AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marcus Brooks, brother of Tamara Brooks; and Donna Norris, mother of Amber Hagerman. S. 151, approved April 30, was assigned Public Law No. 108–21. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today Act of 2003

April 30, 2003

Today I have signed into law S. 151, the "Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today Act of 2003," also known as the PROTECT Act. This important legislation gives law enforcement authorities valuable new tools to deter, detect, investigate, prosecute, and punish crimes against America's children. In particular, the Act builds upon my Administration's ongoing efforts to expand and improve the AMBER Alert program to combat child abduction, strengthens laws against child pornography, and addresses deficiencies in Federal sentencing policies and practices.

The executive branch shall construe section 108(d)(3) of the Act, which calls for the Attorney General to submit recommendations to the Congress, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to submit for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

Section 401(l)(2) of the Act calls for a report to certain committees of the Congress by the Attorney General concerning prosecutorial actions, including the basis on which the Solicitor General decides, in particular cases involving departures from sentencing guidelines, whether or not to authorize an appeal. Were this provision to take effect, the executive branch would implement it in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the deliberative processes of the Executive or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 30, 2003.

NOTE: S. 151, approved April 30, was assigned Public Law No. 108–21.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters

April 30, 2003

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome to the Oval Office a friend and courageous person, the President of Colombia. He is determined to fight terror. He is determined to fight the flow of narcotics to America. We appreciate his determination. We appreciate his strength.

And so it's my honor to welcome you, Mr. President. Before I ask you to speak and before we answer two questions a side, I do want to say that today we issued the roadmap. The roadmap is the beginning of a long process to achieve peace in the Middle East. In order for there to be a peace in the Middle East, it is important for all parties to assume the necessary responsibilities to achieve the conditions so that peace can happen. That starts with fighting off terror, to prevent killers from disrupting that which most citizens want in the Middle East, and that is a peaceful, hopeful world.

I strongly condemn the killings that take place in the Middle East in the last couple of days. I applaud the words of Abu Mazen, the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, who renounced that terror. I look forward to spending time and energies to move the process forward.

And finally, Mr. President, you're here on a day in which our country has achieved another notable success in the war against terror. The Pakistan authorities have detained Waleed bin Attash. He's a killer. He was one of the top Al Qaida operatives. And he was right below Khalid Sheik Mohammed on the organizational chart of Al Qaida. He is one less person that people who love freedom have to worry about.

I want to thank our friends in Pakistan. I want to thank the Agency, the CIA, for working hard to continue to win the war against terror. And make no mistake about it, Mr. President, we will win the war against terror.

Thank you for your courageous fight in the war against terror, and welcome to the Oval Office.

President Uribe. Thank you, Mr. President, for your warm welcome. This is very important for my country. Colombia has suffered terrorism for a long time. Thus, Colombia understands the need to fight terrorism in our country and in other—in any other country. And your Government, your people, your country, they are our best allies for us to succeed in our fight.

Thank you again, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you.

We'll have one—we'll alternate questions between the American side and the Colombian side. Tom [Tom Raum, Associated Press].

Terrorist Attacks

Q. Mr. President, even as the new Palestinian Cabinet was sworn in, there was a terror attack, and the suicide bomber was linked to Mr. Abbas' own party. How much confidence do you have that the new Prime Minister can control, can reign in these people?

President Bush. Well, for certain, in order for there to be peace, we must all join together to fight off terror. Abu Mazen has publicly declared that he will fight terror. He understands that in order for the Palestinian lives to improve, terror must be battled.

Listen, he's a man I can work with. And I look forward to working with him and will work with him, for the sake of peace and for the sake of security.

Do you want to call on one of your reporters?

President Uribe. Half of my Cabinet are made of women.

President Bush. No, I'm very impressed by that. [*Laughter*] Not only that, but they're very smart women.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you.

Colombia-U.S. Trade Agreement

Q. Mr. President, people in Colombia, we want to know how difficult is to sign a bilateral trade agreement with Colombia. Is that going to be done?

