AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

not letting people come in and inspect for the weapons. He had them, and it's just a matter of time. It's a matter of time. The man was a threat to America. He's not a threat today.

But what we're really finding out as well is the threat he posed to the Iraqi people. I mean, we have uncovered some unbelievable scenes. I have not seen them myself. They've been described to me, what it means to see mass graves opened up, with the remains of men and women and children murdered by that regime.

Yes, he was a threat to America. He was a threat to freedom-loving countries. He was a threat in the Middle East. But what we're finding out is the nature of this man when it came to how he dealt with the Iraqi people as well. And it was—it's unbelievable what he did. And I—when it comes to—like the AIDS initiative, we believe in human dignity; we also believe that everybody ought to live in free societies too.

And so we'll stay the course in Iraq. You know, as I said, there's people there that would like to run us out of there, create the conditions where we get nervous and decide to leave. We're not going to get nervous, and we're not leaving until we accomplish the task. And that task is going to be a free country run by the Iraqi people. And that in turn will help the peace in the Middle East. That in turn will bring stability in a part of the world that needs stability. And I am—I'm optimistic about achieving this objective because I believe that people want to be free. I believe it's in the nature of the individual to love freedom and embrace freedom.

And so it has been a great honor to lead our Nation in not only the cause of humanitarian relief through an AIDS initiative but also to lead our Nation to free people from the clutches of what history will show was an incredibly barbaric regime.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health; Mr. Tobias' wife, Marianne Williams Tobias, and his children, Paige T. Button and Todd C. Tobias; Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; President Charles Taylor of Liberia; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation John S. Wolf; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Tobias.

Interview With African Print Journalists

July 3, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. What I thought I would do is make a couple of opening comments about the upcoming trip and answer some questions, maybe go around the horn a couple of times and give everybody a chance to fire away.

First, I'm really looking forward to the trip. I have been to the continent of Africa twice, but I've never been as President, nor have I been on as extensive a tour as the one we are going on.

I'll be carrying a message to the African people that, first, America cares about the future of Africa. It's in our national interests that Africa become a prosperous place. It's in our interest that people will continue to fight terror together. It's in our interest that when we find suffering, we deal with it.

I've laid out some initiatives that I'll be further describing to the African people and African nations: an AIDS initiative; the Millennium Challenge Account; our education initiative, where we'll be spending now $600 million over a 5-year period of time; a $100 million to fight terrorism in east Africa. In other words, just a series of specific initiatives behind a well-intentioned administration. And it's important for the leaders to understand precisely what I mean when I talk about these different initiatives.

And so when we go to Senegal, we'll be talking to not only my friend President Wade but other leaders from western Africa. When I go to South Africa, of course, it'll be a significant platform from which to speak to leaders in the southern region of Africa. I'll be going to Botswana as well and then up to Nigeria and, finally, Uganda and then home. So it's an extensive trip, and it's an

important trip, and I'm very much looking forward to it.

And I'll be glad to answer any questions. Why don't we start with you, Mr. Babou.

President's Upcoming Visit to Senegal

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, when will you be going to Senegal and how long will you stay?

The President. We're leaving Monday night from here, flying all night long and arriving in Senegal in the morning, and we'll be there for about a half a day. I'll be meeting with President Wade in a bilateral meeting, and then we'll be meeting with—I'm not sure how many western African leaders have RSVP'd yet; maybe Jendayi knows.

African Affairs Senior Director Jendayi Frazer. Seven.

The President. Seven other leaders. And then we'll be going to Goree Island, where I'll be giving a speech about race, race in the world, race as it relates to Africa and America. And we're in the process of writing it. I can't give you any highlights of the speech yet because I, frankly, haven't seen it. But I'll be fine-tuning the speech. It's an important speech for me to give, and it's one I'm looking forward to giving.

I look forward to seeing President Wade on his home turf, because I admire him. I admire his leadership. He is a man who believes in the same principles I believe in. He believes in the dignity of each life. He believes in democracy. He believes in open markets. He understands trade. And in our discussions—and we've had quite a few discussions with President Wade—he has constantly talked about the need for infrastructure development to link markets.

So he's got a—he cares deeply about the people of Senegal, but he's also got a regional vision that makes sense. He is a leader, he is one of the leaders of—every time we meet at, like, the G–8, President Wade is one of the representatives of the African nations, because he believes in the principles of NEPAD, and he is a good fellow. I'm looking forward to seeing him at home.

