father was President, particularly toward the end—a rough year politically, in 1992—that that hurt you more than it seemed to hurt him. Is that true?

President Bush. Well, I said that being the son of a President was a lot harder than being the President.

Mr. Hume. And how about being the father of the President?

Former President Bush. Tough at times, only when you see criticism you know is very unfair. But I didn't—I tried not to speak up; it might just exacerbate the problem for him. But when I saw things I knew were grossly unfair in the press, in the print, anywhere, it hurt. It hurt Barbara, and it hurt me. But it's better not to go forth and sally forth and try to take the offense——

President Bush. And by the way, I——

Mr. Hume. Well, did it hurt you more than the criticism that you took as President?

Former President Bush. I think it hurt more, yes.

Mr. Hume. Do you feel that way too, that it hurt you more than——

President Bush. Absolutely. Gosh, I was furious. I got the reputation——

Mr. Hume. ——about stuff about him?

President Bush. Yes. I got the reputation of being slightly hotheaded at times, and you know, it was an accurate characteristic, because I was ready to duke it out when I saw people say things that were unfair about dad. And the other thing that's interesting is, though, I can remember calling he and mom and saying, "Don't worry about me." In other words, I knew that they were taking on, you know, the anxiety, and I knew what it was like to have somebody you love being hammered in the press.

And so I spent a fair amount of time, as I recall, calling them and saying, "Look, don't worry about me, things are going to be fine, my spirits are good, Laura is doing great." And you know, I think people sit out there and say, "They must have had some kind of, you know, relationship that is kept very clinical and very advisory, touched up." But this is a loving relationship. This is—you know, he's the head of a fabulous family, and whether it be me as the President, or Jeb as the Governor, or Neil, Marvin, and Doro, dad's phone calls are not, you know, you must do this or that; his phone calls are, I love you, and it's very powerful.

President's Legacy

Mr. Hume. Now, your son's race is days away from having been run. How do you regard his Presidency?

Former President Bush. Very positively. And I think history will——

Mr. Hume. Why?

Former President Bush. Well, because you make a tough decision and stay with it. I mean, he's been tested unlike any other President with this 9/11. So he passed the test.

President Bush. He's going to be judged great too. He was a—he was almost too humble to be President. And when history finally gets objective, they will be able to say a lot of positive things about George Bush. I cannot worry. You know, I tell people I'm still reading biographies of George Washington or analyses of his Presidency. And if they're still writing about the first guy, the 41st guy and the 43d guy simply don't need to worry about it.

Former President Bush. We won't be around to worry about it, that's for sure. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Yes.

Former President Bush's Health

Mr. Hume. Now, I see you getting along—getting around now on a cane, and—is that a condition that's going to get better, in your judgment? Are you going to be—is this a remnant from one of your hip operations, or what do you got going there?

Former President Bush. This is what they call old age.

Mr. Hume. I understand about that myself. [*Laughter*]

Former President Bush. No, it's—no, no pain, no hip—I think I have an imbalance that came from a back operation.

Mr. Hume. Oh.

President Bush. Let me ask you something. Is it true that you said publicly that you're going to jump out of the airplane again?

Former President Bush. True. But that doesn't take anything but just going up there with some big—strapped on to some big Golden Knight or someone, and it's a thrill.

President Bush. You're going to have trouble convincing mother of that. [*Laughter*]

Former President Bush. No, I won't.

Mr. Hume. What about you? What do you think about that? Do you want him to do that?

President Bush. I think he's a nut to jump out of an airplane at age 70, 75, 80, and 85. I find it—actually, I think it's cool.

Former President Bush. I told you the reasons, though. You don't want to sit around just because you're an old guy, drooling in the corner. [*Laughter*] And secondly, you want to send a message out to around the world, actually, because of the prominence of the Presidency, that you can still do stuff. Old guys can still do stuff, get involved in things.

President Bush. You can drool and jump at the same time. [*Laughter*]

Former President Bush. That's right. [*Laughter*]

Post-Presidency Agenda

Mr. Hume. Now, you're in Houston. You've chosen Dallas.

President Bush. Yes.

Mr. Hume. What's up with that?

President Bush. Well, I want to be close to SMU. And that's where our policy center/library/archives are going to be.

Mr. Hume. You okay with that?

Former President Bush. And they had a Dallas connection——

Mr. Hume. Did you hope that he'd come to Houston?

Former President Bush. What?

Mr. Hume. Did you hope that he'd move to Houston when—

Former President Bush. No, I never thought he would move to Houston.

President Bush. Plus, Houston is 2 hours away from—I mean, Dallas is 2 hours away from Crawford. And I plan on spending some time down there in Crawford.

Former President Bush. And Laura had some Dallas connections, so it made sense.

President Bush. Yes.

Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Hume. Now, I want to ask you a little bit about the intelligence agency situation. After all, you came as an outsider to intelligence.

Former President Bush. Total outsider.

Mr. Hume. You weren't an intelligence professional. And now you got the building out there named after you. So obviously, it could work. Your thoughts about, not to the Panetta nomination or the Panetta selection specifically, but about the general idea of what it takes to be the—to run the intelligence agency effectively?

Former President Bush. Well, I heard what the President said in his interview with you, and I agree with that, that there's so many outstanding people there. And so I went in there at a time the Agency was under tremendous fire—the Pike report, the Church report—and they were just decimating the morale of the Agency. So I viewed my job not to learn all the trade craft, but to defend the quality and the character of the Agency and the people there. And that was perhaps an easier assignment than knowing all about every intrigue of intelligence.

But all I hope is that whoever goes out there goes with confidence in the CIA and the people around CIA. They're good people, more Ph.D.s than many universities and many different disciplines. And everybody just thinks it's kind of a James Bond operation.

And so I think that whoever assumes that job—and I have had great confidence in the President's pick—will express confidence in the Agency and the people that make it up.

Relationship Between Past, Present, and Future Presidents

Mr. Hume. Talk a little bit, if you will, about this relationship among people who are in or have been in this remarkable job; it's a pretty exclusive club. And I know you had a lunch this week to bring them together with the President-elect. But what is that atmosphere like among former Presidents? Are all the old political differences aside? Is that all over with?

Former President Bush. Yes, I think so. And I think everyone—every member of that club realizes there can only be one President; he's not going to be turning to you every day saying, "What will I do now?"

You read a lot of kind of intellectual books, but what we need is the advice—formalize the advice of former Presidents. He doesn't need a lot of advice from former Presidents. And he needs to—the current President needs to have good people around him who will help him pursue the goals he's set out.

And so I don't think there's much to it except collegiality and the idea that you want to be out there if he needs support.

President-Elect Obama's Administration

Mr. Hume. Now, you've watched this range of appointments that Barack Obama has announced; your take on it, your feeling about it?

President Bush. I've been impressed.

Mr. Hume. Why?

President Bush. Well, because, one, he showed decisiveness. Two, he has picked people that are capable and competent people. And I think he's had a very good transition. And frankly, I think Josh Bolten, my Chief of Staff, and the people that work here in the White House have also had a good transition, because they have reached out to the President-elect's team at all levels. And the message is, we want there to be a seamless move from us leaving and you coming in, and we want you to succeed.

And so I've been very pleased with what I've seen over the last—since the election.

Mr. Hume. Do you agree with that?

Former President Bush. Yes, totally. Totally. And if I didn't, I wouldn't tell you—same policy. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hume. Well, what—look, you—this is very like you, and like you as well, to

refrain from comment on the other public—political figures, the incoming President and so on. Why?

Former President Bush. Well, why be out there looking like you're carping and criticizing and know everything? I mean, I've heard what the President said about President Obama—President-elect Obama. I feel the same way: Support him where you can, and don't go out there criticizing and carping. You look small yourself for one thing, but that's not the main reason; the main reason is he needs support. And if it's something you disagree with violently, sit on the sidelines and shut up.

President Bush. There will be plenty of opportunities for people to carp, trust me. I mean, this is a job that——

Former President Bush. Oh, yes, I know there will.

President Bush. ——and dad knows as well as anybody, it's—you'll get plenty of opinions when you're the President, and you'll get plenty of flattering statements, and you'll get your fair share of not so complimentary comments.

I also remember what it was like to have people disappoint you. I mean, you'll be getting—you'll be picking up the newspaper and reading comments from people that you just say, well, I just can't believe that that person would be so kind of not respectful of their own office, much less yours, to call those kind of names. And that—to me that has been the biggest disappointment in the political process up here; there has been this kind of bitterness by a few people to the point where they don't want to have a logical discussion or a civil discussion about policy, they just want to tear you down. And——

Mr. Hume. Do you think that's gotten worse since your days in the White House?

Former President Bush. I don't know that it's gotten worse, but it's offensive, very offensive. And I always—I'll agree with the President that when you have somebody you have your own trust in, and that person for his own gain—thinks it's for his own gain—goes out and gives kind of "here's the inside story," "here's what they're saying, but here's what's really happening," playing the leak game. It's just horrible. And every administration has that. But I think President George Bush here has been lucky; there hasn't been that many of them.

President Bush. Yes.

Former President Bush. And I think we were pretty lucky.

Advice From Former President Bush

Mr. Hume. When you left this office, it was reported at least that it was—it took a while, you had a period of adjustment, and it was tough for you at first. And then, obviously, you hit your stride and found your life. And how was that? And what advice do you have for your son as he embarks on a similar experience?

Former President Bush. Well, looking back lo those many years, I don't remember it being extraordinarily difficult. I mean, I felt unfulfilled agenda, for example; I felt things I'd like to have done.

But once you got back to Texas, it wasn't difficult at all; you just start in a new life. And part of mine was to build around our library at Texas A&M in just the way he's looking forward to having his library. You get a lot of strength from there; you bring a lot of people there to talk. So it's not that difficult.

President Bush. His advice was come back to Texas. But he didn't need to give it, because that's exactly where we're headed.

Former President Bush. Yes, people hover around the Potomac River, whether Senators or Congressmen that have been defeated. They'd better go home; that's what I think.

Mr. Hume. Gentleman, thank you very much for doing this.

President Bush. Yes, sir, thank you.

Mr. Hume. It was a pleasure. Thank you, sir.

[*The interview moved to the Oval Office, and continued as follows.*]

Working in the Oval Office

Mr. Hume. Now, as you stand here together, Mr. President 41, what is your most vivid memory of your time in this office, something that happened in this very room?

Former President Bush. Well, I can't think of many, but I remember Colin Powell reaching under this desk—a desk and pulling out the telephone to call Schwarzkopf to see if the mission had been accomplished. After that, they said it's time to shut down this war——

Mr. Hume. In Kuwait.

Former President Bush. One hundred hours—we'd done what we said we wanted to do, and he called up—and that one sticks in my mind as a dramatic moment. But there are many, many other exciting things. But that one stands out.

Mr. Hume. Can you think of your most anxious moment here?

Former President Bush. Anxious moment?

Mr. Hume. Yes.

Former President Bush. I really can't.

Mr. Hume. I mean, you had to give that order.

Former President Bush. Yes, but I can't think of any—a real anxious moment that stands out among others. There are probably plenty of them, but——

President Bush's First Moments in Office

Mr. Hume. When you first took office, took occupancy of this office, as I recall, the two of you had a brief moment together.

President Bush. Right.

Mr. Hume. Can you reflect on that? Do you remember it?

President Bush. We had just witnessed the Inaugural Parade, and I came upstairs at the White House up there, and I think you were taking a nap.

Former President Bush. No, I was in the bathtub, thawing out.

President Bush. Yes, he was in the bathtub. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hume. Were you really?

Former President Bush. Yes.

President Bush. Of course, I yelled through the door. Anyway, I said, "Why don't you come over and meet me in the Oval Office?" And so I got in here before he did, and I was just getting a sense of what it was like to be in the shrine of democracy. And then I looked up, and in comes 41. And it was a moving moment. It was a great day for me, a very proud moment.

Mr. Hume. Can you remember what was said?

President Bush. Not really. I had a weird chair, as I recall. It had like an electric cord on it. And I don't—did you use the weird chair with the electric cord?

Former President Bush. Yes.

President Bush. Well, I didn't use the weird chair with the electric cord, but he showed me how to operate it.

Mr. Hume. What did it do?

President Bush. Jiggle or something.

Mr. Hume. Where you put on your fingers, turned off the lights, and magic fingers make you feel all right? That kind of thing? [*Laughter*]

Former President Bush. I remember it slightly differently. I remember being in the bathtub after that ice-cold Inaugural Parade or whatever, and Ramsey, one of the guys that was over in the White House said, "Get out of the bathtub, Mr. President, you got to get over; the President wants you right now." [*Laughter*] "Come on, I'm just thawing out here." "Get over there." [*Laughter*] So I went over, and it was very, very moving.

