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Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel

March 26, 2009

Today marks the anniversary of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, signed 30 years ago at the White House.

As we commemorate this historic event, we recall that peace is always possible even in the face of seemingly intractable conflicts. The success of Prime Minister Begin, President Sadat, and President Carter, begun at Camp David, demonstrated that progress results from sustained efforts at communication and cooperation. While much work remains, we honor the courage and foresight of these leaders, who stood together in unity to change the course of our shared history.

Today, as we seek to expand the circle of peace among Arabs and Israelis, we take inspiration from what Israel and Egypt achieved three decades ago, knowing that the destination is worthy of the struggle.

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation to Promote Voluntarism

March 26, 2009

I'm so pleased that the Senate overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, legislation that will usher in a new era of service. I want to applaud all those who have worked so hard to see this bill through, and I am eager to sign it into law.

This legislation will help create new opportunities for millions of Americans at all stages of their lives, from improving service learning in schools to creating an army of 250,000 volunteers a year dedicated to addressing our Nation's toughest problems, from connecting working Americans to a variety of part-time service opportunities to better utilizing the skills and experience of our retirees and baby boomers. This legislation will help tap the genius of our faith-based and community organizations, and it will find the most innovative ideas for addressing our common challenges and helping those ideas grow.

It is fitting that this legislation is named after Ted Kennedy, a person who has never stopped asking what he could do for his country. This legislation is not just a tribute to the service to which he has dedicated his life, it is a call to action for the rest of us. Our work is not finished when I sign this bill into law; it has just begun. While our Government can provide every opportunity imaginable for us to serve our communities, it is up to each of us to seize those opportunities, to do our part to lift up our fellow Americans, to realize our own true potential.

I call on all Americans to stand up and do what they can to serve their communities, shape our history, and enrich both their own lives and the lives of others across this country.

Remarks on United States Military and Diplomatic Strategies for Afghanistan and Pakistan

March 27, 2009

Good morning. Please be seated. Before I begin today, let me acknowledge, first of all, Your Excellencies, all the Ambassadors who are in attendance. I also want to acknowledge both the civilians and our military personnel that are about to be deployed to the region. And I am very grateful to all of you for your extraordinary work.

I want to acknowledge General David Petraeus, who's here and has been doing an outstanding job at CENTCOM; we appreciate him. I want to thank Bruce Riedel—Bruce is