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Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service

March 4, 2003

Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed request for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The request is needed to liquidate legitimate prior-year obligations for eligible participants in the AmeriCorps program, to complete the implementation of a comprehensive corrective action plan developed by CNCS to strengthen financial management, and to provide flexibility to support more than 50,000 AmeriCorps members in FY 2003. This request will not increase my FY 2004 request.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

March 5, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), I transmit herewith a semiannual report prepared by my Administration detailing payments made to Cuba by United States persons as a result of the provision of telecommunications services pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 5, 2003.

Statement on the Senate Filibuster To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Miguel Estrada

March 6, 2003

Miguel Estrada is a well-qualified nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals who has been waiting nearly 2 years for an up or down vote in the United States Senate. The decision today by 44 Senators to continue to filibuster and block a vote on this nomination is a disgrace.

The Senate has a responsibility to exercise its constitutional advice and consent function and hold an up or down vote on a judicial nominee within a reasonable time. Some Senators who once insisted that every appeals court nominee deserves a timely vote have now abandoned that principle for partisan politics. Their tactics are an injustice and unfair to the good man I have nominated and unfaithful to the Senate's own obligations.

These Senators are holding Miguel Estrada to a double standard. I will stand by Miguel Estrada's side until he is sworn in as a judge. I call on the Senate Democratic leadership to stop playing politics and permit a vote on Miguel Estrada's nomination. Let each Senator vote as he or she thinks best, but give the man a vote.

The President's News Conference

March 6, 2003

The President. Good evening. I'm pleased to take your questions tonight and to discuss with the American people the serious matters facing our country and the world.

This has been an important week on two fronts on our war against terror. First, thanks to the hard work of American and Pakistani officials, we captured the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks against our Nation. Khalid Sheik Mohammed conceived and planned the hijackings and directed the actions of the hijackers. We believe his capture will further disrupt the terror network and their planning for additional attacks.

Second, we have arrived at an important moment in confronting the threat posed to our Nation and to peace by Saddam Hussein

and his weapons of terror. In New York tomorrow, the United Nations Security Council will receive an update from the chief weapons inspector. The world needs him to answer a single question: Has the Iraqi regime fully and unconditionally disarmed, as required by Resolution 1441, or has it not?

Iraq's dictator has made a public show of producing and destroying a few missiles—missiles that violate the restrictions set out more than 10 years ago. Yet our intelligence shows that, even as he is destroying these few missiles, he has ordered the continued production of the very same type of missiles.

Iraqi operatives continue to hide biological and chemical agents to avoid detection by inspectors. In some cases, these materials have been moved to different locations every 12 to 24 hours or placed in vehicles that are in residential neighborhoods.

We know from multiple intelligence sources that Iraqi weapons scientists continue to be threatened with harm should they cooperate with U.N. inspectors. Scientists are required by Iraqi intelligence to wear concealed recording devices during interviews, and hotels where interviews take place are bugged by the regime.

These are not the actions of a regime that is disarming. These are the actions of a regime engaged in a willful charade. These are the actions of a regime that systematically and deliberately is defying the world. If the Iraqi regime were disarming, we would know it because we would see it. Iraq's weapons would be presented to inspectors, and the world would witness their destruction. Instead, with the world demanding disarmament and more than 200,000 troops positioned near his country, Saddam Hussein's response is to produce a few weapons for show, while he hides the rest and builds even more.

Inspection teams do not need more time or more personnel. All they need is what they have never received, the full cooperation of the Iraqi regime. Token gestures are not acceptable. The only acceptable outcome is the one already defined by a unanimous vote of the Security Council—total disarmament.

Great Britain, Spain, and the United States have introduced a new resolution stating that Iraq has failed to meet the requirements of Resolution 1441. Saddam Hussein is not disarming. This is a fact. It cannot be denied.

Saddam Hussein has a long history of reckless aggression and terrible crimes. He possesses weapons of terror. He provides funding and training and safe haven to terrorists—terrorists who would willingly use weapons of mass destruction against America and other peace-loving countries. Saddam Hussein and his weapons are a direct threat to this country, to our people, and to all free people.

