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include the purported approval requirements in the appropriations for expenses for the development of the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology project; customs and border protection automated systems; immigration and customs enforcement automated systems; operations, maintenance, and procurement of marine vessels, aircraft, and other related equipment of the air and marine program; expenses of the United States Secret Service; and also in sections 504, 511, and 516. To the extent that section 519 of the Act purports to allow an agent of the legislative branch to prevent implementation of the law unless the legislative agent reports to the Congress that the executive branch has met certain conditions, the executive branch shall construe such section as advisory, in accordance with the *Chadha* principles.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 1, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 2555, approved October 1, was assigned Public Law No. 108–90.

Interview With African Journalists

October 2, 2003

The President. Listen, thanks. Just a couple of thoughts and then I'll answer your questions.

I'm really looking forward to welcoming President Kibaki here to Washington for a state dinner. It's quite a dramatic event. I think the President will really enjoy the ceremony we have. My first hope is that the weather accommodates the arrival, because it is impressive. And it's a way for us to send a strong message, not only to the President but to the people of Kenya, that one, we respect the friendship, two, we like the cooperation that we have, particularly on counterterrorism, three, we respect democracy in our country, and we like leaders who uphold the democratic traditions. The President has done that. It was a good, clean election. He won overwhelmingly. He is following through on some of his campaign pledges, which is an important part of democracy. One of the campaign pledges, as you know, is he's interested in fighting corruption, and he's taking action.

Our visit is a chance to signal clearly that our strategy on the continent of Africa to work with nations to help solve regional disputes and, particularly in this case, the Sudan, where the Kenyan Government has been most helpful and very constructive. So this is an important visit for us. It comes on the heels of my trip to the continent. It was an impressive trip for me. I remember it and will remember it for a long time.

There are issues on the continent that are important for America, and there are opportunities on the continent that are important for the people on the continent and the world. And Kenya is a key player and a leader in east Africa. So that's why he's coming, and I look forward to it. It's going to be a grand day.

Let me answer a couple of questions. We'll go around and save Charlie until the last here.

Martin.

Arrest of Kenyan Journalists

Q. Mr. President, it's a pleasure to be here. Overall——

The President. Please don't take it personally, Charlie. [*Laughter*]

Q. Overall, how does Kenya rank on your scorecard, since a new government took over in January? And in that light, how do you—what would you say about recent events where three journalists were arrested and intimidated into talking about, you know, where they got a source. Kenya has a leak issue of its own. [*Laughter*] That kind of seemed to——

The President. Yes. I'm against leaks, Martin. [*Laughter*] And I would suggest all governments get to the bottom of every leak of classified information. [*Laughter*] And by the way, if you know anything, Martin, would you please bring it forward and help solve the problem? [*Laughter*]

Q. In this particular case, it's actually the method with which they went around dealing with it. That kind of, like, sent a chilling message.

The President. No, I understand. First, the fact that Kenya is coming—the President is coming for a state dinner, as I say, is a

sign of our respect for the President and for the importance of Kenya and meeting common goals and common objectives.

Our country believes in a free press, a free, unfettered press. And we believe that part of having a society which is able to battle corruption is a society in which the press flourishes. And I must say, I don't know all the particulars, so it's hard for me to comment about this particular incident, but I will make the case that a free press is essential to a democratic and free and honest government. The press, you know, has got the capability, a very powerful capability of holding people to account, and I respect that element in the press.

So, again, I don't know the particulars, but the President will hear me talk about all aspects of democracy.

Kevin.

Travel to Kenya/Terrorism

Q. Yes. Mr. President, thank you very much for inviting me. I appreciate it very much.

You mentioned in your opening remarks about Kenya's cooperation with the United States on counterterrorism matters. You're no doubt well aware too that Kenya has been harmed, economically harmed by the many travel advisories, both by the United States and Britain, that have been issued, no doubt for warranted reasons. But at the same time, is there a way that the United States can be helpful to Kenya in this respect?

The President. Well, first of all, a lot of Americans love to travel to Kenya. It is a spectacular destination spot. We have an obligation as a government to call it as we see it, though, when it comes to security matters. It's very important for us as a government to maintain our credibility with the American people and to say—you know, to make assessments. And we have made the assessment that at the moment, Kenya is a place where our citizens should be wary of traveling. And the bombing of Mombasa is clearly an example of what we're talking about.

