

conference that you're now conducting. This counts.

**Q.** Not when we're dressed like this, it doesn't. [Laughter]

**The President.** That's right.

**Q.** Mr. President, when you were flying the plane, what did you do? Did you steer it?

**The President.** Just steer it.

**Q.** Did you go straight, or did you turn it?

**The President.** Straight.

**Q.** How did you do? Did you waver?

**The President.** Ask the pilot.

**Q.** He won't tell.

**Q.** How does it compare to the jets you used to fly?

**The President.** Huh?

**Q.** How does that compare to the jets you used to fly?

**The President.** Much more sophisticated.

**Q.** What's it been like here on the ship?

**The President.** Huh?

**Q.** What have you been doing on the ship?

**The President.** I've mainly been talking to the troops.

**Naval Officer.** Here they come, sir.

[At this point, a squadron of Navy fighter jets flew over.]

**The President.** The press conference is over.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 2:10 p.m. on the ship's navigation deck. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Statement on AIDS Relief Legislation

May 1, 2003

The fight against AIDS is a moral imperative our great Nation must confront decisively and boldly.

I applaud the House of Representatives for acting quickly to pass historic legislation that is consistent with the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that I announced earlier this year. Today's action is an important step toward providing critically needed treatment

and care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and proven prevention programs for millions more who are at risk.

Time is of the essence, and I urge the Senate to act quickly so that we can turn the tide against this disease and give the hope of life to millions of people in the world's most afflicted countries.

## Statement on the Senate Filibuster on the Nomination of Priscilla Owen To Be a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

May 1, 2003

Priscilla Owen is an extraordinarily well-qualified nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals. She has served with distinction on the Texas Supreme Court since 1995 and has strong bipartisan support including from three former Democrat Texas Supreme Court Justices with whom she served. She was unanimously rated "well-qualified" by the American Bar Association.

Justice Owen has been waiting nearly 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the United States Senate. The decision today by 44 Senators to filibuster and block a vote on her nomination is shameful. This obstructionist tactic is an injustice and unfair to this good woman and unfaithful to the Senate's own obligations.

Senate Democrats are now simultaneously filibustering two well-qualified nominees to the U.S. Courts of Appeals. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to exercise its advice and consent function and hold up-or-down votes on all judicial nominees within a reasonable time after nomination. Some Senate Democrats who once insisted that every appeals court nominee deserves a timely vote have now abandoned that responsibility in favor of partisan obstructionist tactics.

In October of last year, I announced my plan for timely consideration of judicial nominees. Today I again call on the Senate to end the delays and to ensure that every judicial nominee receives an up-or-down vote, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. Let each Senator

vote as he or she thinks best, but give the nominees a vote.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments**

*May 1, 2003*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendments to the Administration's FY 2004 budget submission for the Department of Defense.

In total, these amendments would not affect the budgetary resources proposed in my FY 2004 Budget.

The details of this proposal 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**

**Address to the Nation on Iraq From the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln***

*May 1, 2003*

Thank you all very much. Admiral Kelly, Captain Card, officers and sailors of the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*, my fellow Americans: Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed. And now our coalition is engaged in securing and reconstructing that country.

In this battle, we have fought for the cause of liberty and for the peace of the world. Our Nation and our coalition are proud of this accomplishment; yet it is you, the members of the United States military, who achieved it. Your courage, your willingness to face danger for your country and for each other, made this day possible. Because of you, our Nation is more secure. Because of you, the tyrant has fallen, and Iraq is free.

Operation Iraqi Freedom was carried out with a combination of precision and speed and boldness the enemy did not expect and the world had not seen before. From distant bases or ships at sea, we sent planes and missiles that could destroy an enemy division or strike a single bunker. Marines and soldiers

charged to Baghdad across 350 miles of hostile ground, in one of the swiftest advances of heavy arms in history. You have shown the world the skill and the might of the American Armed Forces.

This Nation thanks all the members of our coalition who joined in a noble cause. We thank the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland, who shared in the hardships of war. We thank all the citizens of Iraq who welcomed our troops and joined in the liberation of their own country. And tonight I have a special word for Secretary Rumsfeld, for General Franks, and for all the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States: America is grateful for a job well done.

The character of our military through history—the daring of Normandy, the fierce courage of Iwo Jima, the decency and idealism that turned enemies into allies—is fully present in this generation. When Iraqi civilians looked into the faces of our service men and women, they saw strength and kindness and good will. When I look at the members of the United States military, I see the best of our country, and I'm honored to be your Commander in Chief.

In the images of falling statues, we have witnessed the arrival of a new era. For a hundred of years of war, culminating in the nuclear age, military technology was designed and deployed to inflict casualties on an ever-growing scale. In defeating Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, Allied forces destroyed entire cities, while enemy leaders who started the conflict were safe until the final days. Military power was used to end a regime by breaking a nation.

Today, we have the greater power to free a nation by breaking a dangerous and aggressive regime. With new tactics and precision weapons, we can achieve military objectives without directing violence against civilians. No device of man can remove the tragedy from war; yet it is a great moral advance when the guilty have far more to fear from war than the innocent.

In the images of celebrating Iraqis, we have also seen the ageless appeal of human freedom. Decades of lies and intimidation could not make the Iraqi people love their oppressors or desire their own enslavement.