Yes, sir.

Situation in Zimbabwe

Q. Thank you, sir. On Zimbabwe, Mr. President, in recent days there has been several references from yourself and Secretary Powell to Zimbabwe once again.

The President. Yes, there has been.

Q. Now, beyond President Mbeki and President Obasanjo's efforts in the past to get Mugabe and Tsvangirai to sit down together, which has not been very successful, what more do you think they should do? Or what more——

The President. Well, that's a good question; I appreciate that. Yes, we have been outspoken on the subject because we believe that a democracy in Zimbabwe will improve the lives of all the citizens of that important country.

Listen, one of the things that we must—this country cares about is the plight of each human. And when we see and hear about suffering because of lack of food in sub-Saharan Africa, part of our attention is focused on places where there's political instability. And there's no reason why Zimbabwe is not capable of feeding not only herself but others in the region.

And the reason why now is because of political instability created by a lack of adherence to the principles of democracy. So when you hear me speak out or when you hear Colin speak out, we're speaking out for principles. And the answer to what more can be done, the world needs to speak with common voice in insisting that the principles of democracy are adhered to by the ruling party in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe—the economy of Zimbabwe at one time was a powerful economy for the region. It was a successful economy. People grew food in plentiful supply. Now the people of that country are starving. This country is putting up a billion dollars of money to help people who are starving. Then we're also—I'm asking Congress to put up what they call a $200-million fast reaction—or a fund for fast reaction to confront famine. We need that so that the flexibility—sometimes the appropriators like to put strings on appropriations, so it makes it hard for the executive branch to move with speed. I would like to have more capacity to move with speed when it comes to dealing with emergencies. The

reason I bring that up is that it would be incredibly helpful for the continent of Africa to have its countries that are able to feed people prosperous and whole.

The other issue I want to bring up, now that I brought up the issue of food, is genetically modified crops. I think it is essential that throughout the continent of Africa, nations be encouraged to develop—use the technologies that have been developed to deal with pestilence and drought. And I have been very outspoken on that subject as well, not to be putting thoughts in your mind that you didn't want to hear about, but I've got the mike. [*Laughter*]

But I do want to emphasize, and I will emphasize on the continent of Africa, the need for our agricultural economies on the continent of Africa to adjust with modern technology so that in places where there is drought or likelihood of drought, there can be drought-resistance crops being given a chance to succeed. Where there's pests that some agriculture economy has not been able to deal with, we use pest-resistant crop, and they're available. The problem, of course, we have is that much of the enthusiasm for what we believe is scientifically proven safe crops have been condemned by the refusal of some countries and/or accumulation of countries to accept exports into their markets from countries that use genetically modified crop.

That's a very long answer to a short question. Yes, sir.

Q. Mr. President, sir——

The President. Where is The Guardian based?

Q. In Nigeria.

The President. Very good.

U.S. Policy Toward Africa

Q. I'd like to know what's your reaction to people who say that the major driving force for your interest in Africa is oil and that, you know, what you are trying to do, essentially, is to shift the focus from Saudi—with first your relationship between Saudi and U.S. now to Africa. Now, how much of that——

The President. Saudi Arabia?

Q. Yes. So I'd like to know how much of that is actually for instance, in your interest in Africa?

The President. Well, conspiracy theorists about everywhere, I guess. That's one of the most amazing conspiracies I've heard. Heck, no one has ever made that connection, and so I would say—well, first, look, I have been talking about Africa since I was sworn in as President. I've met with 22, I believe it is, heads of state here. And I have met with President Obasanjo, gosh, I would say—I better be careful, because every number I put out there, people scrutinize—a lot, maybe five times——

Dr. Frazer. Five times, yes, sir.

The President. ——President Wade, several times in the Oval Office, several times in overseas meetings, President Mbeki, quite a few. In other words, Africa has been on the—we've been thinking about Africa ever since I've been sworn in.

Secondly, the initiatives I've laid out are bold initiatives. The Millennium Challenge Account is a very bold initiative. We're going to increase our basic developmental aid by 50 percent, with a new approach which basically says we'll reward those countries which make correct choices on behalf of the people of the countries, countries which are not corrupt, countries which focus on the health and education of the people, countries which adopt market-oriented policies which will enable a country to more likely grow in a prosperous fashion, which would then benefit the people.