If the world fails to confront the threat posed by the Iraqi regime, refusing to use force even as a last resort, free nations would assume immense and unacceptable risks. The attacks of September the 11th, 2001, showed what the enemies of America did with four airplanes. We will not wait to see what terrorists or terrorist states could do with weapons of mass destruction.

We are determined to confront threats wherever they arise. I will not leave the American people at the mercy of the Iraqi dictator and his weapons.

In the event of conflict, America also accepts our responsibility to protect innocent lives in every way possible. We'll bring food and medicine to the Iraqi people. We'll help that nation to build a just government, after decades of brutal dictatorship. The form and leadership of that government is for the Iraqi people to choose. Anything they choose will be better than the misery and torture and murder they have known under Saddam Hussein.

Across the world and in every part of America, people of good will are hoping and praying for peace. Our goal is peace for our Nation, for our friends and allies, for the people of the Middle East. People of good will must also recognize that allowing a dangerous dictator to defy the world and harbor weapons of mass murder and terror is not peace at all. It is pretense. The cause of peace will be advanced only when the terrorists lose a wealthy patron and protector and when the dictator is fully and finally disarmed.

Tonight I thank the men and women of our armed services and their families. I know their deployment so far from home is causing

hardship for many military families. Our Nation is deeply grateful to all who serve in uniform. We appreciate your commitment, your idealism, and your sacrifice. We support you, and we know that if peace must be defended, you are ready.

Ron Fournier [Associated Press].

Diplomacy/U.N. Effectiveness on Iraq

Q. Let me see if I can further—if you could further define what you just called this important moment we're in, since you've made it clear just now that you don't think Saddam has disarmed, and we have a quarter million troops in the Persian Gulf, and now that you've called on the world to be ready to use force as a last resort. Are we just days away from the point of which you decide whether or not we go to war? And what harm would it do to give Saddam a final ultimatum, a 2- or 3-day deadline to disarm or face force?

The President. Well, we're still in the final stages of diplomacy. I'm spending a lot of time on the phone, talking to fellow leaders about the need for the United Nations Security Council to state the facts, which is Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed. Fourteen forty-one, the Security Council resolution passed unanimously last fall, said clearly that Saddam Hussein has one last chance to disarm. He hasn't disarmed, and so we're working with Security Council members to resolve this issue at the Security Council.

This is not only an important moment for the security of our Nation; I believe it's an important moment for the Security Council, itself. And the reason I say that is because this issue has been before the Security Council—the issue of disarmament of Iraq—for 12 long years. And the fundamental question facing the Security Council is, will its words mean anything? When the Security Council speaks, will the words have merit and weight?

I think it's important for those words to have merit and weight, because I understand that in order to win the war against terror there must be a united effort to do so. We must work together to defeat terror.

Iraq is a part of the war on terror. Iraq is a country that has got terrorist ties. It's a country with wealth. It's a country that trains terrorists, a country that could arm terrorists. And our fellow Americans must understand in this new war against terror, that we not only must chase down Al Qaida terrorists, we must deal with weapons of mass destruction as well.

That's what the United Nations Security Council has been talking about for 12 long years. It's now time for this issue to come to a head at the Security Council, and it will. As far as ultimatums and all the speculation about what may or may not happen, after next week, we'll just wait and see.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Timing of Diplomacy/North Korea

Q. Are we days away?

The President. Well, we're days away from resolving this issue at the Security Council.

Q. Thank you. Another hot spot is North Korea. If North Korea restarts their plutonium plant, will that change your thinking about how to handle this crisis, or are you resigned to North Korea becoming a nuclear power?

The President. This is a regional issue. I say a regional issue because there's a lot of countries that have got a direct stake into whether or not North Korea has nuclear weapons. We've got a stake as to whether North Korea has a nuclear weapon. China clearly has a stake as to whether or not North Korea has a nuclear weapon. South Korea, of course, has a stake. Japan has got a significant stake as to whether or not North Korea has a nuclear weapon. Russia has a stake.

So therefore, I think the best way to deal with this is in multilateral fashion, by convincing those nations that they must stand up to their responsibility, along with the United States, to convince Kim Chong-il that the development of a nuclear arsenal is not in his nation's interest and that should he want help in easing the suffering of the North Korean people, the best way to achieve that help is to not proceed forward.