President Bush. Well, we've got a lot of work to do. The President and I look forward to discussing trade. One thing that is for certain is we've started down the road on a free trade agreement through the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, which I'm absolutely confident will boost the capacity of the Colombian economy to grow.

And so we'll work—we'll talk about all aspects of trade, including the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, which, in my judgment, is the most hopeful trade agreement there is. We've got all kinds of different opportunities to work together, whether it be in trade or counternarcotics or fighting terror. And we will stand as a strong friend and supporter of the Colombian people as they take on difficult tasks.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Sir, previous Middle East peace initiatives haven't been all that successful. What's different about this time?

President Bush. Well, just because history has proven to be unsuccessful doesn't mean that we're not going to try, for starters. I'm an optimist. I believe now that we have a interlocutor from the Palestinian Authority that has spoken clearly about the need to fight terror, that we have a good opportunity to advance the peace process. And I will seize the opportunity.

Secondly, the war on Iraq has made it absolutely clear that those who harbor terrorists, fund terrorists, or harbor weapons of mass destruction will be held to account. That, in itself, helps create the conditions to move peace forward.

And by the way, in order for peace to occur, all parties must assume their responsibilities. That includes the Arab nations which surround Israel and the potential Palestinian state. They must cut off funding to terrorists. They must create the conditions necessary for peace. Israel is going to have to make some sacrifices in order to move the peace process forward. But no sacrifice

should be made that will allow and encourage terror to continue and reign.

Colombian Terrorists

Q. Mr. Bush, more than 500 terrorists from the FARC have handed themselves—[*inaudible*]. We're wondering if the United States Government would be willing at some point to help reinsert into society these terrorists that have now handed themselves—[*inaudible*].

President Bush. To help in what fashion? I didn't get your question.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—to reinsert to the civil society——

President Bush. To bring what to the civil society? I'm sorry.

Q. To reinsert themselves, to go back to civil——

President Bush. Oh, to help them go back into civil society?

Q. Yes.

President Bush. Well, some terrorists are just plain coldblooded killers. They're hard to retrain, somebody who is a killer. And we—it's going to be—the President is going to have to make that decision, what's best for his country. All I know is the man is absolutely committed to fighting terror. For that, I appreciate it. He has got a straightforward, strong vision about what has to happen to people who are willing to kill innocent people. And that is, they must be dealt with severely.

And it's interesting, we share the same strategy. When Al Qaida came and killed Americans, there's only one way to deal with them. That was to hunt them down, find them, and bring them to justice. And as I mentioned, today we found one of the Al Qaida leaders. It was a major, significant find, his detention. And the war goes on. It takes a while. We must be patient and strong and diligent and focused.

And the President of Colombia is diligent, strong, and focused. He knows what he must do to make Colombia, a great nation, more safe and more secure against people who, in my opinion, are nothing but terrorists.

President Uribe. Regarding this point, we have only one determination, to defeat terrorists in Colombia. When you look at the people in the terror organizations, you find the ringleaders, you find professional killers, and you find young people mistakenly led by professional killers. Therefore, we have the obligation to defeat terrorists and the duty, the obligation, to give those young people the opportunity to come to live under our Constitution again.

We are telling them, you have the opportunity to follow the ringleaders of the terror organizations, or you have the opportunity to come to live in our community with the respect of our Constitution. For those who make—who choose this option, we are ready to give them a new opportunity.

President Bush. Thank you.

Q. [*Inaudible*].

President Bush. Never can tell what's going to kick in—the urge. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:21 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Waleed Mohammed bin Attash, Al Qaida leader suspected of planning the terrorist attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen in October 2000; and Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East

April 30, 2003

On March 14, I noted the important steps taken by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) toward the creation of an empowered, accountable office of Prime Minister. The PLC has now confirmed a new Palestinian Prime Minister and Cabinet. Today, the roadmap for peace developed by the United States over the last several months in close cooperation with Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations has been presented to Israel and the Palestinians.

The roadmap represents a starting point toward achieving the vision of two states, a secure state of Israel and a viable, peaceful, democratic Palestine, that I set out on June