I spoke out early on free trade with Africa. Certainly, the AGOA initiative was not my administration's initiative. I readily understand that. But we built on the AGOA initiative because I believe in free trade and, as a matter of fact, took the free trade argument to the Halls of Congress and got trade promotion authority, which was not an easy vote, by the way. It was a tough vote. There's a protectionist element in our country that works beneath the political surface. But I feel strongly that trade is an engine of opportunity for developing countries.

These are all initiatives I spoke about prior to—during the war on terror, I guess. I wasn't in office very long before the war on terror became evident here in America.

We've got good relations with Saudi. I gave a speech—just to put it in context, I gave a speech—I swore in some folks the other

day to reenlist in our military. I pointed out that the relationship with Saudi Arabia, when it comes to tracking down terrorists, is strong. I reminded our citizens that Abu Bakr, who is a key operative, and ''Swift Sword'' are no longer issues for America and Saudi Arabia because of the cooperation that is an ongoing cooperation inside the Kingdom.

And anyway, no, listen, let me speak specifically to Nigeria. I have got good relations with President Obasanjo. Every time we have visited, it has been a very cordial, up-front way. I appreciate his cooperation on the U.S.' desire to work with countries such as Nigeria to train troops necessary to be able to handle some of the difficult situations on the continent. As a matter of fact, I believe the United States in working with Nigeria has trained five battalions of Nigerian troops, preparing them for issues such as Liberia or other areas on the continent. And we will continue that relationship with the President of Nigeria. And I appreciate his leadership on that issue.

Mr. Cobb.

Uganda/Liberia

Q. Yes, sir. You're going at least in two of the regions of Africa. You're going to West Africa and—well, Uganda being next door to the Congo.

The President. Right.

Q. There's a fair amount of tumult in those regions. First, I have two specific questions related to that and your trip. Will you make a decision about U.S. troops in Liberia before you go? Or will you be bringing some message about these U.S. troops in Liberia when you visit in Senegal?

Secondly, what will you tell Mr. Museveni—whom I know you admire in terms of his work with HIV/AIDS and his economic policy—with regard to the role of militias that he created and are responsible for much of the violence in eastern Congo?

The President. Right, let me start with that. I also talked to him about ongoing democracy in Uganda. We talked about transfer of power. We talked about the fact that he's been a remarkably good leader on many fronts and that we would hope that he would adhere to the concept of having any democracy with a peaceful transfer of power at the appropriate time.

We did talk about that part of the region. I spoke very clearly about the need for all countries to recognize the peace agreements that we have been involved with—we're not the lead country on, but we're very much supportive of the peace agreements. And he listened very carefully to our admonition that we expect for people to honor the agreements that are being forged. And I will continue to discuss that with him when I go to Uganda.

As well as Uganda, it's important to—one reason why one would go to Uganda is to make sure that people around the world, and particularly on the continent of Africa, understand that dealing with HIV/AIDS is possible. In other words, you can deal with it in a positive way, and it's a remarkable record of Mr. Museveni and his Government in dealing with the pandemic of AIDS. It's essential that—we're fixing to spend $15 billion—I believe Congress will respond and keep the pressure on as, you know—and that this trip will also help create an awareness of the issue in America.

And it's important for our fellow citizens to realize that while we live a relative luxurious life throughout our society, there is a pandemic taking place that's destroying a lot of people, ruining families. You know, the idea of a 14-year-old little girl raising three brothers and sisters without parents is something that's just—it's sad. It is tragic. It needs to be dealt with. And I want to use this trip to say: Here's an example of what is possible, and let's make sure we follow our hearts as a society.

In terms of Liberia, I am in the process of gathering the information necessary to make a rational decision as to how to bring a—how to enforce the cease-fire, keep the cease-fire in place. I said yesterday—I said a while back and I said it again yesterday, ''Mr. Taylor must go.'' A condition for any progress in Liberia is his removal, in removing himself. And that's the message Colin has taken to the United Nations and to Kofi Annan.

Secondly, that today there is a meeting with ECOWAS, and we had a representative at the—you probably knew this before I did,

Mr. Cobb—but we had a meeting there with our military thinkers to determine feasibility, to look at different options. And they have yet to report back to the White House. Maybe the information has gone to the Pentagon at this point in time.

So I'm gathering information in order to make a decision that will achieve a—that will allow me to make a proper decision as to how to bring stability to that country.