However, we also believe it's important to work with Kenya to relieve the situation. It's not only for our own national interests; it's for Kenya's interest that we mutually deal with terrorists. That's why we put forth the $100 million on the East African Counterterrorism Initiative. Kenya will be a key player in that. Kenya has been very cooperative on intel; we're sharing intelligence.

The intent of the terrorists, of course, is to spread fear. That's one of their weapons, in that they're willing to kill innocent people, in that they're willing to murder anybody who is convenient to murder. They then are able to spread fear, and one of the consequences of terrorist activity is to create an environment of fear. We're working with Kenya to relieve the environment.

And you know, we had a restriction on our families at the Embassy; that has been changed. So in other words, things are improving. And at some point in time, hopefully soon, we'll be able to make a declaration about Kenya. But we will do so, you know, by keeping, kind of, the real situation in mind. And I do want to emphasize, though, that obviously we don't believe that the situation is permanent. Otherwise, we wouldn't be dealing with the President like we are, in kind of a very public way. And we believe that together we can change circumstances. We have seen circumstances change from lack of security to security, a place where it was hard to travel to a place where it's easy to recommend travel. And I believe that can happen here in Kenya.

But I understand fully the concerns of people who make a living as a result of U.S. citizens and citizens from Great Britain traveling.

Q. Right, right. And if I may, I mean, the Government—the Kenyan Government obviously looks to the United States to be supportive and helpful. And the advisories have had the opposite effect. I recognize that you're trying to do what you can——

The President. No, actually, I'm sure the President will bring this up. I hope he does bring this up, because we will be able to explore ways to work to create the conditions so that the advisories can come off.

And we just want—but we err on the side of caution when it comes to issuing advisories. You know, we'd all like to—we certainly don't want to damage our friend, unnecessarily damage our friend. On the other hand, we have an obligation to be frank

and honest with the American people. So we'll work through it.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Kevin.

Esther.

Global HIV/AIDS Initiative

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to talk to you this morning. Looking back, Mr. President, you've talked about your trip in Africa. And I'm wondering whether there's anything that you look back and say the U.S. did not involve itself with Africa and which you would like to do now, when you're in the office?

The President. Well, I felt like we needed to expand the AIDS initiative. But I felt that way before I went. And so when I went, I was, one, delivering the message that we will help. We will help to the tune of $15 billion over 5 years. There's been, you know, debate about whether or not I meant $15 billion over 5. I do mean it. But some have suggested, well, maybe the best way to spend that money is divide $15 billion by 5, and it will be $3 billion a year. We think there's a better way to do it, and we're working with Congress to get the appropriations out as we speak.

The judgment from the administration's perspective and listening to the experts is it's best to ramp up, start slower and end up with more in the end, in order to make sure the dollars are spent efficiently and that help is delivered in a way that saves lives. And that's what we're working through with the Congress right now, through the appropriations process. But my message was, is that we're very sincere about this program and that the United States must expand its efforts.

I also was really, as best as I could, calibrating the delivery systems in some of the countries we went to. In other words, it's one thing to provide the aid and the money and the medicines. The other question is, can they actually get to the people that need help? The vibrancy of the faith-based programs or the charities or the NGOs—how strong are they in these receptive countries? How receptive is the Government to receive the help? Will the Government be counterproductive to our efforts?

And you know, look, admittedly, I didn't go to every single country that's going to receive help from this emergency AIDS initiative. But it gave me a sense to then be able to listen to others who had been to the countries and to calibrate and to get a sense of what the infrastructures look like. Kenya is a part of this initiative. And I look forward to talking to the President about this initiative. It is a vital initiative.

Slavery in West Africa

Q. Mr. President, I'm wondering about the 58th session of the U.N. General Assembly, where you talked about illegal trade of human trafficking, which is rampant in west Africa, like Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso. And I'm wondering what the U.S. Government is doing in collaboration with the African governments to eradicate this problem, which also comes about because of poverty, some parents willing to give out their children to go and work as sex slaves or do cheap labor, because they have no money.