President Bush. It was an awesome moment, it really was, as you can imagine.

Message From the Outgoing President to the Incoming President

Mr. Hume. It is the custom of departing Presidents is to leave a note in the drawer.

President Bush. Yes. Actually, it's a custom to leave a note upstairs at the—if I'm not mistaken—the residence.

Mr. Hume. Well, however you do it. Do you recall what you wrote?

Former President Bush. Reagan wrote me, and it was in the desk. And I think I did the same thing.

President Bush. Oops.

Mr. Hume. And what did you say, roughly?

Former President Bush. I don't remember, just good luck.

Mr. Hume. To Bill Clinton?

President Bush. I'm going to write one.

Mr. Hume. Have you thought about it—what you're going to say?

President Bush. I have not. I think it's probably best I wait for, you know, right before he and his family come to ride down Pennsylvania Avenue with me.

The Oval Office

Mr. Hume. This office has been used in different ways by different Presidents—atmosphere, formality, in some less formality than others. As I recall, you never set foot in this office, Mr. President 41, without a jacket and tie. Is that—that was true wasn't it?

Former President Bush. That was my policy, I think.

Mr. Hume. And how about you? Did you——

President Bush. I thought it was the right policy.

Mr. Hume. Has that always been the case?

President Bush. Yes, I may have come in here once in over 8 years without a tie on—or twice. But I come in here to work. And as I said, I refer to this as a shrine to democracy, and it is, and it needs to be treated that way. And I had a fabulous mentor.

Former President Bush. Now, I think it's important to treat this place with respect, and that's what we tried to do.

Mr. Hume. Well, I'm sure you'll be remembered for having done just that. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Former President Bush. Brit, good luck to you.

Mr. Hume. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The interview began taping at 10:32 a.m. in the Cabinet Room and continued in the Oval Office at the White House, for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. Former President Bush referred to former Rep. Otis G. Pike; Michael V. Hayden, Director, Central Intelligence Agency; Gen. Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.), former chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA (Ret.), former commander, U.S. Central Command. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 11. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of Cardinal Pio Laghi
January 11, 2009

Laura and I send our deepest condolences to Pope Benedict XVI and all Catholics on the passing of Cardinal Pio Laghi. Cardinal Laghi was a friend who, in his more than 60 years of service to the Catholic Church, worked tirelessly for peace and justice in our world. As the Papal Nuncio to the United States during the final years of the cold war, and in his many other assignments, Cardinal Laghi always strove to unite people of all religions and promote reconciliation, religious freedom, and tolerance. Cardinal Laghi holds an especially

important place in the hearts of the American people, having served as the first Papal Nuncio to the United States following the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See in 1984.

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I join Catholics around the world to offer our gratitude for the courageous service and life of Cardinal Laghi and commit ourselves to carrying his peaceful message forward.

Memorandum on Provision of Atomic Information to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia
January 9, 2009

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Provision of Atomic Information to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

In your memorandum to me of August 1, 2008, you recommended that I approve pursuant to sections 123 and 144b. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, an agreement for cooperation within the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as between the Government of the United States and the following seven new members of NATO: the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and the Republic of Slovenia, hereinafter the "New Parties." The subject agreement is the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation Regarding Atomic Information, including a technical annex and security annex (hereinafter collectively referred to as the ATOMAL Agreement), which entered into force on March 12, 1965, with respect to the United States and the other members of NATO at that time.

Having considered your recommendations and the cooperation provided for in the ATOMAL Agreement with respect to the New Parties, in accordance with sections 123 and 144b. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, I hereby:

a. Determine that the performance of the ATOMAL Agreement, including the proposed cooperation and the proposed communication of Restricted Data thereunder, with respect to the New Parties, will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security.

b. Approve the ATOMAL Agreement with respect to the New Parties.

c. Authorize the Department of Defense to cooperate with the New Parties to the ATOMAL Agreement in the context of NATO upon satisfaction of the requirements of section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Provision of Atomic Information to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia
January 9, 2009

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, consistent with sections 123 and 144 b. of the Atomic Energy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153 and 2164(b)), the text of the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation Regarding Atomic Information, including a technical annex and security annex (hereinafter collectively referred to as the ATOMAL Agreement), as a proposed agreement for cooperation within the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) between the United States of America and each of the following seven new members of NATO: the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and the Republic of Slovenia, hereinafter the "New Parties." I am also pleased to transmit my approval, authorization, and determination concerning the ATOMAL Agreement with respect to the New Parties, together with a copy of the memorandum of the Secretary of Defense with respect to the agreement. The ATOMAL Agreement entered into force on March 12, 1965, with respect to the United States and the other NATO members at that time. The Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and Spain subsequently became parties to the ATOMAL Agreement. The New Parties have signed this agreement and have indicated their willingness to be bound by it. The ATOMAL Agreement with respect to the New Parties meets the requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. While the ATOMAL Agreement continues in force with respect to the United States and the other current parties to it, it will not become effective as an agreement for cooperation authorizing the exchange of atomic information with respect to the New Parties until completion of procedures prescribed by sections 123 and 144 b. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

For more than 40 years, the ATOMAL Agreement has served as the framework within which NATO and the other NATO members that have become parties to this agreement have received the information that is necessary to an understanding and knowledge of and participation in the political and strategic consensus upon which the collective military capacity of the Alliance depends. This agreement permits only the transfer of atomic information, not weapons, nuclear material, or equipment. Participation in the ATOMAL Agreement will give Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia the same standing within the Alliance with regard to nuclear matters as that of the other current parties to the ATOMAL Agreement. This is important for the cohesiveness of the Alliance and will enhance its effectiveness.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the Department of Defense and other interested agencies in reviewing the ATOMAL Agreement and have determined that its performance, including the proposed cooperation and the proposed communication of Restricted Data thereunder, with respect to the New Parties will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the ATOMAL Agreement with respect to the New Parties and authorized the Department of Defense to cooperate with the New Parties in the context of NATO upon satisfaction of the requirements of section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

The 60-day continuous session period provided for in section 123 begins upon receipt of this submission.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 9, 2009.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12.

Directive on Arctic Region Policy
January 9, 2009

National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD–66

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD–25

Memorandum for the Vice President; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of Defense; the Attorney General; the Secretary of the Interior; the Secretary of Commerce; the Secretary of Health and Human Services; the Secretary of Transportation; the Secretary of Energy; the Secretary of Homeland Security; Chief of Staff; Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; Director of the Office of Management and Budget; Director of National Intelligence; Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Counsel to the President; Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economic Affairs; Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism; Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality; Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard; and Director of the National Science Foundation

Subject: Arctic Region Policy

I. Purpose

A. This directive establishes the policy of the United States with respect to the Arctic region and directs related implementation actions. This directive supersedes Presidential Decision Directive/NSC–26 (PDD–26; issued 1994) with respect to Arctic policy but not Antarctic policy; PDD–26 remains in effect for Antarctic policy only.

B. This directive shall be implemented in a manner consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States, with the obligations of the United States under the treaties and other international agreements to which the United States is a party, and with customary international law as recognized by the United States, including with respect to the law of the sea.

II. Background

A. The United States is an Arctic nation, with varied and compelling interests in that region. This directive takes into account several developments, including, among others:

1. Altered national policies on homeland security and defense;
2. The effects of climate change and increasing human activity in the Arctic region;
3. The establishment and ongoing work of the Arctic Council; and
4. A growing awareness that the Arctic region is both fragile and rich in resources.

III. Policy

A. It is the policy of the United States to:

1. Meet national security and homeland security needs relevant to the Arctic region;
2. Protect the Arctic environment and conserve its biological resources;

3. Ensure that natural resource management and economic development in the region are environmentally sustainable;
4. Strengthen institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations (the United States, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Sweden);
5. Involve the Arctic's indigenous communities in decisions that affect them; and
6. Enhance scientific monitoring and research into local, regional, and global environmental issues.

B. *National Security and Homeland Security Interests in the Artic*

1. The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. These interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.
2. The United States also has fundamental homeland security interests in preventing terrorist attacks and mitigating those criminal or hostile acts that could increase the United States vulnerability to terrorism in the Arctic region.
3. The Arctic region is primarily a maritime domain; as such, existing policies and authorities relating to maritime areas continue to apply, including those relating to law enforcement.[1] Human activity in the Arctic region is increasing and is projected to increase further in coming years. This requires the United States to assert a more active and influential national presence to protect its Arctic interests and to project sea power throughout the region.
4. The United States exercises authority in accordance with lawful claims of United States sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in the Arctic region, including sovereignty within the territorial sea, sovereign rights and jurisdiction within the United States exclusive economic zone and on the continental shelf, and appropriate control in the United States contiguous zone.
5. Freedom of the seas is a top national priority. The Northwest Passage is a strait used for international navigation, and the Northern Sea Route includes straits used for international navigation; the regime of transit passage applies to passage through those straits. Preserving the rights and duties relating to navigation and overflight in the Arctic region supports our ability to exercise these rights throughout the world, including through strategic straits.
6. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to national security and homeland security interests in the Arctic, the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Develop greater capabilities and capacity, as necessary, to protect United States air, land, and sea borders in the Arctic region;
b. Increase Arctic maritime domain awareness in order to protect maritime commerce, critical infrastructure, and key resources;

[1] These policies and authorities include Freedom of Navigation (PDD/NSC–32), the U.S. Policy on Protecting the Ocean Environment (PDD/NSC–36), Maritime Security Policy (NSPD–41/HSPD–13), and the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS).

c. Preserve the global mobility of United States military and civilian vessels and aircraft throughout the Arctic region;
d. Project a sovereign United States maritime presence in the Arctic in support of essential United States interests; and
e. Encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes in the Arctic region.

C. *International Governance*

1. The United States participates in a variety of fora, international organizations, and bilateral contacts that promote United States interests in the Arctic. These include the Arctic Council, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), wildlife conservation and management agreements, and many other mechanisms. As the Arctic changes and human activity in the region increases, the United States and other governments should consider, as appropriate, new international arrangements or enhancements to existing arrangements.

2. The Arctic Council has produced positive results for the United States by working within its limited mandate of environmental protection and sustainable development. Its subsidiary bodies, with help from many United States agencies, have developed and undertaken projects on a wide range of topics. The Council also provides a beneficial venue for interaction with indigenous groups. It is the position of the United States that the Arctic Council should remain a high-level forum devoted to issues within its current mandate and not be transformed into a formal international organization, particularly one with assessed contributions. The United States is nevertheless open to updating the structure of the Council, including consolidation of, or making operational changes to, its subsidiary bodies, to the extent such changes can clearly improve the Council's work and are consistent with the general mandate of the Council.

3. The geopolitical circumstances of the Arctic region differ sufficiently from those of the Antarctic region such that an "Arctic Treaty" of broad scope—along the lines of the Antarctic Treaty—is not appropriate or necessary.

4. The Senate should act favorably on U.S. accession to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea promptly, to protect and advance U.S. interests, including with respect to the Arctic. Joining will serve the national security interests of the United States, including the maritime mobility of our Armed Forces worldwide. It will secure U.S. sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, including the valuable natural resources they contain. Accession will promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the oceans. And it will give the United States a seat at the table when the rights that are vital to our interests are debated and interpreted.

5. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to international governance, the Secretary of State, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Continue to cooperate with other countries on Arctic issues through the United Nations (U.N.) and its specialized agencies, as well as through treaties such as the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
b. Consider, as appropriate, new or enhanced international arrangements for the Arctic to address issues likely to arise from expected increases in human activity in that region, including shipping, local development and subsistence, exploitation of living marine resources, development of energy and other resources, and tourism;
c. Review Arctic Council policy recommendations developed within the

ambit of the Council's scientific reviews and ensure the policy recommendations are subject to review by Arctic governments; and

d. Continue to seek advice and consent of the United States Senate to accede to the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention.

D. *Extended Continental Shelf and Boundary Issues*

1. Defining with certainty the area of the Arctic seabed and subsoil in which the United States may exercise its sovereign rights over natural resources such as oil, natural gas, methane hydrates, minerals, and living marine species is critical to our national interests in energy security, resource management, and environmental protection. The most effective way to achieve international recognition and legal certainty for our extended continental shelf is through the procedure available to States Parties to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

2. The United States and Canada have an unresolved boundary in the Beaufort Sea. United States policy recognizes a boundary in this area based on equidistance. The United States recognizes that the boundary area may contain oil, natural gas, and other resources.

