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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