The President. Well, no, I appreciate that. It's hard to believe a parent would be willing to send their daughter into sex slavery, willingly. But in—yes, I mean, as a dad, it's just hard for me to fathom.

Q. They probably won't know what happens to their children, but they give them for money.

The President. Well, yes, they're not specifically—that's what I thought. I mean, I doubt that they would—you know, I don't know. Look, first, it's to improve the economic of the continent by trade. AGOA is a real opportunity, and we're sincere about AGOA. And we believe in AGOA, and we're leading the way on AGOA. And that will help, hopefully, alleviate the poverty that sends people into such desperate straits that they're willing to sell their child—in essence, is what you're saying.

Secondly, in terms of the role of the United States in terms of sex slavery, it is very essential for the United States to start with the big megaphone, which is what I did. And I called upon the Security Council, kind of the collection of nations, to speak with one voice. And then we can start working bilaterally. It's not just in western Africa where there's an issue. There's an issue in parts of

Europe. There's an issue in parts of the Far East. And I intend to bring this issue up as I meet with leaders, particularly in affected areas.

I've met with—gosh, I don't know how many leaders of African nations I have met with. I would say a lot.

African Affairs Senior Director Jendayi Frazer. Over 26.

The President. My only point is, is that I'm constantly meeting with leaders, which will give me an opportunity to bring this issue up. In order to solve the problem, it's not only the need to address poverty; it's also the need for governments to deal with those who are the slave traders or the slave masters, however you want to call them. We've dealt with this issue once in our civilized history. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, we need to deal with it again.

So this is an effort where it's going to take a collective effort around the world. The United States alone cannot change. We can do our part about sending signals. We can do our part about helping alleviate poverty. We can do our part about—and by the way, we've got a program, one of the most active programs—we're the active nation in the world when it comes to helping alleviate hunger, for example. Maybe that's part of the root cause of—I know it's part of the root cause of desperation as well as disease. But we also pass laws and hold people to account. In other words, it's one thing to call for action, but then we must do it ourselves. And we've got the laws on the books to do so and will.

Charlie, it's about time. [*Laughter*]

Situation in Zimbabwe

Q. Yes, sir. On your trip to Africa, after your meeting with President Mbeki in South Africa, we felt that your attitude or stance was that you would let President Mbeki and the regional leaders in southern Africa take the lead on Zimbabwe.

The President. Zimbabwe, yes.

Q. Yes. Zimbabwe, if anything, has gotten worse. Are you satisfied with the kind of pressures that Mbeki has—President Mbeki has placed or the countries of the neighborhood has placed on Zimbabwe, some additional pressures?

The President. Let me review the history of this. I did speak very clearly to President Mbeki about Zimbabwe. I said, ''You and the neighborhood must deal with this man. You're sending a bad signal to the world.'' Along with Prime Minister Blair, we've been the two most outspoken leaders on this issue. And then our Secretary of State has followed up consistently.

I know there was an impression at the press conference, where I publicly said, ''Mr. Mbeki assures me he'll deal with this issue,'' in essence is what I said. But no, our Government has not changed our opinion about the need for the region to deal with Zimbabwe and the leadership there. In order for there to be a country, a prosperous country, it is—this is a country which was a food exporter, in a region that needs food. It's a country where the economy has fallen apart as the result of bad governance.

And we're constantly making the point to leadership that comes in. I made the point in New York to the leader of Mozambique, who is in the neighborhood.

Q. Oops, my tape—don't worry.

The President. I'm just getting—cranking up, Charlie. [*Laughter*]

Q. I will remember. [*Laughter*]

The President. No, you won't remember. It's impossible to remember eloquence. [*Laughter*] You must capture it. [*Laughter*]

No, nobody should read any—look, we are pressing the issue regularly.

Q. Are you satisfied, though, with what Mr. Mbeki and the other people are doing?

The President. The only time that this Government and I, personally, will be satisfied is when there is an honest government, reformed government, in Zimbabwe. That's our goal. That's the definition of satisfaction. And that hasn't happened yet. Therefore, we're not satisfied.

Q. With Mr. Mugabe or Mr. Mbeki?

The President. With the process. Well, certainly not with Mr. Mugabe. And when President Mbeki says they are working on it, to achieve this goal, I take him for his word. And I am going to remind all parties that the goal is a reformed and fair government. And that hasn't been achieved yet. And we'll continue to press the issue, both privately and publicly, which I just did.