3. The United States and Russia are abiding by the terms of a maritime boundary treaty concluded in 1990, pending its entry into force. The United States is prepared to enter the agreement into force once ratified by the Russian Federation.

4. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to extended continental shelf and boundary issues, the Secretary of State, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Take all actions necessary to establish the outer limit of the continental shelf appertaining to the United States, in the Arctic and in other regions, to the fullest extent permitted under international law;

b. Consider the conservation and management of natural resources during the process of delimiting the extended continental shelf; and

c. Continue to urge the Russian Federation to ratify the 1990 United States-Russia maritime boundary agreement.

E. *Promoting International Scientific Cooperation*

1. Scientific research is vital for the promotion of United States interests in the Arctic region. Successful conduct of U.S. research in the Arctic region requires access throughout the Arctic Ocean and to terrestrial sites, as well as viable international mechanisms for sharing access to research platforms and timely exchange of samples, data, and analyses. Better coordination with the Russian Federation, facilitating access to its domain, is particularly important.

2. The United States promotes the sharing of Arctic research platforms with other countries in support of collaborative research that advances fundamental understanding of the Arctic region in general and potential Arctic change in particular. This could include collaboration with bodies such as the Nordic Council and the European Polar Consortium, as well as with individual nations.

3. Accurate prediction of future environmental and climate change on a regional basis, and the delivery of near real-time information to end-users, requires obtaining, analyzing, and disseminating accurate data from the entire Arctic region, including both paleoclimatic data and observational data. The United States has made significant investments in the infrastructure needed to collect environmental data in the Arctic region, including the establishment of portions of an Arctic circumpolar observing network through a partnership among United States agencies, academic collaborators, and Arctic residents. The United States promotes active involvement of all Arctic nations in these efforts in order to advance scientific understanding that could

provide the basis for assessing future impacts and proposed response strategies.

4. United States platforms capable of supporting forefront research in the Arctic Ocean, including portions expected to be ice-covered for the foreseeable future, as well as seasonally ice-free regions, should work with those of other nations through the establishment of an Arctic circumpolar observing network. All Arctic nations are members of the Group on Earth Observations partnership, which provides a framework for organizing an international approach to environmental observations in the region. In addition, the United States recognizes that academic and research institutions are vital partners in promoting and conducting Arctic research.

5. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to promoting scientific international cooperation, the Secretaries of State, the Interior, and Commerce and the Director of the National Science Foundation, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Continue to play a leadership role in research throughout the Arctic region;
b. Actively promote full and appropriate access by scientists to Arctic research sites through bilateral and multilateral measures and by other means;
c. Lead the effort to establish an effective Arctic circumpolar observing network with broad partnership from other relevant nations;
d. Promote regular meetings of Arctic science ministers or research council heads to share information concerning scientific research opportunities and to improve coordination of international Arctic research programs;
e. Work with the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) to promote research that is strategically linked to U.S. policies articulated in this directive, with input from the Arctic Research Commission; and
f. Strengthen partnerships with academic and research institutions and build upon the relationships these institutions have with their counterparts in other nations.

F. *Maritime Transportation in the Arctic Region*

1. The United States priorities for maritime transportation in the Arctic region are:

a. To facilitate safe, secure, and reliable navigation;
b. To protect maritime commerce; and
c. To protect the environment.

2. Safe, secure, and environmentally sound maritime commerce in the Arctic region depends on infrastructure to support shipping activity, search and rescue capabilities, short- and long-range aids to navigation, high-risk area vessel-traffic management, iceberg warnings and other sea ice information, effective shipping standards, and measures to protect the marine environment. In addition, effective search and rescue in the Arctic will require local, State, Federal, tribal, commercial, volunteer, scientific, and multinational cooperation.

3. Working through the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United States promotes strengthening existing measures and, as necessary, developing new measures to improve the safety and security of maritime transportation, as well as to protect the marine environment in the Arctic region. These measures may include ship routing and reporting systems, such as traffic separation and vessel traffic management schemes in Arctic chokepoints; updating and strengthening of the Guidelines for Ships Operating in Arctic Ice-Covered Waters; underwater noise standards for commercial shipping; a review of shipping insurance issues; oil and other hazardous material pollution response agreements; and environmental standards.

4. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to maritime transportation in the Arctic region, the Secretaries

of State, Defense, Transportation, Commerce, and Homeland Security, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Develop additional measures, in cooperation with other nations, to address issues that are likely to arise from expected increases in shipping into, out of, and through the Arctic region;
b. Commensurate with the level of human activity in the region, establish a risk-based capability to address hazards in the Arctic environment. Such efforts shall advance work on pollution prevention and response standards; determine basing and logistics support requirements, including necessary airlift and icebreaking capabilities; and improve plans and cooperative agreements for search and rescue;
c. Develop Arctic waterways management regimes in accordance with accepted international standards, including vessel traffic-monitoring and routing; safe navigation standards; accurate and standardized charts; and accurate and timely environmental and navigational information; and
d. Evaluate the feasibility of using access through the Arctic for strategic sealift and humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

G. *Economic Issues, Including Energy*

1. Sustainable development in the Arctic region poses particular challenges. Stakeholder input will inform key decisions as the United States seeks to promote economic and energy security. Climate change and other factors are significantly affecting the lives of Arctic inhabitants, particularly indigenous communities. The United States affirms the importance to Arctic communities of adapting to climate change, given their particular vulnerabilities.

2. Energy development in the Arctic region will play an important role in meeting growing global energy demand as the area is thought to contain a substantial portion of the world's undiscovered energy resources. The United States seeks to ensure that energy development throughout the Arctic occurs in an environmentally sound manner, taking into account the interests of indigenous and local communities, as well as open and transparent market principles. The United States seeks to balance access to, and development of, energy and other natural resources with the protection of the Arctic environment by ensuring that continental shelf resources are managed in a responsible manner and by continuing to work closely with other Arctic nations.

3. The United States recognizes the value and effectiveness of existing fora, such as the Arctic Council, the International Regulators Forum, and the International Standards Organization.

4. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to economic issues, including energy, the Secretaries of State, the Interior, Commerce, and Energy, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. Seek to increase efforts, including those in the Arctic Council, to study changing climate conditions, with a view to preserving and enhancing economic opportunity in the Arctic region. Such efforts shall include inventories and assessments of villages, indigenous communities, subsistence opportunities, public facilities, infrastructure, oil and gas development projects, alternative energy development opportunities, forestry, cultural and other sites, living marine resources, and other elements of the Arctic's socioeconomic composition;
b. Work with other Arctic nations to ensure that hydrocarbon and other development in the Arctic region is carried out in accordance with accepted best practices and internationally recognized standards and the 2006

Group of Eight (G–8) Global Energy Security Principles;

c. Consult with other Arctic nations to discuss issues related to exploration, production, environmental and socioeconomic impacts, including drilling conduct, facility sharing, the sharing of environmental data, impact assessments, compatible monitoring programs, and reservoir management in areas with potentially shared resources;

d. Protect United States interests with respect to hydrocarbon reservoirs that may overlap boundaries to mitigate adverse environmental and economic consequences related to their development;

e. Identify opportunities for international cooperation on methane hydrate issues, North Slope hydrology, and other matters;

f. Explore whether there is a need for additional fora for informing decisions on hydrocarbon leasing, exploration, development, production, and transportation, as well as shared support activities, including infrastructure projects; and

g. Continue to emphasize cooperative mechanisms with nations operating in the region to address shared concerns, recognizing that most known Arctic oil and gas resources are located outside of United States jurisdiction.

H. *Environmental Protection and Conservation of Natural Resources*

1. The Arctic environment is unique and changing. Increased human activity is expected to bring additional stressors to the Arctic environment, with potentially serious consequences for Arctic communities and ecosystems.

2. Despite a growing body of research, the Arctic environment remains poorly understood. Sea ice and glaciers are in retreat. Permafrost is thawing and coasts are eroding. Pollutants from within and outside the Arctic are contaminating the region. Basic data are lacking in many fields. High levels of uncertainty remain concerning the effects of climate change and increased human activity in the Arctic. Given the need for decisions to be based on sound scientific and socioeconomic information, Arctic environmental research, monitoring, and vulnerability assessments are top priorities. For example, an understanding of the probable consequences of global climate variability and change on Arctic ecosystems is essential to guide the effective long-term management of Arctic natural resources and to address socioeconomic impacts of changing patterns in the use of natural resources.

3. Taking into account the limitations in existing data, United States efforts to protect the Arctic environment and to conserve its natural resources must be risk-based and proceed on the basis of the best available information.

4. The United States supports the application in the Arctic region of the general principles of international fisheries management outlined in the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of December 10, 1982, relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and similar instruments. The United States endorses the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Arctic from destructive fishing practices and seeks to ensure an adequate enforcement presence to safeguard Arctic living marine resources.

5. With temperature increases in the Arctic region, contaminants currently locked in the ice and soils will be released into the air, water, and land. This trend, along with increased human activity within and below the Arctic, will result in increased introduction of contaminants into the Arctic, including both persistent pollutants (e.g., persistent organic pollutants and

mercury) and airborne pollutants (e.g., soot).

6. *Implementation*: In carrying out this policy as it relates to environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, the Secretaries of State, the Interior, Commerce, and Homeland Security and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in coordination with heads of other relevant executive departments and agencies, shall:

a. In cooperation with other nations, respond effectively to increased pollutants and other environmental challenges;
b. Continue to identify ways to conserve, protect, and sustainably manage Arctic species and ensure adequate enforcement presence to safeguard living marine resources, taking account of the changing ranges or distribution of some species in the Arctic. For species whose range includes areas both within and beyond United States jurisdiction, the United States shall continue to collaborate with other governments to ensure effective conservation and management;
c. Seek to develop ways to address changing and expanding commercial fisheries in the Arctic, including through consideration of international agreements or organizations to govern future Arctic fisheries;
d. Pursue marine ecosystem-based management in the Arctic; and
e. Intensify efforts to develop scientific information on the adverse effects of pollutants on human health and the environment and work with other nations to reduce the introduction of key pollutants into the Arctic.

IV. Resources and Assets

A. Implementing a number of the policy elements directed above will require appropriate resources and assets. These elements shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and authorities of agencies, or heads of agencies, vested by law, and subject to the availability of appropriations. The heads of executive departments and agencies with responsibilities relating to the Arctic region shall work to identify future budget, administrative, personnel, or legislative proposal requirements to implement the elements of this directive.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This directive was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12.

The President's News Conference
January 12, 2009

The President. Thank you. Tapper [Jake Tapper, ABC News]. We have been through a lot together. As I look through the room, I see Jake, Mike [Mike Emanuel, FOX News], Herman [Ken Herman, Cox News], Ann Compton [ABC News]. Just seemed like yesterday that I was on the campaign trail, and you were analyzing my speeches and my policies. And I see a lot of faces that travel with me around the world and to places like Afghanistan and Iraq and Africa. I see some new faces, which goes to show there's some turnover in this business.

Through it all, it's been—I have respected you. Sometimes I didn't like the stories that you wrote or reported on. Sometimes you misunderestimated me. But always the relationship, I have felt, has been professional. And I appreciate it.

I appreciate—I do appreciate working with you. My friends from—say, "What is

it like to deal with the press corps?" I said, "These are just people that—trying to do the best they possibly can."

And so here at the last press conference, I'm interested in answering some of your questions. But mostly, I'm interested in saying thank you for the job.

Ben [Ben Feller, Associated Press].

National Economy/President-Elect Barack Obama

Q. Thank you for those comments, Mr. President. Here's a question. I'm wondering if you plan to ask Congress for the remaining $350 billion in bail money. And in terms of the timing, if you do that before you leave office, sir, are you motivated in part to make life a little easier for President-elect Obama?

The President. I have talked to the President-elect about this subject. And I told him that if he felt that he needed the 350 billion, I would be willing to ask for it, in other words, if he felt like it needed to happen on my watch.

The best course of action, of course, is to convince enough Members of the Senate to vote positively for the request. And, you know, that's all I can share with you, because that's all I know.

Q. So you haven't made the request yet?

The President. Well, he hasn't asked me to make the request yet. And I don't intend to make the request unless he specifically asks me to make it.

He is—you know, I've had my third conversation with him, and I genuinely mean what I say. I wish him all the very best. I have found him to be a very smart and engaging person. And that lunch the other day was interesting—to have two guys who are nearly 85, two 62-year-olders, and a 47-year-old—so kind of the classic generational statement.