We've tried bilateral negotiations with North Korea. My predecessor, in a good-faith effort, entered into a framework agreement. The United States honored its side of the agreement; North Korea didn't. While we felt the agreement was in force, North Korea was enriching uranium.

In my judgment, the best way to deal with North Korea is to convince parties to assume their responsibility. I was heartened by the fact that Jiang Zemin, when he came to Crawford, Texas, made it very clear to me, and publicly as well, that a nuclear weapons-free peninsula was in China's interest. And so we're working with China and the other nations I mentioned to bring a multilateral pressure and to convince Kim Chong-il that the development of a nuclear arsenal is not in his interests.

Dick [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

More Time for Iragi Regime/Cooperation in War on Terror

Q. Mr. President, you have, and your top advisers, notably Secretary of State Powell, have repeatedly said that we have shared with our allies all the current, up-to-date intelligence information that proves the imminence of the threat we face from Saddam Hussein and that they have been sharing their intelligence with us as well. If all these nations, all of them our normal allies, have access to the same intelligence information, why is it that they are reluctant to think that the threat is so real, so imminent that we need to move to the brink of war now?

And in relation to that, today, the British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, suggested at the U.N. that it might be time to look at amending the resolution, perhaps with an eye towards a timetable like that proposed by the Canadians some 2 weeks ago, that would set a firm deadline to give Saddam Hussein a little bit of time to come clean. And also, obviously, that would give you a little bit of a chance to build more support within the members of the Security Council. Is that something that the governments should be pursuing at the U.N. right now?

The President. We, of course, are consulting with our allies at the United Nations. But I meant what I said, this is the last phase of diplomacy. A little bit more time? Saddam Hussein has had 12 years to disarm. He is deceiving people. That's what's important for our fellow citizens to realize, that if he really intended to disarm, like the world has asked him to do, we would know whether he was disarming. He's trying to buy time. I can understand why. He's been successful with these tactics for 12 years.

Saddam Hussein is a threat to our Nation. September the 11th changed the strategic thinking, at least, as far as I was concerned, for how to protect our country. My job is to protect the American people. It used to be that we could think that you could contain a person like Saddam Hussein, that oceans would protect us from his type of terror. September the 11th should say to the American people that we're now a battlefield, that weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist organization could be deployed here at home.

So therefore, I think the threat is real, and so do a lot of other people in my Government. And since I believe the threat is real, and since my most important job is to protect the security of the American people, that's precisely what we'll do.

Our demands are that Saddam Hussein disarm. We hope he does. We have worked with the international community to convince him to disarm. If he doesn't disarm, we'll disarm him.

You asked about sharing of intelligence, and I appreciate that, because we do share a lot of intelligence with nations which may or may not agree with us in the Security Council as to how to deal with Saddam Hussein and his threats. We have got roughly 90 countries engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom, chasing down the terrorists.

We do communicate a lot, and we will continue to communicate a lot. We must communicate. We must share intelligence. We must share—we must cut off money together. We must smoke these Al Qaida types out one at a time. It's in our national interest as well that we deal with Saddam Hussein.

But America is not alone in this sentiment. There are a lot of countries who fully understand the threat of Saddam Hussein, a lot of countries realize that the credibility of the Security Council is at stake, a lot of countries, like America, who hope that he would have disarmed, and a lot of countries which realize that it may require force—may require force—to disarm him.

Jim Angle [FOX News].

Anti-War Demonstrations/Decision on Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, if you haven't already made the choice to go to war, can you tell us what you are waiting to hear or see before you do make that decision? And if I may, during the recent demonstrations, many of the protesters suggested that the U.S. was a threat to peace, which prompted you to wonder out loud why they didn't see Saddam Hussein as a threat to peace. I wonder why you think so many people around the world take a different view of the threat that Saddam Hussein poses than you and your allies?

The President. Well, first, I—I appreciate societies in which people can express their opinion. That society—free speech stands in stark contrast to Iraq.

