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Sec 4. *Functions of the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council.* The Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall:

(a) promote interagency cooperation and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of Federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services;

(b) facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources;

(c) encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available;

(d) formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels; and

(e) develop and implement a method for monitoring progress on achieving the goals of this order.

Sec. 5. *Report.* In performing its functions, the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council shall present to me a report not later than 1 calendar year from the date of this order. The report shall:

(a) Identify those Federal, State, Tribal and local laws, regulations, procedures, and actions that have proven to be most useful and appropriate in coordinating transportation services for the targeted populations;

(b) Identify substantive and procedural requirements of transportation-related Federal laws and regulations that are duplicative or restrict the laws' and regulations' most efficient operation;

(c) Describe the results achieved, on an agency and program basis, in: (i) simplifying access to transportation services for persons with disabilities, persons with low income, and older adults; (ii) providing the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources; and (iii) reducing duplication to make funds available for more services to more such persons;

(d) Provide recommendations to simplify and coordinate applicable substantive, procedural, and administrative requirements; and

(e) Provide any other recommendations that would, in the judgment of the Council, advance the principles set forth in section 1 of this order.

Sec. 6. *General.* (a) Agencies shall assist the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council and provide information to the Council consistent with applicable law as may be necessary to carry out its functions. To the extent permitted by law, and as permitted by available agency resources, the Department of Transportation shall provide funding and administrative support for the Council.

(b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 24, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:57 a.m., February 25, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 26.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia and an Exchange With Reporters

February 25, 2004

President Bush. Here's what we're going to do. I will make a statement. The President will make a statement. I will then call upon an American correspondent to ask a question. The President will call upon a Georgian correspondent. We'll have two questions per side.

Mr. President, welcome. We followed the revolution that took place in your country very closely. We appreciate your firm commitment to democracy and freedom. We've

had a very interesting discussion. I know firsthand that the President will do everything he can to earn the confidence of the people of Georgia by representing their will, by fighting corruption, by working for a system based upon integrity and decency and human rights.

I'm impressed by this leader. I'm impressed by his vision. I'm impressed by his courage. I am heartened by the fact that we have such a strong friend, a friend with whom we share values.

So Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. I appreciate the candid discussion we've had, and I'm proud to call you friend.

President Saakashvili. Thank you. It's a great honor, for me and for the people of Georgia, to be here in this Oval Office. It's not—our cooperation is very deep. We consider ourselves as very close ally and friend of the United States. We are proud to be friend of the United States. I am speaking on behalf of every Georgian.

I have to say that this cooperation, friendship—the U.S. helped us when we needed it most, and would like peoples—other peoples in Europe will never forget that. But our cooperation is—that held friendship is not only about security. It's not only about economy. Primarily it's about our shared values. And we are part of—proud part of antiterrorist coalition. We have forces in Iraq. We are cooperating on other issues.

We are also working very hard on our improved relations with Russia. I had a very interesting conversation with President Putin in Moscow, and I believe Russia should become our reliable partner, and we should improve our relations.

But at the same time, we believe that America's help is absolutely essential, and we are grateful. We will stay grateful, and we want to be not only close ally, but we want to be strong ally. Georgia will become stronger. Georgia will become more democratic. Democracy is top priority. Freedom of speech is top priority. Free enterprise, free market is top priority. And I think Georgia can become a role model for the whole region. And this is very important. We need U.S. help in that.

Regarding our revolution, it was the proudest moment of my own life and of life of the whole generation. And we are so proud that we were supported in our fight for democracy and for people's right to choose by the United States, and Washington was the first to come and help us. And I'm sure we'll never forget that.

Mr. President, I really enjoyed being here at the White House. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you. Hold on a second, please. Deb, [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press] we're going to——

Q. What do you think about——

President Bush. Hold on, please. Will somebody translate——

President Saakashvili. It's in English.

President Bush. I understand. I understand. Hold on for a second. The way this is going to work is this.

Q. I'm from Georgia.

President Bush. I know you are, excuse me. We're going to start with the American press, and then there will be a Georgian press, and then there will be an American press, and then there will be a Georgian press. That's the best way to maintain order, so we don't have everybody yelling at the same time.

Deb.

Federal Deficit/Social Security

Q. Mr. President, Chairman Greenspan today suggested trimming Social Security benefits for baby boomers to deal with the rising budget deficit. Do you think this is a good idea, a good way to ease the deficit, which is expected to top over $520 billion this year?