And one common area, in at least the four of us—we all had different circumstances and experiences, but one thing is we've all experienced what it means to assume the responsibility of the Presidency. And President-elect Obama is fixing to do that. And he'll get sworn in, and then they'll have the lunch and all the deal up there on Capitol Hill. And then he'll come back and go through the Inauguration, and then he'll walk in the Oval Office, and there will be a moment when the responsibilities of the President land squarely on his shoulders.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters]. Yes, we'll get everybody here.

Situation in the Middle East/Middle East Peace Process

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you believe that the Gaza conflict will have ended by the time you leave office? Do you approve of the way that Israel has conducted it? And why were you unable to achieve the peace deal that you had sought?

The President. Remind me of the three points, will you, because I'm getting——

Q. Will it end——

The President. ——I'm getting a little older.

Q. Will it end by the time you leave office? Do you approve of Israel's conduct?

The President. I hope so. I'm for a sustainable cease-fire. And a definition of a sustainable cease-fire is that Hamas stops firing rockets into Israel. And there will not be a sustainable cease-fire if they continue firing rockets. I happen to believe the choice is Hamas's to make. And we believe that the best way to ensure that there is a sustainable cease-fire is to work with Egypt to stop the smuggling of arms into the Gaza that enables Hamas to continue to fire rockets. And so countries that supply weapons to Hamas have got to stop. And the international community needs to continue to pressure them to stop providing weapons.

Hamas, obviously, if they're interested in a sustainable cease-fire, needs to stop arming. And then, of course, countries contingent to the Gaza need to work to stop the smuggling. And it's a difficult task. I

mean, there's tunnels and, you know, great opportunities for people who want to continue to try to disrupt democracy to provide the weapons to do so.

The second part of your question, please, ma'am?

Q. Do you approve of the Israeli conduct in this?

The President. I think Israel has a right to defend herself. Obviously, in any of these kinds of situations, I would hope that she would continue to be mindful of innocent folks, and that they help, you know, expedite the delivery of humanitarian aid.

And third, why haven't we achieved peace?

Q. Why were you unable to——

The President. That's a good question. It's been a long time since they've had peace in the Middle East. Step one is to have a vision for what peace would look like. And in 2002, on the steps of the Rose Garden, I gave a speech about a two-state solution: two states, two democracies living side by side in peace. And we have worked hard to advance that idea. First thing is to convince all parties that the two states were necessary for peace.

And one thing that's happened is, is that most people in the Middle East now accept the two-state solution as the best way for peace. Most Palestinians want their own state, and most Israelis understand there needs to be a democracy on their border in order for there to be long-lasting peace.

The challenge, of course, has been to lay out the conditions so that a peaceful state can emerge, in other words, helping the Palestinians in the West Bank develop security forces, which we have worked hard to do over the past years. And those security forces are now becoming more efficient, and Prime Minister Fayyad is using them effectively. The challenge is to develop—help the Palestinians develop a democracy, I mean, and a vibrant economy in their—that will help lead to democracy.

And the challenge, of course, is always complicated by the fact that people are willing to murder to stop the advance of freedom. And so the Hamas, or for that matter Al Qaida, or other extremist groups, are willing to use violence to prevent free states from emerging. And that's the big challenge.

And so the answer is, will this ever happen? I think it will. And I know we have advanced the process.

Yes, Suzanne [Suzanne Malveaux, Cable News Network]. I finally got your name right, after how many years? Six years?

War on Terror

Q. Eight years. [*Laughter*]

The President. Eight years. You used to be known as "Suz-anne." Now you're "Suz-ahn."

Q. "Suz-ahn." Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm "Jawdg." [*Laughter*]

Q. In your 2002 State of the Union Address, you identified U.S. threats as an axis of evil: Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Iraq is relatively calm; North Korea, no longer on the terrorist threat list. How would you define, if, in fact, there is still an axis of evil? And what is the greatest and most urgent threat when it comes to security that Barack Obama has to deal with?

The President. The most urgent threat that he'll have to deal with, and other Presidents after him will have to deal with, is an attack on our homeland. You know, I wish I could report that's not the case, but there's still an enemy out there that would like to inflict damage on America, Americans. And that will be the major threat.

North Korea is still a problem. There is a debate in the intel community about how big a problem they are. But one of my concerns is that there might be a highly enriched uranium program. And therefore, it is really important that out of the six-party talks comes a strong verification regime. In other words, in order to advance our relations with North Korea, the North Korean Government must honor the commitments it made to allow for strong

verification measures to be in place, to ensure that they don't develop a highly enriched uranium program, for example.

So they're still dangerous, and Iran is still dangerous.

Yes.

The Republican Party

Q. You said in an interview earlier this weekend, one of these, I guess, exit interviews, that——

The President. This is the ultimate exit interview.

Q. ——that you think the Republican Party needs to be more inclusive. Who needs to hear that message inside the Republican Party?

The President. Yes. You see, I am concerned that, in the wake of the defeat, that the temptation will be to look inward and to say, well, here's a litmus test you must adhere to.

This party will come back. And—but the party's message has got to be that different points of view are included in the party. And take, for example, the immigration debate. That's obviously a highly contentious issue. And the problem with the outcome of the initial round of the debate was that some people said, "Well, Republicans don't like immigrants." Now, that may be fair or unfair, but that's what—that's the image that came out.

And you know, if the image is we don't like immigrants, then there's probably somebody else out there saying, "Well, if they don't like the immigrants, they probably don't like me as well." And so my point was, is that our party has got to be compassionate and broadminded.

I remember the 1964 elections. My dad happened to be running for the United States Senate then and, you know, got landslided with the Johnson landslide in the State of Texas. But it wasn't just George Bush who got defeated, the Republican Party was pretty well decimated at the time. At least that's what they—well, I think that's how the pundits viewed it. And then '66, there was a resurgence. And the same thing can happen this time, but we just got to make sure our message is broad-gauged and compassionate: That we care about people's lives, and we've got a plan to help them improve their lives.

Jake, yes. How you doing?

The President's Record

Q. I'm good. How you doing, sir?

The President. So what have you been doing since 2000? Never mind. [*Laughter*]

Q. Working my way to this chair.

The President. So are you going to be here for President Obama?

Q. I will. I will.

The President. That's a pretty cool job.

Q. It's not bad.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Q. Yours might be better.

The President. Yes—what, retirement? [*Laughter*]

Q. In the past, when you've been asked to address bad poll numbers or your unpopularity, you've said that history will judge that you did the right thing, that you thought you did the right thing. But without getting into your motives or your goals, I think a lot of people, including Republicans, including some members of your own administration, have been disappointed at the execution of some of your ideals, whether Iraq or Katrina or the economy. What would your closing message be to the American people about the execution of these goals?

The President. Well, first of all, hard things don't happen overnight, Jake. And when the history of Iraq is written, historians will analyze, for example, the decision on the surge. The situation was—looked like it was going fine, and then violence for a period of time began to throw the progress of Iraq into doubt. And rather than accepting the status quo and saying, "Oh, it's not worth it," or, "The politics makes it difficult," or you know, "The party may end up being—you know, not doing

well in the elections because of the violence in Iraq," I decided to do something about it and sent 30,000 troops in as opposed to withdrawing.

And so that part of history is certain, and the situation did change. Now, the question is, in the long run, will this democracy survive? And that's going to be the challenge for future Presidents.

In terms of the economy, look, I inherited a recession; I am ending on a recession. In the meantime there were 52 months of uninterrupted job growth. And I defended tax cuts when I campaigned. I helped implement tax cuts when I was President, and I will defend them after my Presidency as the right course of action. And there's a fundamental philosophical debate about tax cuts. Who best can spend your money, the Government or you? And I have always sided with the people on that issue.

Now, obviously, these are very difficult economic times. When people analyze the situation, there will be—this problem started before my Presidency; it obviously took place during my Presidency. The question facing a President is not when the problem started, but what did you do about it when you recognized the problem? And I readily concede I chucked aside some of my free market principles when I was told by chief economic advisers that the situation we were facing could be worse than the Great Depression.

So I've told some of my friends who said—you know, who have taken an ideological position on this issue—why did you do what you did? I said, well, if you were sitting there and heard that the depression could be greater than the Great Depression, I hope you would act too, which I did. And we've taken extraordinary measures to deal with the frozen credit markets, which have affected the economy. Credit spreads are beginning to shrink; lending is just beginning to pick up. The actions we have taken, I believe, have helped thaw the credit markets, which is the first step toward recovery.

And so yes, look, there's plenty of critics in this business, I understand that. And I thank you for giving me a chance to defend a record that I am going to continue to defend, because I think it's a good, strong record.

Jim [Jim Axelrod, CBS News].

The President's Critics

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd also like to ask you about your critics.

The President. Sure. You know any? [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, a couple years ago, Charles Krauthammer, columnist and Harvard-trained psychiatrist, coined a term, "Bush derangement syndrome," to talk about your critics who disagreed with you most passionately, not just your policies, but seemed to take an animosity towards you. I'm just wondering, as you look back, why you think you engendered such passionate criticism, animosity, and do you have any message specifically to those—to that particular part of the spectrum of your critics?

The President. You know, most people I see, you know, when I'm moving around the country, for example, they're not angry. And they're not hostile people. And they—well, they say, you never meet people who disagree; that's just not true. I've met a lot of people who don't agree with the decisions I make. But they have been civil in their discourse.

And so I view those who get angry and yell and say bad things and, you know, all that kind of stuff, it's just a very few people in the country. I don't know why they get angry. I don't know why they get hostile. It's not the first time, however, in history that people have expressed themselves in sometimes undignified ways. I've been reading, you know, a lot about Abraham Lincoln during my Presidency, and there was some pretty harsh discord when it came to the 16th President, just like there's

been harsh discord for the 30—43d President.

You know, Presidents can try to avoid hard decisions, and therefore, avoid controversy. That's just not my nature. I'm the kind of person that, you know, is willing to take on hard tasks, and in times of war people get emotional, I understand that. Never really, you know, spent that much time frankly worrying about the loud voices. I of course hear them, but they didn't affect my policy, nor did they affect how I made decisions.

You know, the President-elect Obama will find this too. He'll get in the Oval Office, and there will be a lot of people that are real critical and harsh. And he'll be disappointed at times by the tone of the rhetoric. And he's going to have to do what he thinks is right, Jim. And if you don't, then I don't see how you can live with yourself. I don't see how I can get back home in Texas and look in the mirror and be proud of what I see if I allowed the loud voices, the loud critics, to prevent me from doing what I thought was necessary to protect this country.

Mike.

President-Elect Obama/National Economy

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much. Since your philosophy is so different from President-elect Obama's, what concerns you the most about what he may attempt to do?

The President. You know, Michael, I'm not going to speculate about what he's going to do. It's going to be—you know, he's going to get in the Oval Office, he's going to analyze each situation, and he's going to make the decisions that he think is necessary.

And the other thing is, when I get out of here, I'm getting off the stage. I believe there ought to be, you know, one person in the klieg lights at a time. And I've had my time in the klieg lights. You know, I'm confident, you know, you'll catch me opining on occasion, but I wish him all the best.

And people say, "Oh, you just—that's just a throwaway line." No, it's not a throwaway line. The stakes are high. There is an enemy that still is out there. You know, people can maybe try to write that off as, you know, he's trying to set something up. I'm telling you there's an enemy that would like to attack America, Americans again. There just is. That's the reality of the world. And I wish him all the very best.

And of course, he's going to have his hands full with the economy. I understand. It's tough for a lot of working people out there. People are concerned about their economic future. You know, one of the very difficult parts of the decision I made on the financial crisis was to use hard-working people's money to help prevent there to be a crisis, and in so doing, some of that money went into Wall Street firms that caused the crisis in the first place. I wasn't kidding when I said Wall Street got drunk and we got the hangover. And—but nevertheless, President-elect Obama will find the problems and the situations surrounding problems sometimes cause people to have to make decisions that they, you know, weren't initially comfortable with. And there was such a decision when it came to Wall Street.

I mean, I had a lot of people—when I went out to Midland that time—say, "What the heck are you doing, boy? Those people up East caused the problem." I said, "I know, but if we hadn't worked to fix the problem, your situation would be worse." And anyway, I really do wish him all the best.

Sheryl [Sheryl Gay Stolberg, New York Times].

Presidential Pardons

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, in recent days, there's been a fair amount of discussion in legal circles about whether or not you might give preemptive pardons, pardons in advance, to officials of

your administration who engaged in anything from harsh interrogation tactics to perhaps dismissing U.S. Attorneys. And I'd like to know, have you given any consideration to this? And are you planning on it?