Secondly, I've seen all kinds of protests since I've been the President. I remember the protests against trade. A lot of people didn't feel like free trade was good for the world. I completely disagree. I think free trade is good for both wealthy and impoverished nations. But that didn't change my opinion about trade. As a matter of fact, I went to the Congress to get trade promotion authority out.

I recognize there are people who don't like war. I don't like war. I wish that Saddam Hussein had listened to the demands of the world and disarmed. That was my hope. That's why I first went to the United Nations to begin with, on September the 12th, 2002, to address this issue as forthrightly as I knew how. That's why, months later, we went to the Security Council to get another resolution, called 1441, which was unanimously approved by the Security Council, demanding that Saddam Hussein disarm.

I'm hopeful that he does disarm. But in the name of peace and the security of our people, if he won't do so voluntarily, we will disarm him. And other nations will join him—join us in disarming him.

And that creates a certain sense of anxiety. I understand that. Nobody likes war. The only thing I can do is assure the loved ones of those who wear our uniform that if we have to go to war, if war is upon us because Saddam Hussein has made that choice, we will have the best equipment available for our troops, the best plan available for victory, and we will respect innocent life in Iraq.

The risk of doing nothing, the risk of hoping that Saddam Hussein changes his mind and becomes a gentle soul, the risk that somehow—that inaction will make the world safer, is a risk I'm not willing to take for the American people.

We'll be there in a minute. King, John King [Cable News Network]. This is a scripted—[*laughter*]——

Reasons for Action Against Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. How would—sir, how would you answer your critics who say that they think this is somehow personal? As Senator Kennedy put it tonight, he said your fixation with Saddam Hussein is making the world a more dangerous place. And as you prepare the American people for the possibility of military conflict, could you share with us any of the scenarios your advisers have shared with you about worst-case scenarios, in terms of the potential cost of American lives, the potential cost to the American economy, and the potential risks of retaliatory terrorist strikes here at home?

The President. My job is to protect America, and that's exactly what I'm going to do. People can ascribe all kinds of intentions. I swore to protect and defend the Constitution. That's what I swore to do. I put my hand on the Bible and took that oath, and that's exactly what I am going to do.

I believe Saddam Hussein is a threat to the American people. I believe he's a threat to the neighborhood in which he lives, and I've got a good evidence to believe that. He has weapons of mass destruction, and he has used weapons of mass destruction in his neighborhood and on his own people. He's invaded countries in his neighborhood. He tortures his own people. He's a murderer. He has trained and financed Al Qaida-type organizations before, Al Qaida and other terrorist organizations. I take the threat seriously, and I'll deal with the threat. I hope it can be done peacefully.

The rest of your six-point question?

Price of Inaction

Q. The potential price in terms of lives and the economy, terrorism.

The President. Oh, yes. The price of doing nothing exceeds the price of taking action if we have to. We'll do everything we can to minimize the loss of life. The price of the attacks on America, the cost of the attacks on America on September the 11th were enormous. They were significant, and I am not willing to take that chance again, John.

Terry Moran [ABC News].

International Reaction/Stakes of Iraq Policy

Q. Thank you, sir. May I follow up on Jim Angle's question? In the past several weeks, your policy on Iraq has generated opposition from the governments of France, Russia, China, Germany, Turkey, the Arab League, and many other countries; opened a rift at NATO and at the U.N.; and drawn millions of ordinary citizens around the world into the streets in anti-war protests. May I ask, what went wrong that so many governments and peoples around the world now not only disagree with you very strongly but see the U.S. under your leadership as an arrogant power?

The President. I think if you remember back prior to the resolution coming out of the United Nations last fall, I suspect you might have asked a question along those lines: How come you can't get anybody to support your resolution? If I remember correctly, there was a lot of doubt as to whether or not we were even going to get any votes, much—well, we'd get our own, of course. The vote came out 15 to nothing, Terry. And I think you'll see when it's all said and done, if we have to use force, a lot of nations will be with us.

You clearly named some that—France and Germany expressed their opinions. We have a disagreement over how best to deal with Saddam Hussein. I understand that. Having said that, they're still our friends, and we will deal with them as friends. We've got a lot of common interests. Our transatlantic relationships are very important. While they may disagree with how we deal with Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction, there's no disagreement when it came time to vote on 1441, at least as far as France was concerned. They joined us. They said Saddam Hussein has one last chance of disarming. If they think more time will cause him to disarm, I disagree with that.