Q. Mr. President, can I ask about——

The President. Not yet. [*Laughter*] We're having an orderly discussion. It reminds me of an American press conference. When I ask the journalists, please ask one question, and they ask four or five at the same time in the same breath. It's hard to believe—there's a tremendous lack of discipline in the U.S. press corps. [*Laughter*] Like the other day, I was embarrassed when the AP—a fantastic organization, a wonderful reporter—was able to ask four questions in one breath—[*laughter*]—setting a terrible precedent for the Russian press that followed up.

Q. I have four today, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm sure you do. You've already asked one: "How's the knee?"

Q. Three, then. [*Laughter*]

African Growth and Opportunity Act/ Millennium Challenge Accounts

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned AGOA and how it's anticipated that it will help alleviate poverty in Africa. However, most countries in Africa are still struggling just to begin to export products and don't seem to have the capacity to fully exploit what AGOA promises. And that seems to be an ongoing issue. If it's textiles, there's no capacity to reach the maximum quotas reserved for Africa. And by extension——

The President. So far.

Q. Right. And AGOA seems to be Africa's stepping stone to globalization. Now, just recently, the World Trade Organization meeting collapsed, and that seemed to symbolize a growing frustration among most developing countries, and particularly in Africa, that globalization and AGOA in the same—is not really fair. It's not a level playing field. Does this whole process need to be rethought to try to give them a little more capacity, to probably go in and try and build structures so that they can compete?

The President. Yes, listen, here—we've got a full-scale strategy on dealing with economic opportunity. First, let me talk about the Millennium Challenge Account, which is a central part of the strategy, which basically says we're willing to add aid if countries develop the habits necessary to be able to develop a just and honorable society: transparency, anti-corruption, focus on the people, a market orientation to their economy.

Secondly, AGOA creates opportunity. It's up to the nations to seize the opportunity. Our aid will help. We're more than willing to work with nations to help develop an entrepreneurial class that is able to seize the moment. And AGOA treats African nations fairly when it comes to our markets. And so our strategy is to help African nations develop the infrastructure necessary to achieve the markets.

And it starts with good governance, in our judgment. That's the best thing we can affect—and fight corruption, going to insist upon transparency, insist upon education practices that will help, and we provide help for this. On a wide range of areas, we help nations help themselves develop the economy necessary to take advantage of trade.

I believe that trade is the only way to help nations grow out of poverty. And so we've been open with our markets. The bilateral relationship between the United States and the continent of Africa is a strong relationship. I was sorry to see that there was a setback at the World Trade Organization, because I think that global trade will benefit the African Continent as well. It's important to open up markets, and that will provide opportunity for the African business sector.

And there's been good progress in many countries, by the way, as a result of AGOA. The amount of trade that is coming to the United States from the continent is dramatic. I can't cite the statistic exactly right this second. If I'm not mistaken, the trade from Kenya to the United States is upward of $400 million.

Q. Yes, it's up substantially.

The President. That's substantial. Martin, that's good progress. I think expectations ought to be realistic that market-oriented economies aren't going to happen instantly. It takes—there's a process that will help, but the fact that trade is up $400 million in Kenya is very positive. It means there's more activity, more jobs, more hope, more opportunity, all of which can be fostered by good, honest government, by the way, or it can be squandered by corrupt government. And that's one of the reasons why the Millennium Challenge

Account is part of our strategy on the continent, is to promote the habits of good and honest, decent government.

Kevin.

Kenya's Role in Africa

Q. Yes, thank you, Mr. President. You mentioned Sudan at the outset and the importance of Kenya and moving negotiations forward. Kenya has often seen itself as an island of stability surrounded by countries that have had serious conflicts and continue to have. Is the United States going to be discussing that with Mr. Kibaki and perhaps offering some specific assistance as Kenya tries to bring peace to Somalia, Sudan, and the Great Lakes region?

The President. Yes, interesting. Absolutely, we'll be talking about this, because I view that the best role the United States can play is be supportive of regional leaders and/or the capacity, for example, of African peacekeeping forces to carry the task of dealing with civil dispute. And Kenya is playing a vital role in the Sudan, along with former Senator Jack Danforth. They work closely together. It's a vital role to play.