Look, I recognize the United States has got a—has had a, you know, unique history with Liberia. And therefore, it's created a certain sense of expectations. But I also want to make sure that there are certain expectations met as well. And one expectation is Mr. Taylor has got to leave. And that message is clear, and I can't make it any more clear.

As to whether or not—look, once the strategy is in place, I will let people know whether or not I'm airborne or not. In other words, I'm not trying to make any—I don't need to dramatize the decision. It's getting plenty of attention here at home. But we've got—and look, I'm just gathering enough information to be rational in what we do.

You know, you read all kinds of things, of course, in American newspapers—it's sport here. I'm sure it is elsewhere as well. The gathering of the speculator, the leaker, the whatever—what do you call them? The source—[*laughter*]—people speaking out loud, ''The President has done this. The President is thinking this.'' And what I am thinking about is how to bring some stability to the country in a way that will be effective.

And there's no question, step one of any effective policy, whether we are involved or not, is for Charles Taylor to leave.

Yes, sir. Around the horn again. We call it going around the horn.

Temporary Protective Status for Senegalese

Q. We understand that many African countries, like many countries in the world, get a lot of help from their immigrants living in the United States.

The President. Yes.

Q. And in the South America, at one point there were some special programs for immigrants, illegal immigrants, living here from Nicaragua, from El Salvador. Will you consider supporting a special program for countries that are fighting for a democracy—for the——

The President. Temporary protective status, we call that TPS. We analyze that on a case-by-case basis. TPS generally is granted for those who are fleeing a very difficult political situation. In Senegal's case, the situation doesn't look very—it looks the opposite of difficult political situation. It's a very stable political situation. But we'll analyze any TPS requests.

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. ——remittances.

The President. Are you talking about remittances, people sending money from here to there?

Q. No, what I'm saying is like a TPS, to support democracy in countries because they can't on that—the Senegalese here sent about $80 million a year to their country.

The President. So it's a combination of status and money being remitted, yes.

Well, we look at that. Of course, you know—TPS recognizes that, first of all, illegal immigration is an issue that we've got to deal with. And nobody wants anything illegal happening. But we recognize people come to our country not legally and that sometimes they come for political reasons. And that's why we have the TPS exceptions. And we'll look at it case by case.

Yes, sir.

South Africa

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned in the efforts of Americans to support peacekeeping in countries like Nigeria. What about South Africa——

The President. Same.

Q. ——presently engaged in the Congo and Burundi?

The President. No, very much so. I should have—I brought it up only in the context of Nigeria. I feel the very same way about—I will not count this as a question, because I should have mentioned South Africa. You're absolutely right. South Africa has been a leader. President Mbeki is a leader. When you think about the continent of Africa, you think about leadership, you think about President Mbeki. He's taking strong

positions along with President Obasanjo, and providing troops—the South African.

I will be visiting, by the way, a training base there in South Africa. I look forward to doing so. The South African Army is a very sophisticated, well-trained army. And President Mbeki has been a leader in peace.

And so now you get a question.

U.S. Support for African Peacekeeping Forces

Q. Along the same lines, do you foresee increased aid from the United States for peacekeeping, like training, equipment?

The President. Yes, I do. I do. We've been active in training up to now. We've trained seven battalions for potential peacekeeping missions. I think this is a very important use of U.S. assets. I think the American people would understand and support the notion of training others to take care of their business in their own neighborhood. And that is a—I say, take care of their business, bring peace is what I mean by that. And yes, I do see continued activity on that front.

Yes, sir.

President's Upcoming Visit to Nigeria

Q. Currently, there is a nationwide strike going on in Nigeria. Does that put a—do you have any—how does that affect your planned trip?

The President. It does not affect it at all. And I've been briefed on the strike. I obviously hope it gets settled in a peaceful way. If I have to, I'll make my own bed at the hotel. [*Laughter*] But I'm going. [*Laughter*]

I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be a very interesting trip. It's a local issue, one that—when I go to different countries, sometimes there's local issues that pop up, not because of my trip, just because of the normal course of business. And this happens to be what's happening in the country. So I'm not changing my mind.

Yes, sir.

War on Terror in Africa

Q. I'm curious, how big a factor—are you concerned about international terrorism on this trip? We've seen the numbers drop very sharply in terms of sympathy towards the United States. In the aftermath of the Iraq war, there were the strains between the United States and South Africa over this issue, and a Pew report, in fact, that said that 44 percent of Nigerians believe that they serve a—believe that Usama bin Laden would do the right thing in world affairs.