He's a master at deception. He has no intention of disarming. Otherwise, we would have known. There's a lot of talk about inspectors. It really would have taken a handful of inspectors to determine whether he was disarming. They could have showed up at a parking lot and he could have brought his weapons and destroyed them. That's not what he chose to do.

Secondly, I make my decisions based upon the oath I took, the one I just described to you. I believe Saddam Hussein is a threat—is a threat to the American people. He's a threat to people in his neighborhood. He's also a threat to the Iraqi people.

One of the things we love in America is freedom. If I may, I'd like to remind you what I said at the State of the Union: Liberty is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to each and every person. And that's what I believe. I believe that when we see totalitarianism, that we must deal with it. We don't have to do it always militarily, but this is a unique circumstance, because of 12 years of denial and defiance, because of terrorist connections, because of past history.

I'm convinced that a liberated Iraq will be important for that troubled part of the world. The Iraqi people are plenty capable of governing themselves. Iraq is a sophisticated society. Iraq's got money. Iraq will provide a place where people can see that the Shia and the Sunni and the Kurds can get along in a federation. Iraq will serve as a catalyst for change, positive change.

So there's a lot more at stake than just American security and the security of people close by Saddam Hussein. Freedom is at stake as well, and I take that very seriously.

Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News].

Regime Change in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, good evening. If you order war, can any military operation be considered a success if the United States does not capture Saddam Hussein, as you once said, dead or alive?

The President. Well, I hope we don't have to go to war, but if we go to war, we will disarm Iraq. And if we go to war, there will

be a regime change. And replacing this cancer inside of Iraq will be a Government that represents the rights of all the people, a Government which represents the voices of the Shia and Sunni and the Kurds.

We care about the suffering of the Iraqi people. I mentioned in my opening comments that there's a lot of food ready to go in. There's something like 55,000 oil-for-food distribution points in Iraq. We know where they are. We fully intend to make sure that they're—got ample food. We know where their hospitals are; we want to make sure they've got ample medical supplies. The life of the Iraqi citizen is going to dramatically improve.

Q. Sir, I'm sorry, is success contingent upon capturing or killing Saddam Hussein, in your mind?

The President. We will be changing the regime of Iraq, for the good of the Iraqi people.

Bill Plante [CBS News].

Public Support/Nature of Iraqi Threat

Q. Mr. President, to a lot of people, it seems that war is probably inevitable, because many people doubt—most people, I would guess—that Saddam Hussein will ever do what we are demanding that he do, which is disarm. And if war is inevitable, there are a lot of people in this country, as much as half, by polling standards, who agree that he should be disarmed, who listen to you say that you have the evidence but who feel they haven't seen it and who still wonder why blood has to be shed if he hasn't attacked us.

The President. Well, Bill, if they believe he should be disarmed, and he's not going to disarm, there's only one way to disarm him. And that happens to be my last choice, the use of force.

Secondly, the American people know that Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction. By the way, he declared he didn't have any; 1441 insisted that he have a complete declaration of his weapons; he said he didn't have any weapons. Secondly, he's used these weapons before. I mean, this is—we're not speculating about the nature of the man. We know the nature of the man.

Colin Powell, in an eloquent address to the United Nations, described some of the information we were at liberty of talking about. He mentioned a man named Al Zarqawi, who was in charge of the poison network. He's a man who was wounded in Afghanistan, received aid in Baghdad, ordered the killing of a U.S. citizen, USAID employee, was harbored in Iraq. There is a poison plant in northeast Iraq. To assume that Saddam Hussein knew none of this was going on is not to really understand the nature of the Iraqi society.

There's a lot of facts which make it clear to me and many others that Saddam is a threat. And we're not going to wait until he does attack. We're not going to hope that he changes his attitude. We're not going to assume that he's a different kind of person than he has been.

So, in the name of security and peace, if we have to—if we have to—we'll disarm him. I hope he disarms. Or perhaps, I hope he leaves the country. I hear a lot of talk from different nations around where Saddam Hussein might be exiled. That would be fine with me, just so long as Iraq disarms after he's exiled.