President Bush. First of all, let me talk about the short-term deficit. The best way to trim the deficit is to follow the budgetary plan I submitted to the United States Congress. We presented a plan that will cut the deficit in half over the next 5 years. I haven't talked to the Chairman or read his comments. I need to see exactly what he said. My position on Social Security benefits is this, that: those benefits should not be changed for people at or near retirement.

As you know, in the 2000 campaign, I articulated a point of view that we ought to have personal savings accounts for younger workers that would make sure those younger workers receive benefits equal to or greater

than that which is expected. I still maintain the same position, but I haven't seen his comments completely.

Georgia's Rose Revolution

Q. What do you think about Rose Revolution in Georgia?

President Bush. The Rose Revolution? It was an historic moment. It was a moment where the people spoke. It was a moment where a Government changed because the people peacefully exercised their voice and raised their voice. And Georgia transitioned to a new Government in an inspiring way.

The President and I discussed the ramifications of the Rose Revolution around other parts of the world. The possibility of people taking charge of their own lives and transforming society in a peaceful way is a powerful example to people around the world who long for freedom and long for honest government.

And so the Rose Revolution is an inspiring moment of history. And again, I want to congratulate the President and his team for insisting that democracy prevail through peaceful means.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Situation in Haiti

Q. Mr. President, in Haiti, the rebels are advancing and a power-sharing deal has collapsed. Are you prepared to let President Aristide be overthrown?

President Bush. Secretary Powell and I have been in close consultations on this subject. We still hope to be able to achieve a political settlement between the current Government and the rebels. We are watching the situation very carefully. The Secretary of State has been in touch with Canadian officials and French officials and Caribbean officials, all aimed to convince the parties to come to the table and effect a peaceful solution.

In terms of our own planning here, I have made it abundantly clear to the Coast Guard that we will turn back any refugee that attempts to reach our shore. And that message needs to be very clear as well to the Haitian people. We will have a robust presence with an effective strategy. And so we encourage, strongly encourage the Haitian people to stay home as we work to reach a peaceful solution to this problem.

Q. Do you think it's possible you'll have to send troops there?

President Bush. What we are—incident to a political settlement, we will encourage the international community to provide a security presence. And that is also being discussed right now. But first things, first, Steve, is to work on a—is to work on a political solution.

Georgia-Russia Relations

Q.——very complicated problems, with Russian bases problems——

President Bush. Well, I appreciate you bringing up the Russian bases problem. We expect the Russian Government to honor the Istanbul commitment. The Istanbul commitment made it very clear that Russia would leave those places. We will continue to work with the President and President Putin on that commitment.

I also appreciate very much the President's work with the Russians. It's important that relations between Georgia and Russia be positive. I found it a very positive move and a very sophisticated move by the President that his first trip was to Russia, and I encouraged that. I thought it was a smart thing to do. And we will work with Vladimir Putin, with whom I've got a good relationship, to make sure relations are good with Georgia. It's important for the Georgian people to have good and strong and peaceful relations with Russia. There's a lot we can work on. We can work together to fight terror. Hopefully, as the Georgia economy approves—improves—and I'm confident it will—there will be opportunities for—business opportunities.

So the President has got a good vision and this has been a good trip. I believe in his abilities, and I appreciate his vision. And the people of Georgia will be well served by his leadership.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A reporter referred to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Memorandum on Determination Consistent With the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and for the Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, 2004 (Public Law 108–106), To Make Available Assistance for Liberia

February 25, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–23

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator, United States Agency for International Development

Subject: Determination Consistent with the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and for the Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, 2004 (Public Law 108–106), to Make Available Assistance for Liberia

Consistent with the authority vested in me by the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and for the Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, 2004 (Public Law 108–106), under the heading "International Disaster and Famine Assistance," I hereby determine that it is in the national interest of the United States and essential to efforts to reduce international terrorism to furnish $114 million in assistance for Liberia from funds made available under that heading.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 2, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

Memorandum on Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

February 25, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–24

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to $20 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund as a contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to address unexpected, urgent refugee needs in the West Bank and Gaza.

You are authorized and directed to inform the appropriate committees of the Congress of this determination and the obligation of funds under this authority, and to arrange for the publication of this memorandum in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 2, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of U.S. Military Forces in Response to Security Concerns for United States Embassy Personnel in Haiti

February 25, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Increasing armed rebellion in Haiti, the limited effectiveness of the Haitian National Police, and insecurity in Port-au-Prince brought on by increased armed pro-government gang activity have contributed to a climate of insecurity for the U.S. Embassy and