

Telephone Remarks to the South Boston Saint Patrick's Day Breakfast

March 21, 2004

The President. Senator, this would be your President calling.

State Senator Jack Hart. President Bush, President Bush is on the line. How about a nice round of applause for President Bush? Happy Saint Patrick's Day. What an honor.

The President. Yes, same to you, Jack. Thanks for letting me call in. I appreciate you taking my call.

Senator Hart. Any time, Mr. President, we'll take your call any time, for crying out loud.

The President. Well, I'm proud of that. Listen, I want to thank Father Casey. I presume he's got quite a few souls to save there in that crowd. [*Laughter*]

Senator Hart. There's quite a few Democratic souls to save in this hall, Mr. President.

The President. I know you've got one—you invited at least one Republican, and that's my friend the Governor.

Senator Hart. Yes, yes, he's here. Mitt Romney is here. We were going to ask you, Mr. President, do you need a running mate? [*Laughter*]

The President. Wait a minute.

Senator Hart. We like Dick Cheney and all, but we'd like for you to take the Governor to Washington, DC. [*Laughter*]

The President. Look, you're lucky to have the guy. Here's the way I like to put it about Massachusetts: I know there's a lot of talk about a Massachusetts politician who has his eye on the Presidency. But tell Mitt it's not open until 2008. [*Laughter*]

Senator Hart. Oh, you're talking about—you had me stumped for a second there. You're talking about Senator Kerry, of course.

The President. Oh, no, no.

Senator Hart. Oh, my goodness.

The President. You mean the—well, never mind. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank the speaker and the senate president. I miss my days as being the Governor. I loved dealing with our Lieutenant Governor and speaker and members of the statehouse and the State senate. And I wish

you all the very best. I know you're struggling with some big issues. But these are good, decent folks working for the people of Massachusetts to get some things done, and I appreciate, Jack, the spirit of this lunch.

Senator Hart. Well, thank you very much. We are certainly honored that you called, and we respect the job that you're doing. We pray for you every day, Mr. President. You're a good man, and we just wanted to wish you a very, very happy Saint Patrick's Day.

The President. Same to you, sir, and I wish everybody a happy Saint Patrick's Day as well. God bless, everybody. God bless our great Nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. from the Residence at the White House to breakfast participants meeting in Boston, MA. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Robert E. Casey, pastor, Saint Brigid's Catholic Church, Boston, MA; Gov. Mitt Romney and Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey of Massachusetts; Thomas M. Finnerman, speaker, Massachusetts State house of representatives; and Robert E. Travaglini, president, Massachusetts State senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Consolidated Report on the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces

March 20, 2004

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

In the interests of improving the efficiency of the reporting process and to increase the utility of reports to the Congress, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, I have decided to consolidate supplemental reports I provide to the Congress regarding the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped armed forces in a number of locations around the world. This consolidated report is part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about such deployments and covers operations in support of the global war on terrorism (including in Afghanistan), Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Haiti. Operations in Iraq are a critical part of the war on terror, and it is my intention to continue to provide, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, information regarding the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq in the reports to the Congress