Let's see here. Elisabeth [Elisabeth Bumiller, New York Times].

Vote on New U.N. Security Council Resolution

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you said, the Security Council faces a vote next week on a resolution implicitly authorizing an attack on Iraq. Will you call for a vote on that resolution, even if you aren't sure you have the vote?

The President. Yes. Well, first, I don't think—it basically says that he's in defiance of 1441. That's what the resolution says, and it's hard to believe anybody is saying he isn't in defiance of 1441, because 1441 said he must disarm. And yes, we'll call for a vote.

Q. No matter what?

The President. No matter what the whip count is, we're calling for the vote. We want to see people stand up and say what their opinion is about Saddam Hussein and the utility of the United Nations Security Council. And so, you bet. It's time for people to

show their cards, to let the world know where they stand when it comes to Saddam.

Mark Knoller [CBS Radio].

Allied Action Following U.N. Vote

Q. Mr. President, are you worried that the United States might be viewed as defiant of the United Nations if you went ahead with military action without specific and explicit authorization from the U.N.?

The President. No, I'm not worried about that. As a matter of fact, it's hard to say the United States is defiant about the United Nations, when I was the person that took the issue to the United Nations, September the 12th, 2002. We've been working with the United Nations. We've been working through the United Nations.

Secondly, I'm confident the American people understand that when it comes to our security, if we need to act, we will act, and we really don't need United Nations approval to do so. I want to work—I want the United Nations to be effective. It's important for it to be a robust, capable body. It's important for its words to mean what they say, and as we head into the 21st century, Mark, when it comes to our security, we really don't need anybody's permission.

Bill [Bill Sammon, Washington Times].

Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Even though our military can certainly prevail without a northern front, isn't Turkey making it at least slightly more challenging for us and, therefore, at least slightly more likely that American lives will be lost? And if they don't reverse course, would you stop backing their entry into the European Union?

The President. The answer to your second question is, I support Turkey going into the E.U. Turkey's a friend. They're a NATO Ally. We will continue to work with Turkey. We've got contingencies in place that, should our troops not come through Turkey—not be allowed to come through Turkey. And no, that won't cause any more hardship for our troops. I'm confident of that.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks]. Did you have a question, or did I call upon you cold?

Q. I have a question. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay. I'm sure you do have a question.

Lessons of September 11/President's Faith

Q. Mr. President, as the Nation is at odds over war, with many organizations like the Congressional Black Caucus pushing for continued diplomacy through the U.N., how is your faith guiding you? And what should you tell America—well, what should America do, collectively, as you instructed before 9/11? Should it be "pray," because you're saying, let's continue the war on terror.

The President. I appreciate that question a lot. First, for those who urge more diplomacy, I would simply say that diplomacy hasn't worked. We've tried diplomacy for 12 years. Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed, he's armed.

And we live in a dangerous world. We live in new circumstances in our country. And I hope people remember the—I know they remember the tragedy of September the 11th, but I hope they understand the lesson of September the 11th. The lesson is, is that we're vulnerable to attack, wherever it may occur, and we must take threats which gather overseas very seriously. We don't have to deal with them all militarily. But we must deal with them, and in the case of Iraq, it is now time for him to disarm. For the sake of peace, if we have to use our troops, we will.

My faith sustains me because I pray daily. I pray for guidance and wisdom and strength. If we were to commit our troops—if we were to commit our troops—I would pray for their safety, and I would pray for the safety of innocent Iraqi lives as well.

One thing that's really great about our country, April, is there are thousands of people who pray for me who I'll never see and be able to thank. But it's a humbling experience to think that people I will never have met have lifted me and my family up in prayer. And for that I'm grateful. That's—it's been—it's been a comforting feeling to know that it's true. I pray for peace, April. I pray for peace.

Hutch [Ron Hutcheson, Knight Ridder].

Aftermath and Justification of Action

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you know, not everyone shares your optimistic vision of how this might play out. Do you ever worry, maybe in the wee, small hours, that you might be wrong, and they might be right in thinking that this could lead to more terrorism, more anti-American sentiment, more instability in the Middle East?