And we will be encouraging President Kibaki to continue on being a regional leader. We will discuss it. If he has got suggestions about how our State Department and AID programs can help him do a better job as a regional leader, we're interested in listening.

We also believe that we ought to continue training forces such as ECOWAS, as an example, to be prepared to take on peacekeeping missions on the continent.

Liberia is another—am I answering your question, Charlie? [*Laughter*]

Q. No, I've got it in my head here. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'll save it. That way I won't force you to have to think of another question. [*Laughter*] You might have to slip into the baseball playoffs. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, yes, we will talk about that. It's a key role. You see, I believe that Africa is plenty capable—African nations are plenty capable of dealing with dispute. I believe there are very capable leaders on the continent who are good, strong leaders. And the role of the United States is not to supplant them as problemsolvers, but to help them solve problems. And one of the reasons why I think AGOA is such a strong statement by the United States is it says we have faith in the capacity of the people to take advantage of this opportunity.

I talked about the potential of the African Continent. It's way beyond—oftentimes people talk about the potential of Africa as resource potential. I view it as people potential. And so this country takes a supportive role in dealing with the leadership and recognizing that there are some strong leaders that are capable of handling the problems, as opposed to supplanting them.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Esther.

Developing Civil Society in Africa

Q. Mr. President, I'm wondering, as Africa joins the rest of the world in fighting terrorism, whether there are any plans to involve not only the governments but also the civil society and religious leaders who reach the common man?

The President. Yes. You know, the answer is, of course. And let me put it this way to you—and I say this a lot, Esther, as I explain to the American people why we make the decisions we make. Free societies are societies which will not support terror. Free societies are societies which aren't at war with their neighbors. I mean, freedom has the capacity to change the behavior of the people.

So, you bet. I mean, a free society is a society which, in itself, recognizes the value of civil society. Free societies are societies in which the civil society is the strength of the society. And to the extent that there are religious leaders preaching hatred that go beyond the scope of free speech and free religion, we try to work with leaders to work with their religious counterparts not to preach hatred and violence. But the United States is committed to the overall spread of free, honest, open government. That's the heart of the Millennium Challenge Account.

The Millennium Challenge Account—again, this is—I'm trying to share with you as much of my philosophy about dealing with the continent as anything else. I believe—obviously, I believe that people are plenty capable of developing honest government

and transparent government and focusing resources where they need to be focused. That's why we have laid out the initiative. That's why we've created this entirely new approach to foreign aid on the continent and elsewhere, by the way.

It essentially says I believe in the inherent goodness of men and women and their capacity to govern themselves. And therefore, we want to work with governments that make that choice. I recognize not everybody is going to make that choice, and I recognize sometimes the path of least resistance is corruption. And it's very tempting to take—you know, the head of a government to be corrupt, as Kenya has learned. And you've got a leader now who is willing to stand up and fight corruption. You've got an anti-corruption czar in Kenya, which is a positive development. Now the person must do their work. You've got anti-corruption legislation, which is positive development.

And so one of the key messages from this visit is, ''Mr. Kibaki, you're proving our point. You're leading. You're showing what is possible.'' And to the extent that we work with civil—that in itself spurs a civil society which is vibrant and strong. A civil society—kind of the underpinnings of a free society as opposed to a centralized government. And the habits of freedom change the attitudes of people.

Now, look, I readily concede there must be economic vitality and growth along with that in order to alleviate poverty. And part of the central component of our AIDS initiative is recognizing that a pandemic that sweeps through a continent will destroy the hopes of people. It's incredibly debilitating to the spirit when kids grow up as orphans after their parents have died a tough death. And this pandemic is wiping out a generation.

And that's why I feel so passionate about leading the world. Not just the United States but the world must step up and help in a way that actually works, in a way that changes the attitudes toward AIDS and save lives.

Charles.

Liberia

Q. Yes.

The President. They ever call you ''Charles''?

Q. I had a schoolteacher once call me Charles. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'll join the crowd. Charles, what's on your mind?

Q. I'm open to learning. [*Laughter*] I do, indeed, have a Liberia question.

The President. Thank you, sir. I was hoping you would bring it up. This isn't the first time you've asked me about Liberia.