The President. I won't be discussing pardons here at this press conference.

Q. Can I have a follow-up?

The President. Would you like to ask another question?

Q. Yes, I would, sir. Thank you. Four years ago——

The President. That's the spirit, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

Q. I appreciate that.

The President. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

Reflections on the President's Time in Office

Q. Four years ago, you were asked if you had made any mistakes.

The President. Yes.

Q. And I'm not trying to play "gotcha," but I wonder, when you look back over the long arc of your Presidency, do you think, in retrospect, that you have made any mistakes? And if so, what is the single biggest mistake that you may have made?

The President. Gotcha. Hey, look, I have often said that history will look back and determine that which could have been done better, or you know, mistakes I made. Clearly, putting a "Mission Accomplished" on a aircraft carrier was a mistake. It sent the wrong message. We were trying to say something differently, but nevertheless, it conveyed a different message. Obviously, some of my rhetoric has been a mistake.

I've thought long and hard about Katrina, you know, could I have done something differently, like land Air Force One either in New Orleans or Baton Rouge. The problem with that and—is that law enforcement would have been pulled away from the mission. And then your questions, I suspect, would have been, "How could you possibly have flown Air Force One into Baton Rouge, and police officers that were needed to expedite traffic out of New Orleans were taken off the task to look after you?"

I believe that running the Social Security idea right after the '04 elections was a mistake. I should have argued for immigration reform. And the reason why is, is that—you know, one of the lessons I learned as Governor of Texas, by the way, is legislative branches tend to be risk averse. In other words, sometimes legislatures have the tendency to ask, "Why should I take on a hard task when a crisis is not imminent?" And the crisis was not imminent for Social Security, as far as many Members of Congress was concerned.

As an aside, one thing I proved is that you can actually campaign on the issue and get elected. In other words, I don't believe talking about Social Security is the third rail of American politics. I, matter of fact, think that in the future, not talking about how you intend to fix Social Security is going to be the third rail of American politics.

And the one thing about the Presidency is that you can make—only make decisions, you know, on the information at hand. You don't get to have information after you've made the decision. That's not the way it works. And you stand by your decisions, and you do your best to explain why you made the decisions you made.

There have been disappointments. Abu Ghraib obviously was a huge disappointment during the Presidency. Not having weapons of mass destruction was a significant disappointment. I don't know if you want to call those mistakes or not, but they were—things didn't go according to plan, let's put it that way.

And anyway, I think historians will look back, and they'll be able to have a better look at mistakes after some time has passed. I—along Jake's question, there is no such thing as short-term history. I don't think you can possibly get the full breadth of an administration until time has passed. Where does a President's—did a President's decisions have the impact that he thought they would, or he thought they would over time? Or how did this President

compare to future Presidents, given a set of circumstances that may be similar or not similar? I mean, there's—it's just impossible to do. And I'm comfortable with that.

Yes, Mike [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post].

U.S. Standing in the World

Q. One of the major objectives that the incoming administration has talked frequently about is restoring America's moral standing in the world. And many of the allies of the new President—and I believe that the President-elect himself has talked about—how damage that Gitmo, that harsh interrogation tactics that they consider torture, how going to war in Iraq without a U.N. mandate have damaged America's moral standing in the world.

The President. Yes.

Q. I'm wondering, basically, what is your reaction to that? Do you think that is that something that America—that the next President needs to worry about?

The President. I strongly disagree with the assessment that our moral standing has been damaged. It may be damaged amongst some of the elite, but people still understand America stands for freedom, that America is a country that provides such great hope.

You go to Africa, you ask Africans about Americans' generosity and compassion; go to India, and ask about, you know, America's—their view of America; go to China and ask. Now, if—no question, parts of Europe have said that we shouldn't have gone to war in Iraq without a mandate, but those are a few countries. Most countries in Europe listened to what 1441 said, which is disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

Most people take those words seriously. Now, some countries didn't, and even though they might have voted for the resolution. I disagree with this assessment that, you know, people view America in a dim light. I just don't agree with that. Now, I understand that Gitmo has created controversies. But when it came time for those countries that were criticizing America to take some of those detainees, they weren't willing to help out. And so, you know, I just disagree with the assessment, Mike.

I'll remind—listen, I tell people, yes, you can try to be popular. In certain quarters in Europe, you can be popular by blaming every Middle Eastern problem on Israel, or you can be popular by joining the International Criminal Court. I guess I could have been popular by accepting Kyoto, which I felt was a flawed treaty, and proposed something different and more constructive.

And in terms of the decisions that I had made to protect the homeland, I wouldn't worry about popularity. What I would worry about is the Constitution of the United States and putting plans in place that makes it easier to find out what the enemy is thinking, because all these debates will matter not if there's another attack on the homeland. The question won't be, you know, were you critical of this plan or not. The question is going to be, why didn't you do something?

Do you remember what it was like right after September the 11th around here? In press conferences and opinion pieces and in stories—that sometimes were news stories and sometimes opinion pieces—people were saying, "How come they didn't see it? How come they didn't connect the dots?" Do you remember what the environment was like in Washington? I do. When people were hauled up in front of Congress, and Members of Congress were asking questions about, "How come you didn't know this, that, or the other?" And then we start putting policy in place—legal policy in place—to connect the dots, and all of a sudden people were saying, "How come you're connecting the dots?"

And so, Mike, I've heard all that. I've heard all that. My view is, is that most people around the world, they respect America. And some of them doesn't like me, I understand that, some of the writers

and the, you know, opiners and all that. That's fine; that's part of the deal. But I'm more concerned about the country and our—how people view the United States. They view us as strong, compassionate people who care deeply about the universality of freedom.

Roger [Roger Runningen, Bloomberg News].

Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)/ National Economy

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, you spoke a moment ago about using taxpayers' money for the TARP program.

The President. Yes, I did.

Q. The first $350 billion is out the door; it's been spent. Are you satisfied that it's been spent wisely? And for the second 350 that's under consideration, do you think—are you supportive of Congress putting some restrictions on it?

The President. I'm supportive of the President-elect working out a plan with Congress that best suits him—and Congress. That's what he's going to have to do. He's going to have to go up there, and he's going to have to make his case as to why the 350 [billion] * is necessary. And he knows that. This is nothing new.

And in terms of the first 350 [billion], * I am pleased with this aspect of the expenditure, and that is that the financial markets are beginning to thaw. In the fall, I was concerned that the credit freeze would cause us to be headed toward a depression greater than the Great Depression. That's what I was told, if we didn't move. And so therefore, we have moved aggressively.

And by the way, it just wasn't with the TARP. If you think about AIG, Fannie and Freddie, a lot of the decisions that were made in this administration are very aggressive decisions, all aiming at preventing the financial system from cratering.

President-Elect Obama/The Presidency

Q. Mr. President, you spoke of the moment that the responsibility of the office would hit Barack Obama. The world is a far different place than it was when it hit you. When do you think he's going to feel the full impact? And what, if anything, have you and the other Presidents shared with him about the effects of the sometimes isolation, the so-called bubble of the office?

The President. Yes, that's a great question. He will feel the effects the minute he walks in the Oval Office. At least, that's when I felt. I don't know when he's going—he may feel it the minute he's—gets sworn in. And the minute I got sworn in, I started thinking about the speech. [*Laughter*] And so—but he's a better speechmaker than me, so he'll be able to—I don't know how he's going to feel. All I know is he's going to feel it. There will be a moment when he feels it.

I have never felt isolated, and I don't think he will. One reason he won't feel isolated is because he's got a fabulous family, and he cares a lot about his family. That's evident from my discussions with him. He'll be—he's a 45-second commute away from a great wife and two little girls that love him dearly.

I believe this—the phrase "burdens of the office" is overstated. You know, it's kind of like, why me? Oh, the burdens, you know. Why did the financial collapse have to happen on my watch? It's just—it's pathetic, isn't it, self-pity? And I don't believe that President-elect Obama will be full of self-pity. He will find—you know, your—the people that don't like you, the critics, they're pretty predictable. Sometimes the biggest disappointments will come from your so-called friends. And there will be disappointments, I promise you. He'll be disappointed. On the other hand, the job is so exciting and so profound that the disappointments are—will be clearly, you know, a minor irritant compared to the——

* White House correction.

Q. So it was never the "loneliest office in the world" for you?

The President. No, not for me. We had a—people—we—I had a fabulous team around me of highly dedicated, smart, capable people, and we had fun. I tell people that, you know, some days happy, some days not so happy, every day has been joyous. And people, they say, "I just don't believe it to be the case." Well, it is the case. Even in the darkest moments of Iraq, you know, there was—and every day when I was reading the reports about soldiers losing their lives, no question, there was a lot of emotion. But also there was times where we could be light-hearted and support each other.

And I built a team of really capable people who were there not to serve me or there to serve the Republicans, they were there to serve the country. And President-elect Obama will find, as he makes these tough calls and tough decisions, that he'll be supported by a lot of really good people that care about the country as well.

John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

Trade

Q. You've talked a lot about your concerns over the rise of protectionism in the current——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——economic environment. What do you think the future holds for that? Do you think the trend is a good one or a bad one?

The President. I hope the trend is bad against protectionism. A disappointment—not a mistake, but a disappointment—was not getting the three trade bills out of Congress on Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. That was a disappointment. I actually thought we had a shot at one time, and then I was disappointed that they didn't move out of the House.

And I am concerned about protectionism. In tough economic times, the temptation is to say, well, let's just throw up barriers and protect our own and not compete. That was the sentiment, by the way, that was in place during decent economic times. After all, we got CAFTA out of the Congress by one vote. And it would be a huge mistake if we become a protectionist nation.

And that might be a good thing for the Bush Center to do at SMU, is to remind people about the benefits of free and fair trade: benefits for our own workers, benefits for workers overseas, and benefits when it comes to promoting development and helping lift people out of poverty, in particularly, third world countries. The best way to enhance economic growth in a third world country and to give people a chance to realize a better future is through trade. It's been proven; it's a fact. And I'm hopeful that the country doesn't slip into protectionist policy.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], yes, ma'am.

Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina/Race Relations in America

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes. You were sound asleep back there, so I decided—[*laughter*]——

Q. No, I wasn't. There was a whole clear row before me. I thought you were going to go there first. But either way, thanks for the surprise.

Mr. President, on New Orleans, you basically talked about a moment ago about the photo opportunity. But let's talk about what you could have done to change the situation for the city of New Orleans to be further along in reconstruction than where it is now. And also, when you came—or began to run for the Oval Office about 9 years ago or so, the James Byrd dragging death was residue on your campaign. And now at this time, 2009, we have the first black President. Could you tell us what you have seen on the issues of race, as you see it from the Oval Office?

The President. Sure, thanks. First of all, we did get the $121 billion, more or less, passed, and it's now being spent. Secondly, the school system is improving dramatically. Thirdly, people are beginning to move back into homes. This storm was a devastating storm, April, that required a lot of energy, a lot of focus, and a lot of resources to get New Orleans up and running.

And has the reconstruction been perfect? No. Have things happened fairly quickly? Absolutely. And is there more to be done? You bet there is.

Q. What more needs to be done?

The President. Well, more people need to get in their houses. More people need to have their own home there. But the systems are in place to continue the reconstruction of New Orleans.

People said, well, the Federal response was slow. Don't tell me the Federal response was slow when there was 30,000 people pulled off roofs right after the storm passed. I remember going to see those helicopter drivers, Coast Guard drivers, to thank them for their courageous efforts to rescue people off roofs. Thirty thousand people were pulled off roofs right after the storm moved through. That's a pretty quick response.

Could things have been done better? Absolutely. Absolutely. But when I hear people say, the Federal response was slow, then what are they going to say to those chopper drivers or the 30,000 that got pulled off the roofs?

The other part of the—look, I was affected by TV after the elections, when I saw people saying, "I never thought I would see the day that a black person would be elected President." And a lot of the people had tears streaming down their cheeks when they said it. And so I am—I consider myself fortunate to have a front-row seat on what is going to be an historic moment for the country. President-elect Obama's election does speak volumes about how far this country has come when it comes to racial relations. But there's still work to do. There's always going to be work to do to deal with people's hearts.

And so I'm looking forward to it, really am. I think it's going to be an amazing moment.

Michael Allen [Politico]. Yes, Michael Allen.

Post-Presidency Agenda

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Would be you.