The President. Hutch, I think, first of all, it's hard to envision more terror on America than September the 11th, 2001. We did nothing to provoke that terrorist attack. It came upon us because there's an enemy which hates America. They hate what we stand for. We love freedom, and we're not changing. And therefore, so long as there's a terrorist network like Al Qaida and others willing to fund them, finance them, equip them, we're at war.

And so I—you know, obviously, I've thought long and hard about the use of troops. I think about it all the time. It is my responsibility to commit the troops. I believe we'll prevail. I know we'll prevail. And out of that disarmament of Saddam will come a better world, particularly for the people who live in Iraq.

This is a society, Ron, who—which has been decimated by his murderous ways, his torture. He doesn't allow dissent. He doesn't believe in the values we believe in. I believe this society, the Iraqi society, can develop in a much better way. I think of the risks, calculated the cost of inaction versus the cost of action. And I'm firmly convinced, if we have to, we will act, in the name of peace and in the name of freedom.

Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News].

Efforts To Protect Innocent Lives

Q. Mr. President, if you decide to go ahead with military action, there are inspectors on the ground in Baghdad. Will you give them time to leave the country, or the humanitarian workers on the ground or the journalists? Will you be able to do that and still mount an effective attack on Iraq?

The President. Of course. We will give people a chance to leave. And we don't want anybody in harm's way who shouldn't be in harm's way. The journalists who are there should leave. If you're going, and we start action, leave. The inspectors—we don't want people in harm's way. And our intention—we have no quarrel with anybody other than Saddam and his group of killers who have destroyed a society. And we will do everything we can, as I mentioned—and I mean this—to protect innocent life.

I've not made up our mind about military action. Hopefully, this can be done peacefully. Hopefully, that as a result of the pressure that we have placed—and others have placed—that Saddam will disarm and/or leave the country.

Ed [Ed Chen, Los Angeles Times].

Costs and Benefits of Action Against Iraq

Q. Mr. President, good evening. Sir, you've talked a lot about trusting the American people when it comes to making decisions about their own lives, about how to spend their own money. When it comes to the financial costs of the war, sir, it would seem that the administration, surely, has costed out various scenarios. If that's the case, why not present some of them to the American people so they know what to expect, sir?

The President. Ed, we will. We'll present it in the form of a supplemental to the spenders. We don't get to spend the money, as you know. We have to request the expenditure of money from the Congress, and at the appropriate time, we'll request a supplemental. We're obviously analyzing all aspects. We hope we don't go to war, but if we should, we will present a supplemental.

But I want to remind you what I said before. There is a huge cost when we get attacked. There is a significant cost to our society: First of all, there is the cost of lives. It's an immeasurable cost. Three thousand people died, a significant cost to our economy. Opportunity loss is an immeasurable cost, besides the cost of repairing buildings and cost to our airlines. And so the cost of an attack is significant.

If I thought we were safe from attack, I would be thinking differently. But I see a gathering threat. I mean, this is a true, real threat to America. And therefore, we will deal with it. And at the appropriate time, Ed, we will ask for a supplemental. And that will be the moment where you and others will

be able to recognize what we think the dollar cost of a conflict will be.

You know, the benefits of such a effort, if, in fact, we go forward and are successful, are also immeasurable. How do you measure the benefit of freedom in Iraq? I guess if you're an Iraqi citizen, you can measure it by being able to express your mind and vote. How do you measure the consequence of taking a dictator out of power who has tried to invade Kuwait or somebody who may some day decide to lob a weapon of mass destruction on Israel? How would you weigh the cost of that? Those are immeasurable costs. And I weigh those very seriously, Ed. In terms of the dollar amount, well, we'll let you know here pretty soon.

George Condon [Copley News Service].

North Korea

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. If I can follow on Steve's question on North Korea. Do you believe it is essential for the security of the United States and its allies that North Korea be prevented from developing nuclear weapons? And are you in any way growing frustrated with the pace of the diplomacy there?

The President. Well, I think it's—yes, I think it's an issue. Obviously, I'm concerned about North Korea developing nuclear weapons, not only for their own use but for—perhaps they might choose to proliferate them, sell them. They may end up in the hands of dictators, people who are not afraid of using weapons of mass destruction, people who try to impose their will on the world or blackmail free nations. I'm concerned about it.

