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taken from us, our Nation has lost one of its finest citizens, a community has lost a friend and protector, and a family has lost an example of character and courage who they will love and respect forever. Today in their memory, the flag of the United States of America flies at halfstaff. We pray God's blessings on those who grieve. Our Nation honors each name. We are grateful for each life.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. on the West Grounds at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Chuck Canterbury, national president, Steve Young, former national president, and James O. Pasco, Jr., executive director, Fraternal Order of Police; Aliza Clark, president, Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary; New York City Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly; and singer Marc Anthony.

Statement on the Indonesia-Free Aceh Movement Agreement To Resume Discussions on Implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement

May 15, 2003

The United States welcomes the decision of the Government of Indonesia and the leadership of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to resume discussions in Tokyo this weekend aimed at implementing the December 2002 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) between Indonesia and the GAM. The United States strongly supports efforts to pursue a negotiated peace in Aceh within the framework of a unified Indonesia.

I commend President Megawati for demonstrating her Government's commitment to the Aceh peace process and for her willingness to go the extra mile in pursuit of peace. In returning to the negotiating table, the two sides are taking a concrete step toward a better future for the people of Aceh. I call on the leadership of the GAM to renew its commitment to a peaceful solution in Aceh and for both sides to pursue good faith implementation of the COHA. The United States appreciates the determined efforts of the Henri Dunant Center to advance the cause of peace and justice for Aceh. I also wish to thank Prime Minister Koizumi and the Government of Japan for hosting the negotiations between Indonesia and the GAM and taking an active leadership role in this process.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol of 1997 To Amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships, 1973, as Modified by the Protocol of 1978

May 15, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to its ratification, the Protocol of 1997 to Amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as Modified by the Protocol of 1978 thereto (hereinafter the "Protocol of 1997"). The Protocol of 1997, which would add Annex VI, Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships, to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as Modified by the Protocol of 1978 (hereinafter the "MARPOL Convention"), was signed by the United States on December 22, 1998. I also enclose, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State and its attached analysis of the Protocol of 1997, as well as Resolution 2 of the 1997 MARPOL Conference with its annexed Technical Code on Control of Emission of Nitrogen Oxides from Marine Diesel Engines.

The MARPOL Convention is the global agreement to control pollution from ships. MARPOL Annex VI regulates the emission into the atmosphere of specified pollutants from ships. It complements the other annexes to the MARPOL Convention, which relate to the transport of oil (Annex I), harmful substances carried in bulk (Annex II), harmful substances in packaged form (Annex III), ship-generated sewage (Annex IV) and garbage (Annex V). The United States is a party to all of these annexes with the exception of Annex IV.

MARPOL Annex VI regulates the prevention of air pollution from ships by limiting

the discharge of nitrogen oxides from large marine diesel engines, governing the sulfur content of marine diesel fuel, prohibiting the emission of ozone-depleting substances, regulating the emission of volatile organic compounds during the transfer of cargoes between tankers and terminals, setting standards for shipboard incinerators and fuel oil quality, and establishing requirements for platforms and drilling rigs at sea.

MARPOL Annex VI is an important step toward controlling and preventing emissions of harmful air pollutants from ships. U.S. ratification of the Protocol of 1997 will demonstrate U.S. commitment to an international solution and should hasten the entry into force of the Protocol of 1997. Ratification will also enhance our ability to work within the treaty framework to obtain subsequent amendments that will require further reductions in emissions of nitrogen oxides that are now achievable through the use of modern control technologies which the United States strongly supports.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol of 1997 and give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the declarations and understanding set out in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 15, 2003.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 7678—National Hurricane Awareness Week, 2003

May 15, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Destructive winds, tornadoes, torrential rains, ocean water storm surges, and flooding make hurricanes one of nature's most extreme hazards. As hurricane season approaches, Americans who live in hurricane-prone areas must prepare to help ensure their safety and minimize damage to their communities.

Hurricane season officially begins June 1 and continues through November 30. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an average of 10 tropical storms develop in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico, and 6 become hurricanes each year. In the past 2 years alone, 9 tropical storms and 1 hurricane hit our country, causing 54 deaths and more than $6 billion in damages. While we cannot stop these storms from occurring, we can take steps to limit our vulnerability. Being aware of the dangers of tropical storms and hurricanes and knowing what to do to mitigate their devastating effects are our best defenses.

Federal, State, and local agencies across America are working diligently to prepare our communities for natural disasters. Beginning this year, NOAA's hurricane forecasts will look 5 days into the future, rather than 3 days. This enhanced forecasting ability, combined with efforts to improve the accuracy of hurricane warnings, enables coastal residents and emergency personnel to more effectively prepare for a storm's arrival. In addition, Federal agencies such as FEMA and organizations such as the American Red Cross have teamed up with State and local agencies, rescue and relief organizations, the private sector, and the news media to distribute information to the public and coordinate efforts before, during, and after a tropical storm or hurricane has struck.

To help individuals prepare for an approaching tropical storm or hurricane, FEMA recommends practical measures, to make sure that homes and businesses are ready by developing a plan for what to do; securing loose objects and protecting property by covering glass with plywood or shutters; and creating a disaster supply kit with flashlights, a battery-powered radio, food that does not need refrigeration, water, and first aid supplies. The National Weather Service also encourages acquiring a weather radio equipped with the Specific Area Message Encoder feature that provides automatic alerts when important weather information