The President. Well, I would have to say obviously there needs to be an education program, because Usama bin Laden is nothing but a killer who has hijacked a great religion. And he doesn't care about innocent life. And so I would be glad to have that debate with anybody, anywhere. And I would be glad to take those who believe that he is of some kind of remedial value, to his point of view, to the World Trade Center and introduce them to families who lost life for no reason other than the fact that he is a killer.

Secondly, parts of Africa are—they've got ongoing terrorist threats. And the good news is we are working closely with those governments to deal with those threats. We've got very good intelligence-sharing. We are—the law enforcement officials of these countries where there is a direct threat are moving rapidly upon the—when we enrich the intelligence, when we calibrate the intelligence.

Kenya is a great country, and it has been a place where there's been threats. Everybody knows that. Not only threats, there's been an attack in the past. And the Government of Kenya has been very responsive. And we are—we are helping them. We're helping other countries in Africa. Djibouti comes to mind. There is country after country after country where we're working with their governments when we—or they—they ask for help, and/or we provide information that we have been able to pick up.

Did you ask whether or not the threats are going down?

Q. No, I was saying that the admiration of the United States in surveys has dropped in the aftermath of the Iraq war, particularly in Nigeria.

The President. No, I got what you're saying. Yes, yes, I beg your pardon.

Well, look, it depends upon what the people are being told sometimes. I mean, if there's a constant effort to describe America as a non-caring country, then the people are going to have a bad attitude about us.

But when they know the truth, when the truth comes out, which is that we care deeply about the plight of the African citizen, that we're not only trading partners—and by the way, most nations, I think, would really like to trade with America—that we not only care deeply about the pandemic of AIDS but that we hear the cries of those who are sick and tired of corruption on the continent of Africa. And therefore, we are—we've got a new approach to foreign aid. I think people, when they know the facts, will say, "Well, this is a great country."

And the other thing is that no one likes war, and what you heard—there was kind of attachment to the word "America" with war. What they're going to find out, the word "freedom" and "America" are synonymous. That's what we believe. We believe in freedom. And we believe everybody desires freedom. And that when it's all said and done in Iraq, the world will wake up and say, "Now we understand what a free Iraq means to peace and stability."

And so I—if I conducted our foreign policy based upon polls and focus groups, we would be stumbling all over ourselves. That's not the way I do things. I base our foreign policy based upon deep-seated principles.

And this is a peroration to what's been a very, hopefully, constructive dialog for you. It has been for me. My message to the African people is, we come as a nation that believes in the future of Africa. We believe that people want to be free. We will work with those who embrace the habits of freedom, that when this Nation sees suffering, we will not turn away.

There is tremendous suffering on the continent of Africa. And we will put a strategy in place that effectively spends $15 billion over 5 years to help ease the suffering from HIV/AIDS. When we see starvation, we don't turn our back. We act. We care about the people of the continent. And there are—we've got great relations with leaders and countries on the continent of Africa, relations which will not only make—help enable people to realize their dreams but also make the world more safe.

And that is my message. And I am proud to carry the message on behalf of a great nation to a very important, great continent.

Thank you all for your time.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal; Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council; President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; Abu Bakr Al Azdi, senior Al Qaida associate responsible for the May 12 bombing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; President Yoweri Kugata Museveni of Uganda; President Charles Taylor of Liberia; Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. Journalists referred to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of Zimbabwe's opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change. Journalists participating in the interview were: Dame Babou, Sud Quotidien; Charlie Cobb, AllAfrica.com; Lalou Akande, The Guardian; and Deon Lamprecht, Media 24/Naspers. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With the South African Broadcasting Corporation

July 3, 2003

Liberia

Simon Marks. Mr. President, thank you very much indeed for talking to us here today. Let me start by seeing if we can perhaps make a little bit of news.

Liberia: Many West African leaders have asked you to send U.S. peacekeeping troops to join a multinational stabilization force in Liberia. Are you going to? If so, how many and for how long?

The President. We're in the process of determining the course of action necessary to see that peace and stability reign in Liberia. And some of our military people are meeting with ECOWAS leaders today. And I haven't made a decision yet.

Mr. Marks. Are you closing in on a decision?

The President. Yes. Every day that goes by is closer to a decision. But I need—before I make decisions, I like to have facts, and I'm gathering the facts necessary to determine what is necessary, who's willing to participate.