Q. Mr. President, often Presidents go—leave here; they say they're going to decompress, and then pretty soon they're right back in their office. I wonder how quickly you think you're going to be back at it, whether it's writing your book, whether it's speaking, whether it's traveling, whether it's overseas——

The President. You know, Mike, I don't know. Probably the next day. I'm a type A personality, you know. I just can't envision myself, you know, the big straw hat and Hawaiian shirt sitting on some beach. [*Laughter*]

Q. No one else can either.

The President. So—[*laughter*]. Particularly, since I quit drinking. Anyway, so I predict to you that—first of all, I'm not sure what to expect. For the last 8 years, I have had a national security briefing every day but Sunday. And when you get a national security briefing, it is a reminder of the responsibilities of the job. It's just a daily reminder about what may or may not happen.

The interesting thing about this job, by the way, is it's one thing to deal with the expected, what you anticipate; the real challenge is to be in a position to deal with the unexpected. And that's why those intel briefings are so important, because there is an awareness in the briefings by the analyst to try to help anticipate problems. And of course, you hope they don't arise, but you better be prepared when they do.

And that in itself creates a—you know, gets your attention, when you start thinking about what could happen. And the key

there, of course, is that—to take these different analyses seriously, and then have a structure so that your team will be in a position to analyze and then to lay out potential avenues for the President—from which the President can choose.

I say all that because that's—this has been—this notion about being briefed and thinking about this issue or that issue has been just a part of my life for 8 years. People say, well, there you are in Crawford on vacation. You never escape the Presidency. It travels with you everywhere you go. And there's not a moment where you don't think about being President, unless you're riding mountain bikes as hard as you possibly can, trying to forget for the moment.

And so I wake up in Crawford Tuesday morning—I mean, Wednesday morning, and I suspect I'll make Laura coffee and go get it for her. And it's going to be a different feeling. And I can't—it's kind of like—I'll report back after I feel it.

Last question. Ann, since you've been there from day one.

Political Tone in Washington, DC/ Cooperation With Congress

Q. Well, thank you, and I wanted to ask you about day one. You arrived here wanting to be a uniter not a divider. Do you think Barack Obama can be a uniter not a divider? Or is, with the challenges for any President and the unpopular decisions, is it impossible for any President to be uniter, not a divider?

The President. I hope the tone is different for him than it has been for me. I am disappointed by the tone in Washington, DC. I have tried to do my part by not engaging in the name-calling and, by the way, needless name-calling. I have worked to be respectful of my opponents on different issues.

There—we did find some good common ground on a variety of issues: No Child Left Behind, Medicare prescription drugs, PEPFAR, in the end, the funding for troops in Iraq. We—tax cuts, to a certain extent, got some bipartisan votes on them. There had been areas where we were able to work together. It's just the rhetoric got out of control at times——

Q. Why?

The President. I don't know why. You need to ask those who used the words they used. As I say, it's not the first time it's ever happened, as I think I answered that to Jim there. It's happened throughout our history. And I would hope that frankly for the sake of the system itself, that if people disagree with the President-elect Obama, they treat him with respect. I worry about people looking at our system and saying, "Why would I want to go up there and work in that kind of environment?"

And so I wish him all the best. And no question, he'll be—there will be critics. And there should be. We all should welcome criticism on different policy; it's the great thing about our democracy; people have a chance to express themselves. I just hope the tone is respectful. He deserves it, and so does the country.

It has been a honor to work with you. I meant what I said when I first got up here. I wish you all the very best. I wish you and your families all the best. God bless you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 9:17 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and William J. Clinton; Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; and Michelle Obama, wife, and Malia and Natasha "Sasha" Obama, daughters, of President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Treasury Department Plans Concerning Emergency Economic Stabilization
January 12, 2009

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 115(a)(3) of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–343) (the "Act"), I hereby transmit a report detailing the plan of the Secretary of the Treasury to exercise the authority under the Act.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 12, 2009.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting
January 13, 2009

I want to thank an extraordinary group of American citizens who have served our country as members of my Cabinet. Everybody around this table here could have taken the easy road and stayed home and worried about their own comforts, but instead they answered the call to service. And the country is lucky to have folks like this step up and serve.

I have thanked them here at my last Cabinet meeting not only for their service, but for helping President-elect Obama transition. And we wish the President-elect and his team all the very best. It is our genuine wish that they do well.

We also reviewed our record, and this administration has had a good, solid record. And I'm very proud of it. I tell people I leave town with a great sense of accomplishment and my head held high. We reformed education, and test scores for minority students are up. We reformed Medicare, and seniors have now got prescription drug coverage. We lowered taxes for everybody who pays taxes. We transformed our military to make it be able to deal more effectively with the threats of the 21st century. And the Secretary transformed the State Department so it can deal with the threats of the 21st century as well.

We changed how we deliver aid around the world to—through the Millennium Challenge Account. I put good judges on the bench. Drug use for teenagers is down in America by about 25 percent. The air is cleaner. The water is purer. The armies of compassion are more invigorated than ever before. Free trade agreements have been signed.

We dealt with an economic meltdown with strong action so that our successor has a better chance of dealing with the economic fallout from the credit crisis.

Most of all, we protected this country from harm. And we did so by providing tools and—for our professionals as well as asking our military to do hard work, which they have done time and time again. Concurrent with that, we've promoted the freedom agenda. Fifty million people are now free in Afghanistan and Iraq because of action taken by the United States and our coalition.

But when I talk about the freedom agenda, I talk about more than just freedom from tyranny. I talk about freedom from hunger—and we've had a substantial aid program to help people who are hungry—and freedom from disease. I'm very proud of the efforts out of the State Department

to—on PEPFAR, which is the AIDS initiative on the continent of Africa, as well as our malaria initiative.

All in all, this administration has relied upon the great compassion of the American people, the sacrifice of those who wear the uniform. And so we leave town honored to have served and proud of the job we have done. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico
January 13, 2009

President Bush. Bienvenido a mi amigo. Mr. President, welcome.

President Calderon. Thank you.

President Bush. It has been a true pleasure to work with President Calderon. He's a man of conviction, he is a man of principle, and he is a man who's willing to take on tough challenges. I have appreciated every meeting I've had with him.

I want to take—talk about two subjects quickly. One, Americans are concerned about the battle that's taking place in Mexico, and I want our fellow citizens to understand that this man understands the responsibilities of government to provide security; that he will not allow his country, or parts of his country, to be taken over by narcotraffickers; and that the United States of America wants to share and help deal with the issue on both sides of the border. The less drugs we use, the less pressure there will be in Mexico. We have got responsibilities to help prevent guns from going from the United States into Mexico.

And so, Mr. President, you and I have laid the foundation for a constructive, mutual engagement on this issue.

And secondly, I want to thank you for your steadfast support of trade. I'm a big, strong believer in NAFTA. NAFTA has been good for the United States of America, and NAFTA has been good for Mexico. And I want to thank you for that.

And so, Mr. President, it has been a pleasure to work with you. Thank you for your friendship.

President Calderon. Thank you.

President Bush. Yes. *Y ahora en el espanol.*

President Calderon. Como no.

[*At this point, President Calderon made remarks in Spanish. He then spoke in English, as follows.*]

President Calderon. We have a strong commitment in order to fight and defeat the criminals in Mexico, and we will do so. And we have a strong commitment with the rule of law, enforcement of the law in our country.

[*President Calderon continued in Spanish. He then concluded in English, as follows.*]

President Calderon. Thank you, President Bush——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Calderon. ——and good luck in the future.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

White House Staff Member. Okay, guys, thank you——

President Bush. Hold on. *Un momento, un momento.*

President Calderon. Wait. Hold on.

[*An interpreter then provided the translation of President Calderon's previously delivered remarks.*]

Interpreter. Good afternoon, friends. I wanted to say that I came here to Washington, DC, to wish President Bush the very best. I want to wish him and his family all the best in this new phase. And I want to thank him especially for the friendship that he has shown me over the last 2 years in facing our common challenges together——

President Calderon. And his support.

Interpreter. ——and for his support. [*Laughter*]

With regard to the issues that President Bush has raised, I want to say that our administration has made a crucial decision in this regard. We are going to be promoting law; we are going to be promoting order in our country. We will be promoting the rule of law for all Mexicans.

We have worked jointly in this regard. We have worked together on the drug-trafficking combat front. We have worked together to combat organized crime.

This is not an isolated problem for any country. This is a common problem that affects us both. And in order to do so, we have worked together, and we have made this resolution.

We are committed to fighting criminals and to overcoming them once and for all. And the rule of law is the one thing that I want to stress we are going to promote, no matter what, in our country.

I agree with what the President has said with regard to the North America Free Trade Agreement. It has proved to be very useful, both for the United States and for Mexico. In that regard, millions of jobs were created here in the United States. Mexico is the second largest purchaser of U.S. goods. We buy, in fact, twice as many U.S. products as the People's Republic of China. Two million jobs based on exports were created in Mexico——

President Calderon. No, in the United States.

Interpreter. ——in the United States, excuse me, as a result of NAFTA. [*Laughter*] And yesterday I was discussing with President-elect Obama the fact that we are willing to continue working on future additions of a way to continue to build on the achievements that NAFTA has created—benefits, issues of concern to both of our citizens. I understand that there are issues of concern to Mexicans, as well as to U.S. citizens, on the issue of the environment and on labor.

I want to wish the very best to President Bush, to his family, as well as to the United States. The U.S. will continue to solve its problems with success, I have no doubt about that. And we in Mexico can only wish the very best for this country, a great country, and for its citizens in overcoming the economic crisis it is now facing, overcoming other problems, as well as drug consumption, because any problems arising in the United States in some way will also affect Mexican citizens as well.

And so we can only wish you the very best in every area. Thank you.

President Calderon. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, thank you. *Adios*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, President Calderon referred to President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom
January 13, 2009

The President. Good afternoon to everybody, and thank you all for coming. We have assembled quite a distinguished crowd to honor three good friends: President Uribe, Prime Minister Howard, and Prime Minister Blair. Laura and I welcome you to the White House.

You'll always be welcomed in our country. And we hope to have you come down and visit us in Texas. As you probably have heard, we're changing addresses here—[*laughter*]—in a little less than 7 days.

We're delighted to have a lot of distinguished guests, people who have worked with you throughout your time in office; members of your family who are here, we're really glad you've come.

I want to thank the Vice President, members of the Cabinet, and Members of the Congress who have joined us as well. We offer a special welcome to those who are personal friends of the honorees. I know they're as delighted to have you here as I am.

In a few moments the military aide will read the citations for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The medal is America's highest civil award. It is given in recognition of exemplary achievement and to convey the utmost esteem of the people and the President of the United States.

In these 8 years, I have presented the Medal of Freedom to some of our most eminent citizens. On occasion, I have also had the honor of presenting it to citizens of other lands who inspired particular admiration in the United States and provided courageous leadership to our world. Among these recipients have been Vaclav Havel, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nelson Mandela, and the late Pope John Paul II.

This afternoon I am pleased to award the Medal of Freedom to three extraordinary leaders. We honor a sitting President and two former vice—Prime Ministers, each one of them a true friend of the United States who met historic challenges with great tenacity, and who provides a lasting example of statesmanship at home and abroad.

The first day I met Tony Blair, almost exactly 8 years ago, he was in his second term as Prime Minister, and I was just starting out. After our first meeting, a reporter asked if we'd found anything in common, and I jokingly replied that we both used Colgate toothpaste. [*Laughter*]

The truth is I did feel a close connection to Tony Blair. As I said after the first meeting, I knew that when either of us gets in a bind, there will be a friend on the other end of the phone. My friend was there, indeed, after America was attacked on September the 11th, 2001. And it just wasn't on the phone line. When I stood in the House Chamber to ask the civilized world to rally to freedom's cause, there in the gallery was the staunch friend, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

He was there in a moment of trial to affirm the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. And he was there to show America, and all nations, that he understood the stakes in the war on terror. As he said, "Just as the terrorist seeks to divide humanity in hate, so we have to unify it around an idea. And that idea is liberty." Under Tony Blair's leadership, the might and the moral authority of Great Britain have been applied to the war on terror from the first day. Our nations have worked proudly together to destroy terrorist havens, liberate millions, and help rising democracies to serve the aspirations of their people.

Tony Blair's entire career is defined by his devotion to democratic values and human dignity. At his very center, this man believes in freedom: freedom from oppression, freedom from hunger, freedom from

disease, and freedom from fear and despair. In the House of Commons, as the longest serving Labour Prime Minister in history, he fought to lift up his nation's communities and better the lives of all its people. He helped turn generations of violence in Northern Ireland into years of peace. He drew the attention and conscience of the world to the suffering in Africa, and he continues to serve the cause of peace and democracy as the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East.