Q. No, nor the last.

The President. Nor the last, yes, I was about to say. [*Laughter*]

Q. There was gunplay in Monrovia, I guess, yesterday.

The President. There was.

Q. There's deep suspicion of this process in the sense that—among Liberians—that these rebel groups aren't much better than Charles Taylor. And without getting some significant control of the country, independent, if you will, anything free and fair seems remote. And there's puzzlement—which is my question to you, at the—well, what one Liberian characterized as the aloofness of this administration toward the Liberian situation in terms of concrete people on the ground. There's puzzlement over this. How do you respond?

The President. Yes, I respond this way, Charles.

Q. Go ahead.

The President. Got the tape cranked up, will you?

Q. Yes, I want to get——

The President. Once again, this will be a—[*laughter*].

Q. Yes.

The President. I made it very clear from the beginning, our strategy in Liberia. Now, remember, I have just told you that I believe on the continent of Africa is—African nations are plenty capable of dealing with issues such—of civil unrest, like in Liberia.

And I believe it's very important for our Government to be consistent in our message, that we will help, we will help train troops. And I said from day one, Charlie, that we would provide help to ECOWAS—by the way, a group of folks we helped train in the past—and we would provide enough presence to enable ECOWAS to come in and

do their job. And we moved a Marine group of troops in, secured the port. Remember the first issue was the port? Would the United States act to secure the airport and port? Yes, we did. Would we create the conditions necessary for ECOWAS to move in, and then eventually blue-helmet the operation, which happened yesterday, and that encouraged others to participate along with the United Nations? You bet we did.

Now, we've kept a presence there. We've kept a presence there to help ECOWAS. So we've done everything we said we would do. And the strategy has worked. I recognize there was sporadic fire, or however you want to describe it, yesterday. And I suspect that that may happen on an infrequent basis.

But the process is working. The United Nations will move in. They will help supervise the elections. Hopefully, they will be free and fair. This is a good role for the United Nations. And in the meantime, more troops will be coming in. We worked collaboratively with the United Nations to help sign up nations to blue-helmet—to be blue-helmeted. And so I'm pleased with the progress we have made in Liberia. We have kept our word. We have done exactly what we said we would do.

Q. Just not exactly what you were asked to do.

The President. Well, sometimes, Charlie, we don't do exactly what everybody asks us to do. We get a lot of requests. And in this case, it fit—the strategy was a part of a larger strategy on the continent to help people help, in this case, the regional situation to resolve it.

ECOWAS has done a very good job. President Obasanjo gets a lot of credit for responding and moving Nigerian troops in and providing the command structure along with our help. I think the situation has turned out a lot better than people assumed it was going to, and there's progress still to be done. And the United Nations is now in charge of the process, but we're keeping people there to help with our Nigerian friends.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all, yes. I guess it's over. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview began at 9:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House and was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2 but was embargoed for release until 8 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique; former Senator John Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan; and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. A reporter referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia. Participating in the interview were Martin Mbugua, correspondent, Daily Nation; Kevin Kelley, correspondent, The EastAfrican; Charlie Cobb, senior writer and diplomatic correspondent, allafrica.com; and Esther Githui, international broadcaster, Voice of America Swahili Services. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring Hispanic Heritage Month

October 2, 2003

Thank you very much. *Sientese. Sientese, Embajador.* Thank you for coming. *Bienvenidos. Mi casa es su casa.* I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

You know, this Nation is blessed by the talents and the hard work of Hispanic Americans, and we're really blessed by the values of *familia y fe* that strengthen our Nation on a daily basis. It is fitting we honor Hispanic Americans in our country. It's part of our country—an incredibly important part of our country. I also think it's fitting that the way to honor Hispanic Americans is to revel in the vitality of the Hispanic culture that was displayed today, the music that honors the roots, the rhythm, the life of the Latino.

I appreciate my Ambassador to Mexico, Tony Garza. He's been a long-time friend. He was the secretary of state in the State of Texas. It gave him a chance to learn diplomacy. [*Laughter*] He's a great man and a great friend.

I have asked people from Hispanic heritage to join my administration: Hans Hertell,