We are working hard to bring a diplomatic solution. And we've made some progress. After all, the IAEA* asked that the Security Council take up the North Korean issue. It's now in the Security Council—constantly talking with the Chinese and the Russians and the Japanese and the South Koreans. Colin Powell just went overseas and spent some time in China, went to the inauguration of President Roh in South Korea, spent time in China. We're working the issue hard, and I'm optimistic that we'll come up with a diplomatic solution. I certainly hope so.

Bob [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers].

Mission in Action Against Iraq

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, millions of Americans can recall a time when leaders from both parties set this country on a mission of regime change in Vietnam. Fifty thousand Americans died. The regime is still there in Hanoi, and it hasn't harmed or threatened a single American in the 30 years since the war ended. What can you say tonight, sir, to the sons and the daughters of the Americans who served in Vietnam to assure them that you will not lead this country down a similar path in Iraq?

The President. That's a great question. Our mission is clear in Iraq. Should we have to go in, our mission is very clear: disarmament. In order to disarm, it will mean regime change. I'm confident we'll be able to achieve that objective in a way that minimizes the loss of life. No doubt there's risks in any military operation; I know that. But it's very clear what we intend to do. And our mission won't change. Our mission is precisely what I just stated. We have got a plan that will achieve that mission, should we need to send forces in.

Last question. Let's see who needs one. Jeanne [Jeanne Cummings, Wall Street Journal].

British Proposal of a Deadline for Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In the coming days, the American people are going to hear a lot of debate about this British proposal of a possible deadline being added to the resolution, or not. And I know you don't want to tip your hand—this is a great diplomatic moment—but from the administration's perspective and your own perspective, can you share for the American public what you view as the pros and cons associated with that proposal?

The President. You're right, I'm not going to tip my hand. [*Laughter*]

Q. But can you help us sort out the——

The President. Thank you for—thank you. Anything that's debated must have resolution to this issue. It makes no sense to allow this issue to continue on and on in the hopes

* White House correction.

that Saddam Hussein disarms. The whole purpose of the debate is for Saddam to disarm. We gave him a chance. As a matter of fact, we gave him 12 years of chances. But recently we gave him a chance, starting last fall. And it said, last chance to disarm. The resolution said that. And had he chosen to do so, it'd would be evident that he's disarmed.

So more time, more inspectors, more process, in our judgment, is not going to affect the peace of the world. So whatever is resolved is going to have some finality to it, so that Saddam Hussein will take us seriously.

I want to remind you that it's his choice to make as to whether or not we go to war. It's Saddam's choice. He's the person that can make the choice of war and peace. Thus far, he's made the wrong choice. If we have to, for the sake of the security of the American people, for the sake of peace in the world, and for freedom to the Iraqi people, we will disarm Saddam Hussein. And by "we," it's more than America. A lot of nations will join us.

Thank you for your questions. Good night.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 8:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; President Jiang Zemin of China; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea.

Executive Order 13288—Blocking Property of Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Zimbabwe

March 6, 2003

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code,

I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, have determined that the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions, contributing to the deliberate breakdown in the rule of law in Zimbabwe, to politically motivated violence and intimidation in that country, and to political and economic instability in the southern African region, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.

I hereby order:

Section 1. Except to the extent provided in section 203(b) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)), and in regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that may be issued pursuant to this order, and notwithstanding any contract entered into or any license or permit granted prior to the effective date of this order, all property and interests in property of the following persons that are in the United States, that hereafter come within the United States, or that are or hereafter come within the possession or control of United States persons, including their overseas branches, are blocked and may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in:

(a) the persons listed in the Annex to this order; and

(b) any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to be owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act directly or indirectly for or on behalf of, any of the persons listed in the Annex to this order.

Sec. 2. (a) Any transaction or dealing by a United States person or within the United States in property or interests in property blocked pursuant to this order is prohibited, including but not limited to the making or receiving of any contribution of funds, goods, or services to or for the benefit of any person listed in the Annex to this order or who is the subject of a determination under subsection 1(b) of this order.

(b) Any transaction by a United States person or within the United States that evades