Out of office but still in public life, Tony Blair remains on the world stage as a man of high intelligence and insight, and above all, as a man of faith and idealism and integrity. The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom will stand tall in history. And today the United States of America proudly honors its gallant friend Tony Blair.

John Howard of Australia has spent a lot of years in politics. He's won some, and he's lost a few. There was even a time, two decades ago, when he thought his days of political leadership might be over. A comeback, he said, would be like "Lazarus with a triple bypass." [*Laughter*] The man has got an unusual way of speaking. [*Laughter*]

With his plain-spoken style and unpretentious manner, John Howard did make a comeback. He rose to his nation's highest elected office, won four straight elections, and served longer than all other Australian Prime Ministers but one. And all the while, John Howard retained his close connection with the people of his country. His time in office was marked by great national confidence and prosperity and rising global influence. He won the respect of leaders around the world for his commitment to free markets, cooperation, and the peaceful resolution of differences. He was a faithful steward of Australia's alliances and a sturdy friend in a time of need.

At an event here in Washington, he reflected on the many tests that our two countries faced together in the 20th century. He spoke with feeling about our shared values, as well as our obligation to defend them, and "if necessary fight for them, and be ready to repel those who would seek to take [our] freedoms away."

As it happens, John Howard spoke those words on Monday, September the 10th, 2001, and in all that followed, he proved true to his convictions. He always has been brave in the defense of freedom. In these 7 years, both our countries have lost innocent civilians and suffered casualties on the field of battle. But this man, who saw the burning Pentagon on September the 11th, and who confronted—comforted the survivors of Bali, never wavered in his commitment to overcoming this great danger to civilization. He never wavered in his support for liberty, and free institutions, and the rule of law as the true and hopeful alternatives to ideologies of violence and repression. He's a man of honesty and moral clarity. He can make a decision, he can defend it, and he stands his ground. That's why I called him a man of steel.

In the character of John Winston Howard we see that fine Australian spirit of "standing by your mates." Our two countries, though half a world apart, have long enjoyed an easy and natural fellowship. And the 25th Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia stands for all that Americans like and admire most about this wonderful country.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, our friend, welcome to the White House and congratulations.

National leaders sometimes take office without fully knowing all the tests that await them. But when Alvaro Uribe became the President of Colombia, the challenges were in full view. He knew exactly what he was getting into.

For more than a generation, good and decent people across that country had lived at the mercy of brutal drug cartels and illegal, armed groups. A contagion of terrorist violence and killings and kidnapings had shaken the political system and caused

many Colombians to despair for their nation's future. Early in this decade, the Republic of Colombia was near the point of being, at best, a failed state, or at worst, a narco-state. In those conditions, it took more than ambition and ideals to run for political office; it required immense personal courage and strength of character.

As a Presidential candidate in 2002, Alvaro Uribe pledged to his people greater security, a healthier democracy, and a better chance for prosperous lives. He was elected on a theme that expressed perfectly what the Colombian people desired in a President: "Strong hand and big heart."

President Uribe's leadership has been resolute and uncompromising. Today, in Colombia, homicides are down 40 percent, kidnapings are down more than 80 percent, terror attacks are down by more than 75 percent. The forces of violence are on the defensive, and the people are reclaiming their country.

President Uribe's fellow citizens know him as someone who speaks forthrightly and follows through on his commitments. With his lifelong interest in public policy, he has a phenomenal grasp of the details of governing. At the same time, he has formed a powerful bond with his people. They've met their President in townhalls across the country. They've seen him deliver results. They like him, and they trust him. And they have made him the first Colombian leader in the modern era to win reelection.

Lately, I've been asked to reflect on the most memorable events of my Presidency. Among those is a phone call I received several months ago from President Uribe. He called to say that a group of hostages, including three Americans, that had been held in captivity for 5 years, had been rescued and were alive and safe and sound. It was a joyful moment, Mr. President. And it was a credit to your leadership.

For President Uribe, the great demands of office continue. Today the United States honors all Colombians by honoring the man they have chosen to lead them. By refusing to allow the land he loves to be destroyed by an enemy within, by proving that terror can be opposed and defeated, President Uribe has reawakened the hopes of his countrymen and shown a model of leadership to a watching world. Colombia remains a nation with challenges. But the future will always be bright in a country that produces such men as President Alvaro Uribe.

Congratulations, *mi amigo*.

Each of these gentlemen we honor today has his own style and personality, and each has amassed distinctions and achievements that belong to him alone. Yet all of them have shown a firm adherence to the principles of freedom and democratic values and a willingness to face problems squarely instead of passing them on to others. They're the sort of guys who look you in the eye and tell you the truth and keep their word. In lengthy service they proved to be leaders of character and fortitude. They are warm friends of the United States of America. The opportunity to know them and work with them has been among the great satisfactions of my time as President. I respect them, and I admire them.

And now I ask the military aide to read the citations, and it will be my honor to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Tony Blair, John Howard, Alvaro Uribe.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Clay Beers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

The President. In honor of these distinguished gentlemen, Laura and I invite you to stay for a reception in the State Dining Room. Please enjoy yourselves, and thank you for joining us here at the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; former

President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa; and Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Situation in Cuba
January 13, 2009

As much of the world celebrates the dawning of a new year, Cuba marks 50 years of one of the cruelest dictatorships this hemisphere has witnessed.

To those who yearn for liberty, all is not lost. The world has witnessed other instances of dictatorship, but has ultimately seen those regimes fall and formerly enslaved countries embrace their birthright of freedom. One day, the people of Cuba will enjoy this same blessing.

This message of hope is directed especially to those who have made pleas for freedom only to be silenced by tyranny and oppression: individuals like Oscar Elias Biscet, Luis Enrique Ferrer, Ricardo Gonzalez, Jose Luis Garcia Paneque, and many others. It is equally intended for the families of such prisoners, who dearly miss their loved ones and continue to suffer oppression at the hands of the regime. The American people admire the courage of these families and the emerging civil society movement, reflected in the existence of groups like the *Damas de Blanco*, who stand up for the fundamental human rights bestowed by our Creator.

As long as there are people who fight for liberty, the United States will stand with them and speak out for those whose voices have been temporarily silenced. All Cubans have the right to be treated with dignity, so that they can rise as high as their talents and hard work will take them. This is the standard my administration and past administrations—regardless of political affiliation—have expected from the Cuban Government as the condition for improved relations.

My administration has continually challenged the Cuban Government to bring genuine political and economic changes and improve human rights and has made it clear that the United States stands prepared to respond to any request for assistance from a Cuba that transitions to democracy. The Castro regime's response to our offers has been continued repression of the Cuban people.

Throughout my Presidency, the plight of Cuba has been close to my heart. My sincere wish has been for the proud people of Cuba to take their rightful place in the community of democratic, freedom-loving nations.

Laura and I send our Cuban *hermanos y hermanas* a message of peace and love. May God bless you and continue to give you the faith and courage to fight for the day when the light of liberty will shine on the people of Cuba.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the Department of State

January 15, 2009

Thank you all. I got 5 days left; be seated. [*Laughter*]

Madam Secretary, thank you very much for your kind introduction, and thank you for these beautiful reminders of how fantastic it's been to work with you.

By the way, these are going to be at Southern Methodist University—[*laughter*]—proudly displayed at the Presidential Center I will build to remind our country of the timeless values of freedom and liberty. And I am honored to take them back to Texas. I'm honored to take my wife back to Texas too. [*Laughter*]

The award you gave Laura, Condi, is well deserved in my unobjective opinion. She has been awesome First Lady. And I'm proud to have been here in Washington. And you've been an awesome friend and a great Secretary of State.

You know, people—I tell people all the time, they ask me about Condi, and I say, "She's like my sister." We've been through a lot together. [*Laughter*] And one of the things about her is that she has never lost her great optimism. She's plenty tough when she needed to be tough; she's plenty charming when she needs to be charming. But during the darkest of days, she always had a sense of optimism and constantly reminded me of what is possible and what will happen if we don't lose confidence in fundamental truths. History will say that Condi Rice was one of the great Secretaries of State our country has ever had.

And I thank my friend John Negroponte. I call him "Ponte"—you better call him—[*laughter*]—Mr. Secretary. He has done a lot of hard work on behalf of the country, and he has really done it well, a variety of jobs that have required skill and dedication and courage, and each job he's handled with a lot of class, he really has.

I want to thank the Ambassadors who have joined us. Thanks for coming. Appreciate your service to your countries. And I want to thank all those who work here, veterans and rookies alike. [*Laughter*] This is a fabulous Department and a vital part of making sure this country remains secure in the long run. And it's been a joy to work with you.

Tonight I'm going to give a farewell address to the American people. It's going to be a short one. [*Laughter*] But it's got a lot of meaning to it, as far as I'm concerned. I'm going to urge our Nation to continue to engage the world with confidence, confidence in the transformative power of freedom and liberty.

These are the ideals that gave birth to our own Nation, these universal ideals gave birth to America. And over the past 8 years, together we have worked to advance these ideals. And every member of this Department can be proud of the results.

In the Middle East, we stood with dissidents and young democracies. Sometimes that was not easy to do, but we stood strong with those young democracies. We outlined a vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

In Asia, we deepened our alliances with old friends, Japan and South Korea, and we strengthened ties with China. I'm not so sure if this is historically accurate, but we may be the only administration that has had really good ties with Japan, South Korea, and China all at the same time. And we opened a new historic and strategic partnership with India.

In Europe, we expanded NATO to include new democracies from the Baltics to the Balkans. We work in a multilateral fashion to deal with issues like Iran and North Korea.

In Africa, we helped resolve old conflicts and formed new partnerships to confront hunger and disease and poverty. I'm often asked, you know, "How come you, from Texas, care about Africa?" And I remind people—I'm reminded of one of my first conversations with Condi. And she said, "If I'm going to work with you, I want you to make sure you focus on Africa." She gets a lot of credit for the focus on Africa.

I also acted on this timeless belief: To whom much is given, much is required. We have been given a lot in our country. And it's not only in our strategic interests that we deal with hunger and disease, it is in our moral interest that we do so as well. In the Western Hemisphere, we expanded trade and helped our fellow democracies deliver prosperity and social justice to their people. And around the world, we built a coalition of more than 90 nations to fight terror and advance the cause of freedom in the great ideological struggle of our time.

In short, we've made our alliances stronger, we've made our Nation safer, and we have made the world freer. The record is a testament to all those who have served, including our outstanding Foreign Service officers. This is a profession that requires commitment and sacrifice. When you volunteered for the Foreign Service, you agreed to put the needs of your country before your own and your family. You agreed to spend years away from home, and you knew that your service might just put you in harm's way.

Today we send our thoughts and prayers to all the men and women representing America in distant lands, and we pledge that we will never forget the brave souls who did not come home.

As President, I have entrusted the Foreign Service with our Nation's most critical diplomatic missions. I have relied on your expertise, your advice, and your good judgment. I will always be grateful for your valor and your professionalism.

Members of the Foreign Service bring this valor and professionalism to their work every single day. And there is one man who embodies these qualities above all: Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Over the years, Ryan has earned many honors, including the Presidential Meritorious Service Award and the rank of Career Ambassador. Today I have the privilege of honoring Ambassador Crocker with the highest civil award I can bestow, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. [*Applause*] Okay. It has not been bestowed yet. [*Laughter*]

The son of an Air Force officer, Ryan Crocker has never been your typical diplomat. For social engagements, he likes to tell guests, "No socks required." [*Laughter*] For language training, he once spent time herding sheep with a desert tribe in Jordan. For sport, he has jogged through war zones and run marathons on four continents. And for assignments, his preference has always been anywhere but Washington. [*Laughter*]

During his nearly four decades in the Foreign Service, Ryan Crocker has become known as America's Lawrence of Arabia. His career has taken him to every corner of the Middle East. His understanding of the region is unmatched. His exploits are legendary. He has served as ambassador to five countries. He has repeatedly taken on the most challenging assignments.

The man has never run from danger. As a young officer during the late 1970s, Ryan catalogued Saddam Hussein's murderous rise to power. In 1983, he survived the terrorist attack on the American Embassy in Lebanon. In 1998, as the Ambassador to Syria, he witnessed an angry mob plunder his residence.

After any one of these brushes with danger, most people would have lost their appetite for adventure. Not Ryan Crocker. In the years since September the 11th, 2001, I have asked Ryan to hold numerous posts on the frontlines of the war on terror, and he has stepped forward enthusiastically every time.

When the American Embassy in Kabul reopened in the beginning of 2002, Ryan Crocker was our first envoy. When we liberated Iraq and removed the thug Saddam Hussein from power in 2003, I sent Ryan to help lead the reconstruction efforts. When the American Embassy in Pakistan needed new leadership, Ryan Crocker was put in charge. In 2007, I asked Ryan to return for a final mission to Iraq as America's Ambassador.

Two years later, Iraq is becoming a rising democracy, an ally in the war on terror, an inspiring model of freedom for people across the Middle East. When the story of this transformation is written, historians will note the extraordinary partnership between two exceptional men: General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. As the General carried out a surge of military forces to improve security, the Ambassador led a civilian surge to improve everyday life. In December, after months of intense negotiations, the world saw the culmination of Ambassador Crocker's masterful diplomacy: two historic agreements for long-term cooperation between the United States and Iraq.

This is not the first time that Ambassador Crocker has executed a brilliant diplomatic maneuver in Baghdad. During a rotation at the American Embassy nearly 30 years ago, he persuaded a young Foreign Service officer named Christine Barnes to be his wife. [*Laughter*] They have traveled the world together, and as Ryan prepares to retire from the Foreign Service, we wish the two of them many years of happiness.

General Petraeus recently said this about his retiring colleague: "It was a great honor for me to be his military wingman." And today it is my great honor to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to one of the finest Foreign Service officers in American history, Ryan Clark Crocker. And now the military aide will read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:14 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command, in his former capacity as commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Cmdr. Clay Beers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the U.S. Airways Plane Crash in New York City
January 15, 2009

My administration is coordinating with State and local officials to respond to this afternoon's plane crash in New York City. We continue to monitor the situation. Laura and I are inspired by the skill and heroism of the flight crew, as well as the dedication and selflessness of the emergency responders and volunteers who rescued passengers from the icy waters of the Hudson. We send our thoughts and prayers to all involved in the accident.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 15, 2009

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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2009.

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, as expanded on August 20, 1998, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

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

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels

January 15, 2009

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 declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, as amended and expanded on February 26, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2009.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

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

Message to the Congress Transmitting the 2009 National Drug Control Strategy
January 15, 2009

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit the 2009 National Drug Control Strategy, consistent with the provisions of section 201 of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006.

My Administration released its first National Drug Control Strategy in 2002 with the commitment to turn the tide against a problem that truly threatens everything that is good about our country. As we prepare to pass this noble charge to a new team of leaders, we can look back with satisfaction on what we have achieved together as a Nation. From community coalitions to our international partnerships, we pursued a balanced strategy that emphasized stopping initiation, reducing drug abuse and addiction, and disrupting drug markets.

The results of our efforts are clear. Together we have helped reduce teenage drug use by 25 percent since 2001. This means 900,000 fewer American teens are using drugs. The Access to Recovery program alone has extended treatment services to more than 260,000 Americans. Through law enforcement cooperation and international partnerships, the United States has caused serious disruptions in the availability of drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine, reducing the threat such drugs pose to the American people, while also denying profits to drug traffickers and terrorists.

Our work is by no means complete—we must build on these efforts both to further reduce drug use and to rise to new challenges. I thank the Congress for its support and ask that it continue to support this critical endeavor.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Extension of the Russia-United States Mutual Fisheries Agreement
January 15, 2009

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation Extending the Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Russian Federation on Mutual Fisheries Relations of May 31, 1988, with annex, as extended (the "Mutual Fisheries Agreement"). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes in Moscow on March 28, 2008, and September 19, 2008, extends the Mutual Fisheries Agreement until December 31, 2013.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Russian Federation, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Malta-United States Taxation Convention

January 15, 2009

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Malta for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on August 8, 2008, at Valletta (the "proposed Convention"). I also transmit for the information of the Senate the report of the Department of State, which includes an Overview of the proposed Convention.

The proposed Convention provides for reduced withholding rates on cross-border payments of dividends, interest, royalties, and other income. The proposed Convention contains a restrictive provision designed to prevent "treaty shopping," which is the inappropriate use of a tax treaty by third-country residents. The proposed Convention also provides for the exchange of information between the competent authorities to facilitate the administration of each country's tax laws.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 15, 2009

Dear _____ :

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114) (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2009, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to David R. Obey, chairman, and C. Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, ranking member, Senate

Committee on Appropriations; Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Farewell Address to the Nation
January 15, 2009

Thank you. Fellow citizens: For 8 years, it has been my honor to serve as your President. The first decade of this new century has been a period of consequence, a time set apart. Tonight, with a thankful heart, I have asked for a final opportunity to share some thoughts on the journey that we have traveled together and the future of our Nation.

Five days from now, the world will witness the vitality of American democracy. In a tradition dating back to our founding, the Presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the American people. Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose history reflects the enduring promise of our land. This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation. And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls.

Tonight I am filled with gratitude to Vice President Cheney and members of my administration; to Laura, who brought joy to this house and love to my life; to our wonderful daughters Barbara and Jenna; to my parents, whose examples have provided strength for a lifetime. And above all, I thank the American people for the trust you have given me. I thank you for the prayers that have lifted my spirits. And I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity, and grace that I have witnessed these past 8 years.

This evening my thoughts return to the first night I addressed you from this house, September the 11th, 2001. That morning, terrorists took nearly 3,000 lives in the worst attack on America since Pearl Harbor. I remember standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center 3 days later, surrounded by rescuers who had been working around the clock. I remember talking to brave souls who charged through smoke-filled corridors at the Pentagon and to husbands and wives whose loved ones became heroes aboard Flight 93. I remember Arlene Howard, who gave me her fallen son's police shield as a reminder of all that was lost. And I still carry his badge.

As the years passed, most Americans were able to return to life much as it had been before 9/11. But I never did. Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our Nation. I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.

Over the past 7 years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our Nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists' movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them. Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored Al Qaida and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States.

There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions, but there can be little

debate about the results. America has gone more than 7 years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil night and day to keep us safe: law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Our Nation is blessed to have citizens who volunteer to defend us in this time of danger. I have cherished meeting these selfless patriots and their families. And America owes you a debt of gratitude. And to all our men and women in uniform listening tonight: There has been no higher honor than serving as your Commander in Chief.

The battles waged by our troops are part of a broader struggle between two dramatically different systems. Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience, and marks unbelievers for murder. The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God, and that liberty and justice light the path to peace.

This is the belief that gave birth to our Nation. And in the long run, advancing this belief is the only practical way to protect our citizens. When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror. When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives to violence and extremism. So around the world, America is promoting human liberty, human rights, and human dignity. We're standing with dissidents and young democracies, providing AIDS medicine to dying patients—to bring dying patients back to life, and sparing mothers and babies from malaria. And this great republic, born alone in liberty, is leading the world toward a new age when freedom belongs to all nations.

For 8 years, we've also strived to expand opportunity and hope here at home. Across our country, students are rising to meet higher standards in public schools. A new Medicare prescription drug benefit is bringing peace of mind to seniors and the disabled. Every taxpayer pays lower income taxes. The addicted and suffering are finding new hope through face—faith-based programs. Vulnerable human life is better protected. Funding for our veterans has nearly doubled. America's air and water and lands are measurably cleaner. And the Federal bench includes wise new members like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

When challenges to our prosperity emerged, we rose to meet them. Facing the prospect of a financial collapse, we took decisive measures to safeguard our economy. These are very tough times for hard-working families. But the toll would be far worse if we had not acted. All Americans are in this together. And together, with determination and hard work, we will restore our economy to the path of growth. We will show the world once again the resilience of America's free enterprise system.

Like all who have held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. And there are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I've always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some of the tough decisions I have made, but I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles that shape—should shape our course.

While our Nation is safer than it was 7 years ago, the gravest threat to our people remains another terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger. In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad. If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges and others we cannot foresee tonight, America must maintain our moral clarity. I've often spoken to you about good and evil, and this has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace.

President Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." As I leave the house he occupied two centuries ago, I share that optimism. America is a young country, full of vitality, constantly growing and renewing itself. And even in the toughest times, we lift our eyes to the broad horizon ahead.

I have confidence in the promise of America because I know the character of our people. This is a nation that inspires immigrants to risk everything for the dream of freedom. This is a nation where citizens show calm in times of danger and compassion in the face of suffering. We see examples of America's character all around us. And Laura and I have invited some of them to join us in the White House this evening.

We see America's character in Dr. Tony Recasner, a principal who opened a new charter school from the ruins of Hurricane Katrina. We see it in Julio Medina, a former inmate who leads a faith-based program to help prisoners returning to society. We see it in Staff Sergeant Aubrey McDade, who charged into an ambush in Iraq and rescued three of his fellow marines.

We see America's character in Bill Krissoff, a surgeon from California. His son Nathan, a marine, gave his life in Iraq. When I met Dr. Krissoff and his family, he delivered some surprising news. He told me he wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in honor of his son. This good man was 60 years old, 18 years above the age limit. But his petition for a waiver was granted, and for the past year he has trained in battlefield medicine. Lieutenant Commander Krissoff could not be here tonight because he will soon deploy to Iraq, where he will help save America's wounded warriors and uphold the legacy of his fallen son.

In citizens like these, we see the best of our country, resilient and hopeful, caring and strong. These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there's more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great Nation will never tire, never falter, and never fail.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your President. There have been good days and tough days. But every day I have been inspired by the greatness of our country and uplifted by the goodness of our people. I have been blessed to represent this Nation we love. And I will always be honored to carry a title that means more to me than any other, citizen of the United States of America.

And so, my fellow Americans, for the final time, good night. May God bless this house and our next President, and may God bless you and our wonderful country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Malia and Natasha "Sasha" Obama, daughters of President-elect Barack Obama; Arlene Howard, mother of Port Authority police officer George Howard, who was killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001; Anthony Recasner, principal, Samuel J. Green Charter School, New Orleans, LA; and Julio Medina, executive director, Exodus Transitional Community, New York City. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Death of Andrew Wyeth
January 16, 2009

Laura and I deeply mourn the death of American painter Andrew Wyeth.

Mr. Wyeth captured America in his paintings of his native Pennsylvania and Maine.

Mr. Wyeth was no stranger to White House recognitions. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963. President Nixon sponsored an exhibition of Andrew Wyeth's paintings at the White House. In 1990, my father presented Mr. Wyeth the Congressional Gold Medal. And in 2007, I awarded Mr. Wyeth the National Medal of Arts in recognition of his lifetime achievement and contribution to American arts and culture.

Laura and I are fortunate to have known Andrew Wyeth and to have had the pleasure of enjoying his work. In 2005, Andrew and his wife Betsy presented to the White House his painting, "Jupiter," which is displayed in the Family Sitting Room in the Residence.

On behalf of the American people, Laura and I offer our sincere condolences to Betsy and the Wyeth family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

The President's Radio Address
January 17, 2009

Good morning. For the last 8 years, I have had the honor of speaking to the American people Saturday mornings through this radio address. In hundreds of broadcasts, I have talked to you about important issues affecting our security and our prosperity. And today, in my final address, I want to send a simple and heartfelt message: Thank you.

Eight years ago, Laura and I left our home in Texas to come to Washington. Through two terms in the White House, we have been blessed by your kind words and generous prayers. We have been inspired by those of you who reach out to feed the hungry, clothe the needy, and care for the sick. We have been moved by the courage and devotion of those of you who wear the uniform. Serving as your President has been an incredible honor.

Like every individual who has held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. There are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I've always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some tough decisions I have made, but I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles that should shape our course. While our Nation is safer than it was 7 years ago, the gravest threat to our people remains another terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve, and we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger. In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad. If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges and others we cannot foresee today, America must maintain our moral clarity. I've often spoken to you about good and evil. This has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace.

Eight years ago, on a cold January morning, I stood on the steps of the United States Capitol, placed my hand on the Bible, and swore a sacred oath to defend our people and our Constitution. On that day, I spoke of "our Nation's grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity." Next week, my term of service will come to an end, but that story and that dream will continue.

On Tuesday, Laura and I will join all Americans in offering our best wishes to President Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls. And later that day, we will return to the love of family and friends in Texas. I will depart office proud of my administration's record, and I will spend the rest of my life grateful for the opportunity to have served as President of the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on January 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 16, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Malia and Natasha "Sasha" Obama, daughters of President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Selection of Alan C. Lowe as Director of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum

January 19, 2009

We are very pleased that Alan Lowe has been selected by the National Archives and Records Administration as the director of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Alan is a talented and experienced professional and will be an outstanding director of the Library. We look

forward to working with him and the National Archives to build a world-class Presidential library and museum that will be an important resource for scholars and the general public.

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